

KRAV MAGA

PROFESSIONAL TACTICS



DAVID KAHN

Israeli Krav Maga Association
US Chief Instructor

THE CONTACT COMBAT SYSTEM OF THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES

BECAUSE NOT ALL KRAV MAGA IS THE SAME™

“As a police officer studying krav maga under David Kahn, it has changed my life both mentally and physically. I have a confidence and knowledge in krav maga that I can only get from David Kahn.”

—Officer Al “Poodie” Carson

This book is designed for security-conscious civilians, law enforcement officers, military personnel, and security professionals alike who wish to improve their chances of surviving an armed attack and prevailing without serious injury.

Krav maga training shares the same principles for civilians, law enforcement, and military personnel: instinctive tactics, optimized combatives, economy of continuous fight motion, and an “attack the attacker” mind-set.

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- Firearm retention

**Up-to-date
tactics that focus
on the most
common violent
scenarios**



DAVID KAHN is the United States chief instructor for the Israeli Krav Maga Association. He has trained all branches of the US military, in addition to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. David is an instructor certified by the State of New Jersey Police Training Commission. He resides in Princeton, New Jersey.

“This is krav maga delivered at its highest level.”

—S. M., SEAL senior chief (ret.), US Navy

“[David Kahn’s] instruction and skill set are at the highest level.”

—Captain S. Munafo, commandant, New Jersey State Police Training Bureau

“[David Kahn’s] knowledge of defensive tactics is extremely beneficial to the law enforcement community.”

—Officer Vladimir Vaval, New Jersey Transit Police, Training Unit

“[David Kahn’s] clear and concise instruction in military hand-to-hand combat, as well as in law enforcement defensive tactics, is of the highest caliber.”

—J. C. Shusko, Lt. Col. (ret.), director, US Marine Corps Martial Arts Center of Excellence

“The krav maga was effective yet easy to learn and retain.”

—Col. Corey L. Britcher, director, Pennsylvania Bureau of Law Enforcement

“Realistic options that could be adapted to fit any requirement or scenario/environment.”

—Sgt. Ben Perkins, RM CC UK chief instructor trainer (IT), Commando Training Centre Royal Marines



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Praise for David Kahn . . .

“Having served as a Navy SEAL for more than twenty-five years, I recognized premier training when we did it. *This* is krav maga delivered at its highest level—a phenomenal force multiplier. David provides instinctive, simple, and brutally efficient tools to prevail in a violent kinetic or nonkinetic hand-to-hand combat situation. The professional insights and tactics David presents are dead-on serious and practical—no nonsense. I, and other like-minded professionals, continue to train with David. I highly recommend David Kahn’s reality-based krav maga approach to everyone who is serious about developing a hand-to-hand capability.”

—**S.M., (ret.) Senior Chief Petty Officer**, United States Navy

“On behalf of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Center of Excellence (MACE) I would like to extend my appreciation to David B. Kahn and H. C. ‘Sparky’ Bollinger, Maj USMC (ret.) as well as their professional training team. On several occasions they have trained the top-level Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) instructor-trainers as well as instructors of the FBI and DEA academy at our facility. Their clear and concise instruction in military hand-to-hand combat, as well as in law enforcement defensive tactics, is of the highest caliber.”

—**Lt. Col. (ret.) J. C. Shusko**, United States Marine Corps

“I would like to thank you for providing your expert instruction. . . . This represents an ongoing relationship with the goal of providing top-level best-practices training for all members of law enforcement throughout the state. Based on the response from this course, all agencies involved had nothing but praise for the course and your staff. It is important our tactics continually evolve as new techniques and defensive tactics are developed. I know the academy staff is looking forward to working with you in the future. Your instruction and skill set are at the highest level.”

—**Captain S. Munafo**, Commandant, New Jersey State Police
Training Bureau

“I wanted to express my gratitude for the Israeli Krav Maga weapon-defense training that you provided. The opportunity to do these skills ‘hands on’ with M4, shotgun, as well as the handgun is extremely beneficial. I appreciate that you stuck with real-world tactics and your delivery of the lesson was well taken by the law enforcement audience. Additionally, it was apparent that you are aware of the law enforcement rules of engagement. Thank you also for providing weapon disarming, close quarters/tubular combat, as well as removing subjects from vehicles during [motor vehicle] stops in addition to what you had planned for the day. It is obvious that as the chief instructor of the Israeli Krav Maga Association your knowledge of defensive tactics is extremely beneficial to the law enforcement community.”

—**Vladimir Vaval**, New Jersey Transit Police Officer, Training Unit

“I would like to express my gratitude for the training you provided to the officers with the PA Fish and Boat Commission. The Law Enforcement Krav Maga Instructor course was excellent and a true asset to not only my officers but the visiting officers from various departments. The krav maga was effective yet easy to learn and retain, making it very practical for the patrol officer. We look forward to continuing the program and expanding it in the future. Your experience, knowledge of the law, and enthusiasm were greatly appreciated. If the Bureau of Law Enforcement can ever be of assistance in the future, don't hesitate to ask. Thanks again.”

—**Col Corey L. Britcher**, Director, Pennsylvania Bureau
of Law Enforcement

“I would like to thank you for sharing your expertise in Israeli krav maga with the members of the New Jersey State Police, Executive Protection Bureau. The simplicity of the moves, coupled with effectiveness of the techniques, makes this training useful in real-world situations. I particularly like the disarming training and simultaneous ‘block and strike’ techniques. Your professional instruction and enthusiastic participation along with you and your entire staff made this training a true success. Israeli krav maga has further prepared the New Jersey State Police, Executive Protection Bureau, in achieving our mission of protecting our principals. We look forward to training with you and your impressive krav maga fighting system in the future.”

—**Lt. Kevin Cowan**, Training Officer, New Jersey State Police,
Executive Protection Bureau

“I would like to start by saying what an informative and eye-opening experience all of my team had during the seminar you and your team delivered in Portsmouth (UK) back in July 2013. The magnitude of knowledge combined with your relentless approach to adapting techniques to create a workable solution fit for specific military purpose was commendable. However, what stood out most to my team in our reflection of the experience was the manner of its delivery, as at no stage did you sell the system as being the way or a better way; you simply provided realistic options that could be adapted to fit any requirement or scenario/environment. Royal Marines Close Combat (RM CC) will always look to evolve, as this is at the heart of commando business. To cross-pollinate further knowledge and experiences I and my team will look to maintain links wherever possible with you and your instructors, as I strongly believe this will benefit to both parties, as I know you already do with other elite units globally.”

—**Sgt. Ben Perkins**, RM CC UK Chief Instructor Trainer (IT),
Commando Training Centre Royal Marines

“I can personally attest to how effective krav maga under David Kahn really works. Many people train krav maga on a regular basis, but never get to use it outside the gym setting or in a

real-life situation like I have. As a former professional football player, a police officer for twenty-two years, and a SWAT team member for 12 years, I know the need for proper and consistent training. I have found that training with David Kahn is the best for the patrol and SWAT officer. My real-life experience occurred when having to take into custody a wanted person who was a real threat to my life and possibly to those living in his area. One of my fellow officers who had just trained with David got to witness first hand the knowledge and training that David has taught the law enforcement community when I had to use krav maga to take the violent individual into custody. As a police officer studying krav maga under David Kahn it has change my life both mentally and physically. I have a confidence and knowledge in krav maga that I can only get from David!"

—**Officer Al “Poodie” Carson**

Of all the training I have put myself through for the last several years, nothing could have prepared me for the experience in Mexico City this evening. I am currently here on a business trip and was walking from the IBM office to my hotel (only ten minutes away) with two of my colleagues from the States. Some guy comes out of nowhere and started speaking Spanish in a threatening tone. I didn't know what he was saying, but he pulled out a gun and pointed it at all of us, moving it around (in broad daylight). All three of us froze up. One of my colleagues started trying to speak Spanish, saying sorry, no problem. I charged in and grabbed the gun followed by the standard disarm: redirected it to the ground, punched him so bloody hard in the face whilst keeping the gun pointed away, and pulled the gun out. He fell to the ground . . . I wanted to send you this note, because I know that krav maga and what I have learnt from you saved me.

—**Anuj Batra**, krav maga student

I have had the pleasure, opportunity, and advantage the last decade to train with the United States chief instructor of the Israeli Krav Maga Association, David Kahn. I first met David when I was assigned to the New Jersey State Police Training Academy in Sea Girt, New Jersey, as the lead defensive tactics instructor. I had been tasked by the commandant to research, evaluate, assess, and conduct a “best practices” for the NJSP defensive tactics program regarding duties of a NJSP trooper.

After researching federal, state, and local agencies' defensive tactics standards, training, and requirements, it was apparent that no uniform standard existed. However, it was obvious the Israeli Krav Maga Association met and exceeded any and all needs of the NJSP as well as the law enforcement community. I invited and met with David and his staff, as well as Haim Gidon, grandmaster for the Israeli Krav Maga Association based in Israel. After initially training with David it was clear that IKMA curriculum and best practices exceeded any national defensive tactics standards.

I noted that not all krav maga is the same and made the recommendation. I was granted permission by the commandant to move forward to formally bring in David Kahn. As a result,

Israeli krav maga was officially implemented into NJSP Academy recruit training, advanced, and in-service member training. David personally trained me, along with self-defense instructors Tpr. M. Oehlmann, Tpr. Rayhon, and Tpr. R. Roberts. David also trained the NJSP TEAMS (SWAT) and Executive Protection Unit (EPU). The IKMA provided us with the mind-set and physical skills a law enforcement officer will need to survive a situation and win. Several federal agencies have also brought David in to their academies to provide training for their instructors as well.

Training in IKM prepared members of the NJSP to react decisively, instinctively, and with speed and economy of motion, while combining a simultaneous defense and aggressive, objectively reasonable response that can be performed under pressure, thwarting any attack. IKM provided members with subduing techniques to safely and effectively direct, ease, place, restrain, and control an adversary onto the ground, thus limiting liability and enabling the trooper a smooth transition into a handcuffing procedure. IKM focused on legally acceptable anatomical targets, allowing female and male troopers alike to overcome and neutralize a stronger adversary while also complying with an objectively reasonable use-of-force standard. The integration of IKM provided members with a seamless transition from defensive and close-quarters combat tactics to firearms utilizing force options.

I highly recommend and believe that training with David Kahn (IKMA) should be implemented into all law enforcement agencies' firearms and defensive tactics programs. IKM is essential and critical to the responsibilities and job performance of law enforcement members and agencies.

—**Mickie W. McComb (ret.)**, New Jersey State Police, Assistant unit head, Firearms and Self-Defense Training Unit; lead defensive tactics instructor and use of force instructor, Training Bureau, Sea Girt, New Jersey, Expert witness, excessive use of force: www.mickiemccombexpertwitnessuseofforce.com, The TASA Group—Technical Advisory Service for Attorneys: Expert witness, excessive use of force

David Kahn is a true professional. He is extremely knowledgeable yet humble. David is an outstanding author and instructor. I have known and worked with David for over fifteen years. This book will provide readers an opportunity to learn from one of the best Israeli krav maga instructors at their leisure. The techniques in this book are proven and effective. If practiced regularly and perfected, the techniques will become instinctive and will be effective. This book is the opportunity for you to better prepare yourself for encounters on the street or anywhere else. Now is the time to begin. Protect yourself, your comrades, and your family.

—**Paul M. Miller**, retired captain, New Jersey State Police, academy instructor, TEAMS unit member

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“IMITATION IS THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY.”

—Charles Caleb Colton

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THE CONTACT COMBAT SYSTEM OF THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES

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The authors and publisher of the material are NOT RESPONSIBLE in any manner whatsoever for any injury which may occur through reading or following the instructions in this manual.

The activities physical or otherwise, described in this manual may be too strenuous or dangerous for some people, and the reader(s) should consult a physician before engaging in them.

Warning: While self-defense is legal, fighting is illegal. If you don't know the difference, you'll go to jail because you aren't defending yourself. You are fighting—or worse. Readers are encouraged to be aware of all appropriate local and national laws relating to self-defense, reasonable force, and the use of weaponry, and to act in accordance with all applicable laws at all times. Understand that while legal definitions and interpretations are generally uniform, there are small—but very important—differences from state to state and even city to city. To stay out of jail, you need to know these differences. Neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for the use or misuse of information contained in this book.

Nothing in this document constitutes a legal opinion, nor should any of its contents be treated as such. While the author believes everything herein is accurate, any questions regarding specific self-defense situations, legal liability, and/or interpretation of federal, state, or local laws should always be addressed by an attorney at law.

When it comes to martial arts, self-defense, and related topics, no text, no matter how well written, can substitute for professional hands-on instruction. These materials should be used for academic study only.

Printed in Canada.

For Claire, Benjamin, and Leo
In Loving Memory of Helen Brener Smith and Master Lowell Slaven

The Book of Psalms, chapter 144:1

לדוד ברוך יהוה צורי המלמד ידי לקרב אצבעותי למלחמה

“A Psalm of David. Blessed be the LORD, my rock,
Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle.”

Contents

<i>Foreword: The Warrior Mind-Set</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Introduction</i>	xvii
<i>The Professional Level</i>	xvii
<i>Three Reaction-Proaction Levels</i>	xix
<i>Fight Timing</i>	xx
<i>The Best Use of This Book</i>	xxi
CHAPTER 1—Civilian, Law Enforcement, and Military Krav Maga Training	1
The Professional Kravist Mind-Set When Facing a Deadly Attack	2
Psychological Aspects of Violent Conflict	3
Violent Conflict’s Mental and Physical Stress Manifestations	4
Krav Maga’s Training Philosophy	5
Visceral Counterviolence	6
Attack the Attacker: Anatomical Targeting	6
Twenty-Four Vulnerable Targets	8
Injuring versus Hurting	9
Legal Considerations	10
The Israeli Krav Maga Advantage	11
Krav Maga Tactical Positioning	12
Reacting to an Ambush	12
Seeing an Attack	13
CHAPTER 2—Defending the Most Common Upper-Body and Lower-Body	
Attacks, Throws, and Counterthrows	17
Straight-Punch Defenses	18
Hook-Punch Defenses	25
Defending a Hook Punch into Throws	37
Counterthrows	47
Core Kick Defenses	50
CHAPTER 3—Clinches, Choke and Takedown Defenses, Escorts, and Ground Survival	57
Clinching	59
Clinch Defense	60
Tackle Defenses	61
Escort Control Holds	73
Core Ground Survival Tactics	79

Protecting Your Neck	86
Offenses from the Rear Mount	100
CHAPTER 4—Impact-Weapon Combatives and Defenses	105
Impact Weapon against Upper- and Lower-Body Strikes	105
Short Impact Weapon against Short Impact Weapon	116
Impact Weapon against Edged-Weapon Attack	129
Impact Defenses against an Assailant Posturing with an Edged Weapon (Midlevel)	130
Windmill Rotational Defense against an Overhead Edged Weapon (Not Depicted)	136
CHAPTER 5—Firearm Cold Combatives	141
How to Optimize Cold-Weapon Combatives	141
Mastering Personal, Impact, and Firearm Combined Combatives	143
Long-Gun Cold Weapons against Personal and Cold Weapons	156
CHAPTER 6—Defending Edged Weapons: Open Handed and When Your Handgun Is Inoperable	191
Defense with an Empty or Malfunctioning Pistol against Edged-Weapon Attacks	191
Overhead Edged-Weapon Attacks	191
Hostage Taker Holding a Knife to a Hostage’s Throat	212
CHAPTER 7—Multiple Assailants	215
CHAPTER 8—Firearm Defenses	239
Krav Maga’s Firearm Disarming Philosophy	239
Handgun Defenses from the Front (VIP Protection)	246
CHAPTER 9—Firearm Retention and Professional Kravist Weapon-Defense Drills	271
Sidearm Retention	271
Long-Gun Weapon Retention While Defending Takedown Attempts	288
<i>Appendix—Use of Force</i>	303
<i>Use of Force and Law Enforcement, by Sergeant First Class Mick McComb, Ret.</i>	303
<i>Use-of-Force Standard: Objective Reasonableness</i>	305
<i>Summary of Force Options</i>	306
<i>Severe Threat Level and Factors</i>	306
<i>Biographies</i>	309
<i>Resources</i>	311
<i>Index</i>	313

Foreword: The Warrior Mind-Set

Having the physical and mental capability to negate a threat to your life and the lives of loved ones must be sharpened through tough, realistic training. Many people study and hone their combat mind-set skills. Much of this is done through the mental preparation for combat or a violent encounter. While mental preparation is highly important, one must hone the physical attributes to survive a violent altercation of any kind. Both of these subjects are imperative when a threat enters your OODA loop—that is, the decision-making cycle in which you observe, orient, decide, and act.

The techniques taught to me by Mr. Kahn, many of which are illustrated in this book, are highly efficient, effective, and practical. *These* techniques along with rigorous mental preparation can give you the combat mind-set and skills needed to survive a violent altercation. These techniques are a force multiplier to anyone's martial arts arsenal. As a military professional and a subject-matter expert in military hand-to-hand combat, it is my opinion that he is an unparalleled teacher and mentor. I would recommend his training to anyone. I recommend *Krav Maga Professional Tactics* by Mr. David Kahn to anyone serious about self-defense or lifesaving tactics.

—MSgt. (ret.) Ronald E. Jacobs

Ron Jacobs is the former chief instructor of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. His other martial arts credentials include the following:

Black belt, krav maga

Black belt, Japanese ju-jitsu

Kru (master instructor), muay Thai

Brown belt, Brazilian jiu-jitsu

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Grandmaster Haim Gidon for instilling in me the self-defense fighting style of krav maga at its highest and most evolved level. As the head of the Israeli krav maga system and president of the Israeli Krav Maga Association (IKMA) Gidon System, Haim continues to develop and improve the krav maga system on a daily basis. With the blessing of Imi Lichtenfeld (the late founder of krav maga). Haim, along with the most capable assistance and expert insight from his sons (Albert, Ohad, and Noam) and other senior IKMA instructors represent the vanguard of krav maga development. I am also grateful to instructors Yoav Krayn, Yigal Arbiv and Steve Moishe. Haim emphasizes that the krav maga we teach must work against determined and concerted resistance; against someone who knows how to attack. or as Charles Caleb Colton summarized, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” I can only hope that I can adequately represent Haim’s unparalleled krav maga mastery.

I give special thanks to black-belt instructor Rinaldo Rossi for being both in front and behind the lens, along with Chris Eckel and Don Melnick for their unparalleled instructional support. Rinaldo is truly one of the world’s foremost krav maga instructors and black-belt practitioners. This book would not exist without his dedication, patience, and generosity along with the help of Don and Chris. Instructor Mimi Rowland performed a nearly miraculous feat in helping to organize the many photos in addition to her creativity in shooting them. Thank you, Mimi.

It is an honor and privilege to work with my great friend Major HC “Sparky” Bollinger, ret. I first met Sparky at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, through an introduction by our mutual friend Captain Frank Small, ret. Frank invited us to teach select marines at Camp Lejeune and persuaded Sparky, fresh off a flight from the Helmand Province after his second tour of duty, to attend the training. I knew right away that Sparky was a pro when it came to martial arts training. We were very appreciative of Sparky’s acceptance and recognition that our krav maga “was good to go.” A great friendship developed, as well as an atmosphere of mutual learning. Sparky holds a fifth-degree black belt in combat jujitsu and sits on the board of the United States Judo Association. He is a true comrade.

I am deeply grateful also to my close friend and business partner Captain Frank Small (ret.) and to his wonderful wife, Dana. Frank made it possible for us to work with the United States military. He quickly grasped the most important criterion for success in professional training: only what works. With this mind-set, he has paved the way for us to work with some of the finest professional warriors in America, including M.Sgt. Ronald E. Jacobs, chief instructor for the United States Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. Ron holds a sixth-degree black belt in MCMAP along with high-ranking belts in numerous other martial arts systems, including a black belt in Israeli krav maga. It is

an honor and privilege to work with Ron, who was gracious enough to pose in several of the photo series presented in this book. He is a consummate professional and a great friend.

I am grateful to Navy instructors R., J., N., J., and S. for their nonpareil professional insights, hospitality, and most, importantly, for what they do.

Sgt. Major Nir Maman, res., former LOTAR lead counterterror instructor, krav maga instructor, and IDF Infantry and Paratroopers Ground Forces Command Soldier of the Year, 2009, has provided great support, professional insights, and specialized training expertise as only he can. Nir has improved the Israeli krav maga system immeasurably with his unique professional insights. Nir is also one of my greatest friends.

I am grateful to my other Israeli krav maga instructors and close friends. Aldema Tzrinksky is a great friend who has provided immeasurable support and counsel over many years. Many thanks to the Hauerstocks for their *sabra* hospitality in my biannual visits to Israel and my good friend Shira Orbas, now one of the best in the security “business,” along with her wonderful family. I offer special thanks to Master Kobi Lichtenstein and his organization for their hospitality.

Thank you to the IKMA board of directors and all IKMA members, who continue to welcome and train with me over the years. Once again, this book would not be possible without the expert training, support, and inspiration of krav maga’s backbone: the IKMA (www.kravmagaisraeli.com).

The same is true of senior krav maga instructors Rick Blitstein and Alan Feldman, who are support strongholds and knowledge reservoirs. Their collective sagacity improves me as an instructor. Our good friend in Poland, Kris Sawicki, keeps the IKMA at the forefront in Europe. A special thanks to USJA master instructor Lowel Slaven for his considerable vote of confidence and professional interest. I am grateful to all our students at our Israeli Krav Maga United States Training Centers (www.israelikrav.com).

I am indebted to many other friends, supporters, and my network of fellow instructors in the krav maga world: Chris Eckel, Jeff Gorman, Frank Colluci, Mike Delahanty, David Ordini, Alec Goenner, David Gollin, George Foster, Jason Bleitstein, Joe Tucker, David Rahn, Chris Morrison, Al Ackerman, Joe Drew, Jose Anaya, Kelly Arlinghaus, Mimi Rowland, Mike McElvin, and Paul Karleen, along with all those instructors in the pipeline.

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A special thanks on both a personal and professional level to all of our friends and supporters in the law enforcement community, including Lt. Miller, ret.; Sgt. McComb, ret.; Sgt. Klem; Sgt. Oehlmann; Sgt. Rayhon; Maj. Ponenti; Lt. DeMaise; Lt. Wolf; Lt. Cowan; Sgt. Boland; Lt. Capriglione; Lt. Peins; Officer Vaval; Capt. Crowe; Officer Vacirca; Capt. Maimone, ret.; Lt. Cowan; Capt. Savalli, ret.; Associate Director Harrison; Chief Lazzarotti; Director Paglione; Investigators Smith and Gioscio; Officer Tucker; Officer Hanafee; Lt. Colon; Sgt. Hayden; Officer Johnson; Special Agent-in-Charge Hammond; Special Agents Schroeder and Belle; Special Agents Love, Clark, Nowazcek, and Crowe; Chief Sutter, Lt. Currier, and my entire hometown Princeton Police Department, along with the many other law enforcement professionals with whom we have the honor of working.

I would like to thank the following United States Marine Corps personnel: Lt. Col. Joseph Shusko, ret.; GySgt. Gokey, ret.; MGySgt. Urso, ret.; Sgts. Ladler, Parker, and Allen; Lt. Col. “Tonto” Ardesi; SSgt. Jensen; Cpl. Lackland; and SSgt. Kropelwicki. Thanks also to Sgt. Ben Perkins of the Royal Marines, along with 1st Sgt. Johnson and Maj. Haigh of the United States Air Force for their support. I must not fail to mention all of our fighting men and women of the United States military and Israel Defense Forces for safeguarding our freedom.

Security expert Steven Hartov, one of my favorite authors and good friends, deserves much gratitude for his personal and professional support. I am grateful to Drs. Steven Gecha, Stephen Hunt, and Bruce Rose, as well as PTs Lindsey Balint and Jeff Manheimer for continuing to hold me together. Thanks to Jerry Palmieri for his conditioning advice along with George Samuelson and “Doc” Mark Cheng.

My family is always a buttress and the wellspring of support, especially my wife Claire, mother Anne, stepfather Ed, and father Alfred, for the growth of krav maga training and all the effort that has gone into our expansion. My business partners are true brothers to me, embodying the greatest dedication, entrepreneurial spirit, work ethic, and loyalty. I trust Benjamin and Leo will be the next generation of kravists—and be more accomplished than their daddy.

I am especially grateful to my publisher David Ripianzi for recognizing the need for a comprehensive krav maga book featuring many professional tactics, strategies, and insights of the Israeli fighting method. David has also helped me in innumerable ways to improve as an author, video producer, and entrepreneur. Tim Comrie, Doran Hunter, and T. G. LaFredo each warrant deep thanks as well for each expert’s respective role in shaping this book. YMAA Publication Center is a credit to the profession, and I am honored to work with such a great group of professional people.

Introduction

We are proud to present *Krav Maga Professional Tactics*. We thank the many readers and krav maga enthusiasts who contacted us about the next book of the line. Here, you will learn more about the proven core, and in some cases, advanced combative and weapon tactics of the Israel Defense Forces developed first by Imi Lichtenfeld and refined by Grandmaster Haim Gidon. Sgt. Maj. Nir Maman, res., has also made significant contributions to the Israeli krav maga system. The tactics and strategies represented in this book have established their efficacy in defeating aggression over the last seven decades.

I have selected many techniques from the top levels of krav maga. There are several tactics we elected not to include for security considerations in the public interest. Obviously, these omitted offensive and third-party protection tactics are singularly suited for training vetted personnel. I am confident this omission does not detract from the principles and tactics detailed in this book.

Krav maga's popularity in professional law enforcement, military, and security circles is, in large part, attributable to its practicality, simplicity, quick retention, easy learning curve, and brutal effectiveness. We train federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies along with all four branches of the US military in the method. We have also trained foreign military branches and private security contractors.

I would like to reiterate a quick anecdote from *Krav Maga Weapon Defenses* (YMAA, 2012). Over the years we have had several skeptical highly skilled operators take our courses to disprove Israeli krav maga's professional applications and effectiveness. As far as we are aware, none of these warriors came away unimpressed with krav maga. Some were more than impressed and asked to be put on our mailing list for all future courses.

We are firmly rooted to the precept that good tactical minds think alike. Our goal is not to replace whatever knowledge these seasoned personnel have but rather to augment their capabilities, to add additional arrows to the proverbial quiver. What is paramount is that we do not approach our specific krav maga training as an exercise program or fad. The tactics and strategies we teach are designed by and for hard-core, no-nonsense, tactically minded professionals, along with civilians who are serious about safety training. *Not all krav maga is the same*. For those who convert these tactics and strategies for their own use without attribution, you know who you are. We know who you are.

The Professional Level

The Israeli krav maga self-defense system is world renowned for its brutal efficiency. The system's continuing evolution is grounded in street- and battle-proven tactics. If a

tactic should fail, the system either removes it or modifies it. This effectiveness is built on a few core tenets and simple building blocks. Krav maga's street and battlefield survival defenses were developed for a modern army, the Israel Defense Force (IDF), as its official self-defense and close-quarters combat system. Modern armies, law enforcement agencies, and security forces need a hand-to-hand combat system based on simplicity, adaptability, practicality, and most important, defensive, instinctive movements. These professionals need a system that can be readily honed. Krav maga fits the bill.

Krav maga is often translated as "contact combat." The meaning here is significant. Combat is a life-and-death battle devoid of rules. This is the fundamental military underpinning of the krav maga system's methods and philosophy. It also takes into account limitations that may be imposed on the defender's movements and flexibility due to equipment and weight loads, such as a duty belt, bulletproof vest, flak jacket, Kevlar helmet, or backpack. What a flexible, unencumbered mixed martial arts fighter wearing shorts may be able to accomplish in a ring is often a far cry from what a fully equipped operator or, equally important, average person may be able to accomplish in a combat zone or on the street, respectively.

In this book we continue to develop a self-defense fighting arsenal based on the green, blue, brown, and advanced-level black-belt techniques of Israeli krav maga. The techniques represented here focus on the most common violent scenarios law enforcement, security, and military personnel typically face—but civilians, on occasion, also find themselves in these dangerous encounters. These techniques derive from my translation of the Israeli Krav Maga Association (IKMA) technique guidelines. The expert insights of Sgt. Maj. Nir Maman, res., are also woven into the tactics.

The IKMA is the governing body for Israeli krav maga recognized by the Israeli government and headed by Grandmaster Haim Gidon. Haim Gidon received his eighth dan (black belt) ranking on June 5, 1996, when krav maga founder Imi Lichtenfeld also declared that ninth and tenth dans (red belt) were to come. Thus, Haim Gidon, after Imi's passing in 1998, became the highest-ranking krav maga instructor in the world, following in Imi's hallowed footsteps.

Haim introduced several key weapons technique modifications and improvements—all formally approved by krav maga founder Imi Lichtenfeld. While improving the system daily, Haim follows Imi's fundamental premise that krav maga must work for everyone, even against the most skilled adversaries—professionals. Constant enhancement, evolution, and adaptability make krav maga a most formidable fighting method. Its hallmark and genius is to teach anyone to successfully defend against deadly weapon attacks.

Krav maga's defensive philosophy is never to do more than necessary, but to react instinctively with violence of action involving speed, economy of motion, and the appropriate measure of force. The basic principle is to do whatever is practical to deliver a defender from harm's way. Instinctive trained reaction is paramount. One is taught to strike instinc-

tively at the human anatomy's vulnerabilities. The practitioner relies on being proactive, rather than reactive, as soon as possible.

The training attempts to place you in the most realistic pressure scenarios. The bottom line is to present trained instinctive solutions to defeat any threat in the most effective way possible. This includes the decisive use of lethal force when warranted. Krav maga uses the same building blocks from the simplest defenses to the most advanced techniques, including empty-handed defenses and disarming techniques against bladed weapons, firearms, and even a microexplosive—as you will soon learn.

The system stresses several adaptable core tactics, and its application is flexible in line with its modern combat evolution. Real-life encounters account for modification, revision, and the addition of new techniques. While krav maga weapons defenses are specific, their application must be adaptable to accommodate the unpredictability of a violent confrontation. Stated another way, we apply general principles but customize them to suit the needs of a given violent situation. Most important, krav maga emphasizes that there are no rules in a deadly encounter. Do whatever is necessary to overcome the threat in a life-or-death situation and *survive*.

Core tenets of each defense involve deflection-redirections, evasive footwork, and upper-body movements combined with simultaneous or near-simultaneous counter-attacks to overwhelm the assailant. Importantly, the defensive tactics are designed for multiple-assailant encounters to protect the defender, incapacitate the assailant(s), and, when necessary, commandeer the assailant's weapon for the defender's use. Krav maga instills an *attack-the-assailant mind-set*, providing the defender with an all-important preemption capability prior to a weapon's active deployment. The defender's goal is to take away the assailant's freedom of action. Of course, recognition of the warning signs of impending violence allows a defender to thwart an attack at its inception.

Israeli krav maga's stellar reputation is built on the following four pillars:

1. It emphasizes defending against any manner of attack (unarmed or armed).
2. It relies on instinctive body movements, which are honed, easily learned, retained, and performed under stress.
3. The techniques are based on building blocks that, when combined, allow the defender to prevail in life-threatening situations.
4. Defenders react with speed, economy of motion, and the appropriate measure of force.

Three Reaction-Proaction Levels

Level I: Common-sense reactions. At the common-sense novice level, your reactions to violence are still somewhat conscious. You still deliberate over your reactions, which have

not yet become instinctive. Conditioned reflexive responses are not yet a part of the novice's arsenal. Movements are not yet fluid. A counterattack is a catch-up *reaction* to attack or defensive response, not an *action* to thwart an incipient attack.

Level II: Proficient reactions. You reach this level when your subconscious assumes control and you *react* as the attack is initiated. You now respond instinctively to any threat and quickly assume control over the situation. By recognizing the attack or preparatory movements, you instinctively comprehend the threat descending on you. When confronted with danger, you automatically respond as you have practiced or visualized. You are approaching a high level of proficiency.

Level III: Instantaneous trained reactions. This expert-level *kravist* takes the initiative through preemptive action. Initiative and prescribed controlled movement take over the millisecond you recognize the threat. This allows you to seamlessly execute your thwarting action. In other words, you attack the assailant. You instantaneously recall a scenario you have mentally stored through action, practice, or visualization and explode into preemptive action without the slightest hesitation. The advanced or expert level-III *kravist* will recognize that same attack before the assailant can initiate.

Fight Timing

Essential to a successful defense is correct fight timing: using the appropriate tactic at the correct time. Preemption and fight timing are a fusion of instinct with simultaneous decision-making. You have the choice to either preempt an opponent's attack by initiating your own attack or respond to the opponent's attack, countertargeting a physical vulnerability the opponent exposes. In other words, even when skilled, an opponent when attacking leaves himself briefly open for counterattack. For example, as the opponent delivers a straight punch, he shifts his weight forward, offering you the opportunity to deliver a side kick to damage the knee of his lead leg. Fight timing is harnessing instinctive body movements while seizing or creating opportunities to defend both effectively and logically.

Fight timing, alternatively defined, is the defender's ability to capitalize on a window of opportunity offered by the adversary, or to create an opportunity to end the confrontation using whatever tactics come instinctively. Timing must be developed and sharpened with realistic training—always *krav maga's* objective. While speed is not timing, speed can deliver a decisive advantage when the defender acts more quickly than the assailant. As emphasized throughout this book, *krav maga* relies on economy of motion to eliminate wasted movement, which, in turn, improves speed.

The Best Use of This Book

This book is designed for security-conscious civilians, law enforcement officers, military personnel, and security professionals alike who wish to improve their chances of surviving an armed attack and prevailing without serious injury. The best use of this book is to practice each technique as presented. You'll find that each technique either builds upon a previous technique or compliments a technique presented later.

Again, the Israeli krav maga system relies on a few core self-defense tactics adaptable to most violent encounters. No book is a substitute for hands-on learning with a qualified Israeli krav maga expert instructor, but our goal is to impart some of the more important principles and core tactics to hone one's self-defense skills in the specific situations we cover and, by extension, other similar situations. Be sure to thoroughly vet any instructor with whom you should decide to train because *not all krav maga is the same*.

CHAPTER 1

Civilian, Law Enforcement, and Military Krav Maga Training

Responsible people pursue krav maga training as a shield against violence, *not as a weapon to orchestrate violence*. Krav maga training for civilians, law enforcement, and military personnel all share the same principle: to deliver oneself from harm's way. Importantly, the “ending” or end goal is different. The exception is when any category of defender faces a situation involving deadly force. The following table summarizes the engagement strategies with the key end-goal differentiations for civilians, law enforcement, and military:

Civilian:	Law enforcement:	Military:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• disrupt• incapacitate as necessary• disengage; call police	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• disrupt• incapacitate• subjugate and control or, if necessary, terminate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• disrupt• incapacitate or maim• terminate

As noted, the core tenets and building blocks of Israeli krav maga are taught to civilians, law enforcement, and military personnel alike. The crucial difference, again, is the “finish.” Regardless of one’s professional standing or state-granted immunity, if you are faced with a life-threatening attack, you are generally justified in using lethal counterforce. For civilians or law enforcement, three elements must be present to warrant the use of counterforce: an assailant must have the (1) intent, (2) means, and (3) capability to cause bodily harm.

In a legal use-of-force analysis, civilians may use counterforce commensurate with the amount of force used on them. (Hence the term counterforce.) For law enforcement, however, most jurisdictions allow an officer or agent to escalate the use of counterforce one level higher. When an arrest must be made, law enforcement’s goal is to use “objectively reasonable” force in taking a suspect into custody (*Graham v. Connor* 490 U.S. 386). When force is required, the goal remains the same while safeguarding both the officer and the

suspect. A deadly force encounter is just that: officers are facing down a perpetrator intent on severely injuring them or a third party.

My good friend, Sergeant First Class Mick McComb, ret., was kind enough to contribute on this matter (see appendix). Mick served twenty-five years with the New Jersey State Police. For ten years he was assigned to the NJSP Training Bureau. He is currently a federal court-accepted use-of-force expert and Israeli krav maga instructor.

For military personnel, krav maga focuses on lethal-force applications. These include the optimum offensive use of weaponry. Firearm or “hot weapon” lethal tactics, impact and edged-weapon lethal tactics, and techniques using all of your personal weapons—your limbs, head, teeth (if necessary)—are essential to professional krav maga training. Krav maga employs specific methods to strangle an enemy combatant or sever his spinal cord. We do not publish these tactics for public consumption.

There is a distinct difference between law enforcement and military krav maga training.

Not everyone understands or honors this important separation. For example, when training military police, we successfully tackle both spheres by combining elements where applicable and separating the law enforcement the military’s respective end goals. It is vitally important that readers understand their end goal and the force the state empowers them to use. An unfortunate common mistake is to substitute law enforcement techniques for military techniques. To be sure, they can overlap, but military training, when taught properly, focuses on terminating an enemy combatant.

The Professional Kravist Mind-Set When Facing a Deadly Attack

Krav maga training focuses on the realistic and brutal nature of both self-defense and hand-to-hand combat. Targeting an opponent’s vital and structural anatomy is essential to one’s counterattack tactics and strategy. Breaking an opponent’s anatomic functionality is central to hand-to-hand combat or defensive tactics in a deadly force encounter.

As is the goal with any reality-based training, you’ll learn to avoid freezing under the stress and pressure of a violent encounter. You’ll learn how to harness an instinctive and instantaneous trained reaction without thinking. You’ll defend yourself from a visceral level—however you can. The goal is to react instantaneously, without thinking.

Training prepares you for any eventuality, so when you find yourself in a dangerous position, you will know you’ve been there and done that. What follows is an autonomic response. The techniques become not second nature, but first nature. The goal is that you never waiver or contemplate the life-threatening situation. Let your training hijack the circumstances. The optimal outcome is to neutralize the threat at its very inception.

To prepare a professional to face a potential deadly force street encounter or the realities of a modern-day battlefield, krav maga’s training tactics include defending against

full-force multiple attacks with facsimile impact and edged weapons. At the same time, we practice defending against firearm threats using Simunitions® to simulate firearm discharges. Note: always wear protective equipment in full-on training, including eye protection when working with facsimile weapons. Under strictly controlled conditions, we also allow trainees to secure a live firearm to discharge it down range to prove the defense will work.

There are six different levels of awareness in Israeli krav maga:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0
Unaware	Semi-aware	Aware	Cautious	Alert	Prepared

Psychological Aspects of Violent Conflict

Violent conflict produces severe stress on the human mind, slowing down the cognitive process. Instincts will always dominate over cognitive response under stress. The limbic or primitive part of your brain (“unconscious mind”) narrows the gap between reaction and action on the action-reaction power curve and cannot be cognitively controlled. The action-reaction power curve suggests that an action will generally beat a reaction, as the defender must “catch up” to counter the attack. Reducing the reaction time from recognition to action is vital in a defensive violent encounter.

The neocortex (“conscious mind”) section of the brain is chiefly responsible for higher cognition and analysis. Paradoxically, the limbic and neocortical systems can be in competition or at odds regarding self-defense. The limbic system relies on the body’s natural self-preservation actions, while the neocortex may try to make logical sense of an action or event. This is what causes us to freeze. When under physical duress, a person may have difficulty thinking clearly because his cognitive abilities are being suppressed by the limbic brain, which has asserted control over all cerebral functions.

Hormone levels (including cortisol), when affected by high stress, impair memory. Hence we see the importance of an instinctive or conditioned self-defense response. Instinctive (re)action harnesses adrenaline. As a result, the mind reverts to three processes: freeze, flight, or fight. If freezing is not the optimum response, the limbic brain orders flight or escape. If flight is impossible, the limbic brain’s final mandate is to fight by converting fear into fury to physically confront a threat. Therefore, the self-defense and close-quarters battle (CQB) process may be understood using the following four-part process:

1. Threat recognition
2. Situation analysis
3. Choice of action
4. Action or inaction

Security professionals know well to accept the possibility of violence under any circumstances. Maintaining an overall strategy to take away your opponent's ability to harm you is paramount. If your actions require a forceful and debilitating physical response, krav maga will provide it. Remember, though, the intensity of your response will escalate to meet the threat.

Violent Conflict's Mental and Physical Stress Manifestations

It is well known that stress, when triggered in a potentially violent situation, protects the body. Mental and physical stress can produce shock. When confronting a life-threatening situation, shock can be more problematic than fear. Uncontrolled shock causes the body's homeostasis to cease, and it can no longer compensate for injuries. The body begins a shutdown procedure, which beyond a certain point becomes irreversible.

Through training, krav maga's goal is to embed in your subconscious with preparation and conditioning of the highest order. The key is to transition immediately from surprise to an assault mind-set. One must be aware of the following:

- Tunnel vision: under extreme stress, to increase blood and oxygen delivery to the eyes, one's attention may be focused primarily on the greatest threat, resulting in a temporary loss of peripheral vision.
- Auditory exclusion: one's vision takes over as the primary sense, diminishing one's hearing.
- Compression of time and space: time and space will become muddled with added difficulty in judging the interrelationship of speed and distance. Movements may appear in slow motion.

Before any violent encounter, regardless of the specific circumstances, you must adopt a winner-take-all mind-set under any and all circumstances—a no-lose, locked-on attitude. While you cannot underestimate the assailant's abilities, the assailant's abilities, paradoxically, are irrelevant—provided your intent and determination surpass the assailant's. That must be your mind-set. With superior determination combined with a honed krav maga skill set, you will have the decisive advantage. You will win. You will survive.

To help make krav maga first nature, one must also train mentally to defeat *any* threat, to know one's training and determination will prevail regardless of who or what may confront the defender. Mental assurance, combined with physical preparedness, provides a decisive advantage to triumph in a violent encounter. Of course, there is a fine distinction between confidence and overconfidence. Do not mistake the latter for the former. In short, believe your training will unleash your own violence of action that will carry the day regardless of an adversary's capabilities.

Krav Maga's Training Philosophy

Krav maga is designed around a few core tactics to counter a myriad of attacks. Defenders get tools for their toolboxes along with a general blueprint for how to use them. Imi's goal was survival in any defensible situation. While there are no set solutions for ending an armed confrontation, there are preferred methods using violence of action combined with *retzev*, or "continuous combat motion." A few mastered techniques go a long way and are highly effective against both unarmed and armed threats and attacks. The defender learns how to protect his vital points and organs. Equally important, the defender perfects how to debilitate an adversary through anatomical targeting.

Retzev teaches the defender to move instinctively in combat motion without *thinking* about the next logical move. In short, the defender launches a seamless, overwhelming counterattack using strikes, takedowns, throws, joint locks, chokes, or other offensive actions combined with evasive action. Retzev, armed or unarmed, is quick and decisive movement merging all aspects of one's krav maga training. Defensive movements transition automatically into offensive movements to neutralize the attack, leaving an adversary little or no time to react.

Retzev may be compared to a professional law enforcement or military assault. Professional military and law enforcement personnel use overwhelming violence of action and a preponderance of firepower. Criminals try to do the same. The predatory assault mind-set is ruthless and controlled; it detaches the target from human to either a target resource or target threat. Therefore, if attacked, the kravist must—within the boundaries of the law—become the most viscerally violent person present, capable of defeating any threat.

Combined with simultaneous defense and attack, *retzev* is a seamless, decisive, and overwhelming counterattack, forming the backbone of the Israeli fighting system. When defending against weapons, *retzev* is modified ("modified weapons *retzev*") because the nearside arm often controls the assailant's weapon or weapon arm. Krav maga uses *retzev* to overwhelm an assailant to complete the defense. It combines upper- and lower-body combatives, locks, chokes, throws, takedowns, and weapons interchangeably without pause.

From a professional's standpoint, violence is paradoxically both unpredictable and predictable, due to one's prior experience and training. There is one certainty regarding violence: there are none. Even with the best training, you may find yourself in a "negative five" position—which is to say initially unprepared for the fight of your life. An assailant, seeking every advantage, will try to catch you off guard.

Field experience, proper training, or both can trigger an automatic fighting response. Realistic training improves reaction capability by allowing an immediate assessment of a violent situation and triggering a corresponding stress-simulated reaction. An attack launched by surprise can force you to react from an unprepared state. Therefore, a self-defense reaction must be instinctive and reflexive. Training ingrains the appropriate

responses; whether the threat comes from an edged weapon or gun, you will already know how to react. Training puts honed instinct in control.

Visceral Counterviolence

A kravist's violent intent governs his violence of action. True self-defense or counterviolence focuses not simply on survival but rather on how to optimally injure, cripple, maim, and—if necessary and justified—kill. If you begin with the intent to injure and neutralize your opponent, a trained paroxysm of counterviolence is more likely to favorably conclude the situation. Use the closest weapon to attack the closest target. Your goal is to achieve traumatic injury in the shortest time, using the most opportune route. Target the opponent's vulnerable anatomy, damage that anatomy, continue to damage it, and capitalize on debilitating him to move on to the next anatomical target as necessary. Inflicting injury obviously affords the opportunity to impose more injury. For example, delivering a debilitating side kick to an adversary's knee usually immobilizes him, exposing him to your further onslaught. In short, a kravist's rapid infliction of successive damage, mutilation, and wounds epitomizes the optimum use of counterviolence.

Attack the Attacker: Anatomical Targeting

To stop an assailant, krav maga primarily targets the body's vital soft tissue, chiefly the groin, neck, and eyes. Other secondary targets include the kidneys, solar plexus, knees, liver, joints, fingers, nerve centers, and other smaller, fragile bones. The professional immediately recognizes that an assailant might also target these same targets and, accordingly, takes measures to protect his own vital anatomy. A protective posture or stance is integral to krav maga training. In addition, krav maga teaches you to disarm assailants and, if necessary, turn the weapon against them. The system differs from other systems that may rely primarily on targeting difficult-to-locate nerve centers.

Forging an awareness of your own personal weapons and an adversary's vulnerabilities is essential to fight strategy and tactics, especially when he is armed and you are not. There are no rules in a fight, particularly in the life-or-death struggle of combat. This lack of rules distinguishes the system from sport fighting.

Krav maga, initially developed as a military fighting discipline, employs lethal-force techniques. Lethal force may involve crushing the skull, cutting off an aggressor's oxygen supply or blood flow, severing the spine or major arteries, or stopping or penetrating the heart, along with several other slower-acting methods of inflicting trauma. Founder Imi Lichtenfeld was resolute that these techniques remain confined to military and professional security circles. While these techniques are integrated at the highest levels of the IKMA curriculum, trainees who are exposed to them are highly vetted.

A key to krav maga—especially for law enforcement, security, and military professionals, along with legally armed citizens—is understanding weapon deployment and the capabilities of different categories of weapons. Those categories include *personal* (hands, forearms, elbows, knees, shins, feet, and head), *cold* (impact and edged weapons, plus firearms used as impact weapons), and *hot* (firearms). Another key is making a seamless transition from one weapon type to another.

In both defending and attacking, recognizing the human anatomy’s vulnerabilities is essential to fight strategy and tactics. The human body is amazingly resilient. Therefore, an adversary may only be stopped when his offensive capabilities are put out of commission by nonlethal concussive force, joint dislocations, bone breaks, or cutting off the blood supply to the brain, resulting in unconsciousness. If necessary, krav maga also employs chokes and “blood” chokes to render an adversary unconscious or worse.

From a professional standpoint, even when an attacker is shot with a large-caliber round, it is well documented that he or she may continue to fight. Therefore, the defender must not let down his guard or cease defensive actions until the threat is neutralized. Medical research in one study indicates that 64 percent of those who were shot and received wounds to the chest and abdomen continued to fight for more than five minutes after being wounded. Moreover, 36 percent of those who sustained wounds to the head and neck continued to function for more than five minutes, some still capable of continuing violent offensive actions.¹ These facts have been historically borne out when, in self-defense, Israeli security forces have shot terrorists who nevertheless continued to attack.

A wounded terrorist can continue an attack even when shot multiple times, and this was underscored during an attack in Jerusalem on October 13, 2015. A terrorist rammed his car into a number of civilians waiting at a bus stop. The terrorist exited his vehicle and continued his attack with a meat cleaver, killing an Israeli citizen. A security guard who witnessed the attack closed on the terrorist and shot the terrorist multiple times at close range. The terrorist continued to struggle and attempted to continue his attack nearly thirty seconds after being shot repeatedly at close range.

This type of terrorist attack with an edged weapon (and with firearms) is, unfortunately, a regular occurrence in Israel. The lessons learned remain the same when dealing with wounded attackers who will continue their deadly onslaught until physically shut down. Hence, the Israeli security forces have a standard operating procedure when neutralizing terrorists. Note: knowing when to cease fire is specific to every incident and not a clear cut or easy decision to make. The subject matter is not within the scope of this book (see footnote 1 for a insightful analysis and recommended reading).

¹ Law Enforcement Executive Forum, 2014, 14(2). Police Officer Reaction Time to Start and Stop Shooting: The Influence of Decision Making and Pattern Recognition by William J. Lewinski, William B. Hudson, Jennifer L Dyster-theft citing research from Adams et al., 2009; Levy & Rao, 1988; Newgard, 1992, Spitz, Petty, & Fisher, 1961.

With proper body positioning, an adversary on the ground can be pummeled severely while giving him little defensive recourse. Logically, in both standing and ground fights, it becomes difficult for an adversary to fight effectively if his hands or limbs are broken, and rendering an adversary unconscious quickly ends a fight. Every type of lock requires moving the joint against its natural articulation with breaking pressure. While we teach certain core arm dislocation positions, once you have an understanding of the biomechanics, you can apply the principles to many situations. This is especially important in the fluidity of a fight. Optimally, you will use the entire force and weight of your body to apply pressure against an adversary's joint. This is the key principle to joint locks. Remember that a joint lock, however decisive and quick, still ties you up momentarily, exposing you to a second adversary—or multiple adversaries—attacking you.

Remember, standing, clinched, or on the ground, krav maga is designed for everyone. A smaller opponent can defeat a larger, stronger, and perhaps more athletic opponent. A well-trained kravist will possess core training in all three combat phases. In a rapidly unfolding fighting chess match, the best way to defend against an offensive technique is to know the offensive technique. Knowing an array of techniques solidifies your ability at an advanced level.

Twenty-Four Vulnerable Targets

In krav maga, you learn to avoid hard skeletal bones such as the back of the head and rib cage, and focus your efforts on easy-to-strike soft tissues. Good targets include the following:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Temples | 13. Solar plexus |
| 2. Eyes | 14. Elbows |
| 3. Ears | 15. Ribs |
| 4. Nose | 16. Liver |
| 5. Chin and jaw | 17. Spleen |
| 6. Throat (specifically the windpipe) | 18. Back and kidneys |
| 7. Sides, back, and hollow of the neck | 19. Stomach |
| 8. Base of the skull | 20. Testicles |
| 9. Base of the neck | 21. Thighs |
| 10. The spinal column | 22. Knees |
| 11. Clavicles | 23. Ankles |
| 12. Fingers | 24. Top of the foot |

Pain may stop some assailants, but others have enormous pain thresholds. Therefore, an opponent may only be decisively stopped when his offensive capabilities are put out of commission by joint dislocations, bone breaks, or by cutting off the oxygen or blood supply to the brain, resulting in unconsciousness.

Injuring versus Hurting

Spinal reflexes govern the body's physical reaction to damage. While physically resilient, the human body is affected by structural injury in a somewhat predictable manner. Therefore, a kravist can generally predict how his counterattacks will affect the assailant's subsequent movements or capabilities. Strategically, inflicting a first-salvo injury against an adversary opens the door to unleash subsequent injurious counterattacks. As another example, when an attacker is hit in the face, usually his head will jolt backward, exposing his throat and neck to attack while also forcing his pelvis forward to expose his groin for further attack. As emphasized, the optimum way to end a violent conflict is to injure the opponent rapidly and repeatedly as necessary.

Deadly, concerted, one-on-one, up-close-and-personal violence usually lasts no more than a few seconds. Adopting a simple survival mind-set is inadequate; you must not get seriously injured or maimed. One usually does not cleanly win a violent hand-to-hand combat encounter. One survives it, subject to an injury scale. Krav maga, at its core, does not reflect "fighting" prowess so much as the ability to damage the adversary. In a fight, experienced combatants understand that specific defensive tactics rarely work or are applied. Rather, it is your offensive capabilities that are paramount. A well-timed, decisive preemptive attack creating anatomical damage, followed by additional combatives, usually prevails. In other words, the victor is whichever fighter first successfully exploits an anatomical vulnerability of his opponent with a well-placed debilitating combative and, then, continues to serially injure the opponent through *retzev* continuous combat motion.

Importantly, it is an ambush situation, or the negative five, where a specific defensive tactic designed to counter a particular threat or attack may be successfully employed. In other words, by necessity, the ambushed defensive party reacts first defensively and then, as soon as possible, transitions to the counterattack. Conversely, when engaged in mutual combat, offensive capabilities take priority and come to the fore. The one who first imposes a debilitating injury and then follows through with additional combatives is usually the one who prevails. An analogy might be a well-placed bullet from a semiautomatic weapon followed by that weapon's then going fully automatic to finish the threat. When facing a potential lethal encounter, every counterviolent act should focus on inflicting injury or damage to render the aggressor incapable of further aggression.

When there is no choice but to use counterviolence, a professional kravist is compelled to maim, cripple, or—provided the circumstances are legally justifiable—kill an assailant

by, say, breaking bones, disabling ligaments, or destroying an eyeball. In short, and in an animalistic sense, inflicting terrible, debilitating wounds on an adversary—maiming an assailant—balances power in the kravist’s favor.

It is axiomatic that the party who significantly damages the other party first usually prevails if he presses the counterattack home to neutralize the threat. Once again, there is no pity or humanity in visceral self-defense or hand-to-hand combat, *provided* the ends justify the means in the correct use of force. Survivors do not waver in believing they will impose their will on an aggressor to alter the outcome.

Legal Considerations

However and wherever krav maga self-defense might be used, it must be legally justifiable. For anyone acting outside of law enforcement or military duties, counterforce must be commensurate (including one level above) with the threat and meet an “objectively reasonable” standard for the given circumstances. Those employing self-defense will need to articulate why they had no choice when faced with a threat who demonstrated all of the following:

- Intent (stated or evident goal of harming you)
- Capability (prowess or tools to harm you)
- Opportunity (proximity)

If any of the above three criteria is absent or becomes absent—or if you could avoid the threat altogether—you are no longer acting in self-defense. While this book focuses on professional krav maga applications, they must always be used for the right reason—self-defense with the appropriate level of counterforce. The following table serves as a summary and reference for the Israeli krav maga system’s philosophy, tactics, and strategy:

The Professional Krav Maga Four Pillars Tactical Grid©

Deliver simultaneous defense and attack.

Combine your defense and offense into one complete strategy. Do whatever is necessary to overcome a dangerous threat.

Focus on vulnerable soft tissue and anatomy.

Counterattack the vulnerable areas of your adversary’s body, including the groin, eyes, and throat.

Act with retzev, or continuous combat motion.

Move fast, continuously, seamlessly, and determinedly—when necessary, attacking with extreme prejudice, giving the assailant no time to react.

Master a few instinctive tactics.

Learn a few core tactics and use them instinctively to prevail in a myriad of situations.

The Israeli Krav Maga Advantage

The key is your mind-set: to neutralize an opponent quickly and decisively. In fighting sports, the following tactics are generally banned: eye gouges, throat strikes, head butting, biting, hair pulling, clawing, pinching or twisting of the flesh, striking the spine and the back of the head, striking with the tip of the elbow, small-joint manipulation, kidney and liver strikes, clavicle strikes, kneeling or kicking the head of an opponent on the ground, and slamming an opponent to the ground on his head. These are exactly the combined core tactics krav maga emphasizes.

Operators may have different strengths and capabilities. Some may be strong punchers, while others excel with infighting, throwing, or takedowns. The krav maga system is designed to best conform to defenders. A defender does not have to compromise his capabilities to conform to any set solutions or prescribed movements. To adopt and streamline the krav maga method, you must personalize the techniques and make them your own. This begins conceptually and ends tactically. Choose the ballistic strikes and other combatives you feel most comfortable with and that give you the greatest confidence.

Krav Maga's Core Tenets

Make attacking the assailant instinctive. Target the assailant's anatomical vulnerabilities.

Train defense as simultaneous offense. Combine your defense and offense into one complete strategy.

Practice continuous combat motion. Krav maga emphasizes *retzev*, a Hebrew word that means "continuous motion." Combine and synchronize counterattack combatives in a logical way to overwhelm the assailant, giving your opponent little or no time to either react or recover.

Understand the difference between *retzev* and a mere series of counterattacks. A series of counterattacks lacks continuity; your counterviolence will not flow instinctively. *Retzev* enables your body to move instinctively—without thinking about your next move—in combat motion to exploit your assailant's vulnerabilities.

Take decisive action. Take him out.

Eliminate fighting inhibitions. Do whatever is necessary to overcome a dangerous threat. Damage—as opposed to hurt—your assailant.

Master a few effective tactics. Learn a few core defensive movements and counterattacks.

Make your training as real as possible. Training must attempt to simulate a real attack for you to understand the speed, ferocity, and strength a determined assailant may direct at you.

Visualize and plan scenarios. In addition to training with a partner, you can also use your mind to train your body to automatically and instinctively react to danger.

Krav Maga Tactical Positioning

Footwork and body positioning, whether standing or prone, allow you to simultaneously defend and attack, leading to seamless combative transitions essential to *retzev*. The key to evasion is moving out of the “line of fire” or the path of an opponent’s offensive combatives. Clearly, positioning yourself where you can counterattack your opponent more easily than he can attack you is most advantageous. It is self-evident that fight positioning determines your tactical advantage. Optimally, a skilled krav maga fighter will move quickly to a superior and dominant position relative to his opponent, known in krav maga parlance as the *deadside*.

The *deadside* often provides you with a decisive tactical advantage. This strategy should revolve around your capabilities and preferred tactics involving long, medium, and short combatives combined with evasive maneuvers. Positioning becomes even more important when facing multiple assailants. Once superior position is achieved, the opponent will have minimal ability to defend or to counter your *retzev* attack. Remember, *retzev*, because it uses all parts of your body and incorporates multiple facets of fighting, provides an overwhelming counterattack.

When facing multiple assailants, you must only engage one at a time, using optimum combatives and movement while putting that opponent between you and any others. Inexperienced assailants will fortunately group together. If the student uses correct tactical positioning (never between two assailants), he limits the assailants’ abilities to harm him. There is a limitation on how many assailants can occupy the same space to get at you. In select circumstances, you may have to go through them. (Krav maga has techniques for this.)

Reacting to an Ambush

Reacting from surprise allows the use of more force because you do not have time to rationally or reasonably analyze the situation. In other words, you are reacting defensively and catching up necessarily within fractions of a second to calibrate your response. Again, krav maga’s goal is to have you react instantaneously without thinking. To reiterate, the overriding essence of krav maga is to neutralize an assailant immediately. The moment you are deemed safe, any additional defensive actions may, in fact, become offensive actions. If you continue to injure an assailant who is no longer a threat, you could face civil and criminal charges—especially if you deliberately turn the assailant’s weapon on him.

Five Elements of an Ambush

1. Ambush victims are usually distracted, complacent, outnumbered, or caught in a state of maximum unpreparedness (negative five).
2. Victims' chances of escape are minimized or nonexistent since the assailant has chosen the site and circumstances.
3. Assailants often act from some sort of concealment or close in on their unwitting victims.
4. Assailants give themselves a way to escape.
5. Assailants have the intent—and usually the capability—to dominate their victims.

Seeing an Attack

Blind spots inhibit human vision. Therefore, a low-line kick or uppercut-type strike may come in under the visual radar. Human vision is also limited in judging the speed from an attack coming straight on and recognizing the speed of something traveling against a static background. Therefore, tactically, straight attacks are more difficult to recognize and defend. Oblong attacks such as hooks and roundhouse kicks are, accordingly, more recognizable. In addition, these looping types of attacks, by their nature, have to travel roughly three times the distance of a linear attack.

Trained fighters look for the mental commitment and corresponding physical manifestations such as blood draining from the face, increased breathing, and a subtle weight shift forward before the actual physical attack. While pupil dilation and constriction can indicate an impending attack, an experienced fighter may attack you without these phenomena, precisely because he has done it before and it has become second nature. One strong indicator is a head-to-toe slight shudder as adrenaline pours into his system. If he contracts his frame rather than expanding it, you may be dealing with a trained fighter coiling to spring into action.

Importantly, it is widely accepted that roughly eighty-five percent or more of the world's population is right handed and, therefore, right-side dominant. The majority of attacks are likely to be initiated by an attacker using his right arm. Nevertheless, it is crucial to train against all contingencies, including attacks initiated with the left hand. A skilled fighter will use all of his limbs in various combinations and may change his stance repeatedly to gain an advantage. Yet, the majority of unskilled or semiskilled attackers will initiate from their strong side. When training, we suggest taking this consideration into account. This can become especially important when closing on someone to put him into dominant control by controlling his favored arm.

The Language of Krav Maga

Throughout *Krav Maga Professional Tactics*, the following terms will appear frequently. Once you understand the language of krav maga, you can better understand the method.

Cavalier: A wrist takedown forcing an adversary's wrist to move against its natural range of motion, usually combined with tai-sabaki for added power.

Cold weapons: Blunt and edged weapons.

Combative: Any manner of strike, takedown, throw, joint lock, choke, or other offensive fighting movement.

Deadside: Your adversary's deadside, in contrast to his liveside, places you behind his near shoulder or facing his back. You are in an advantageous position to counterattack and control him because it is difficult for him to use his arm and leg farthest away from you to attack you. You should always move to the deadside when possible. When executed properly, this will also place the adversary between you and any third-party threat.

Elbow kiss: When securing an edged weapon or firearm held by an assailant and pinning it against his body, the defender moves to the assailant's deadside, creating an angle between the defender's arm and assailant's arm where the tips of their elbows touch or "kiss." The defender's forearm and assailant's gun arm create a "V" by the underside of the defender's forearm pressing against the topside of the assailant's forearm.

Figure four: A control hold securing an adversary's arm, torso, or ankle to exert pressure. The hold is performed by using both of your arms on the joint of the wrist, shoulder, or tendon of an adversary. For example, say you have secured your adversary's right wrist (his elbow is pointed toward the ground) with your right hand placed on the flat of his right hand, bending his wrist inward, with his elbow (tip toward the ground) pinned to your chest. At the same time, you simultaneously slip your other arm over the top of his forearm to interlock his arm and grab your own forearm. This positional arm control may also be used to attack the Achilles tendon with the blade of your forearm or control an adversary's torso from the rear mount. A figure four may also be applied to an adversary's torso by hooking one leg across the torso and securing it in the crook of the other knee.

Glich: A sliding movement on the balls of your feet to carry your entire body weight forward and through a combative strike to maximize its impact.

Green zone: Major muscle groups of the limbs. Green-zone strikes are designed to distract and provide a temporary debilitating effect.

Gunt: Angled elbow block defense.

Hot weapons: Firearms.

Inside defense: An inside defense defends against an inside or straight attack. This type of attack involves a thrusting motion such as jabbing your finger into someone's eye or punching someone in the nose.

Kravist: A term I coined to describe a smart and prepared krav maga fighter.

Left outlet stance: Blade your body by turning your feet approximately 30 degrees to your right, with your left arm and left leg forward. (You can also turn 30 degrees to your right to come into a right regular outlet stance so that your right leg and arm are forward.) One may modify the stance for comfort's sake, perhaps by angling the rear foot at more than 30 degrees or in whatever way allows for quickest movement. Rest on both balls of your feet in a comfortable and balanced position. Your feet should be parallel, with about 55 percent of your weight distributed over your front leg. Your arms are positioned in front of your face and bent slightly forward at approximately a 60-degree angle between your forearms and your upper arms. From this stance, you will move forward, laterally, and backward, moving your feet in concert.

Liveside: When you are in front of your adversary and your adversary can both see you and use all four arms and legs against you, you are facing his or her liveside.

Nearside: Your adversary's limb closest to your torso.

Negative five: You are caught unaware and at a complete disadvantage. The assailant has the advantage of surprise and positioning.

Off angle: An attack angle that is not face to face.

Inoperable weapon: This occurs when a live round is partially lodged and improperly secured in the firing chamber of a firearm that loads automatically.

Outside defense: An outside defense counters an outside attack, that is, an attack directed at you from the outside of your body to the inside. A slap to the face or hook punch are examples of outside attacks.

Personal weapons: Hands, feet, elbows, knees, body limbs, head, and teeth.

Retzev: A Hebrew word that means "continuous motion" in combat. Retzev, the backbone of modern Israeli krav maga, teaches you to move your body instinctively in combat motion without thinking about your next move. When in a dangerous situation, you'll automatically call upon your physical and mental training to launch a seamless, overwhelming counterattack using strikes, takedowns, throws, joint locks, chokes, or other offensive actions combined with evasive action. Retzev is quick and decisive movement, merging all aspects of your krav maga training. Defensive movements transition automatically into offensive movements to neutralize the attack, affording your adversary little time to react.

Same side: Your same-side arm or leg faces your adversary when you are positioned opposite one another. For example, if you are directly facing your adversary and your right side is opposite your adversary's left side, your same-side arm is your right arm (opposite his left arm).

Secoul: A larger step than glichá, covering more distance to carry your entire body weight forward and through a combative strike to maximize its impact.

Stepping off the line: Using footwork and body movement to take evasive action against a linear attack such as a straight punch or kick. Such movement is also referred to as **breaking the angle of attack**.

Red zone: The head, spine, vital organs, and groin. Red-zone strikes are designed to shock the attacker's central nervous system and stop his movements.

Tai-sabaki: A 180-degree or semicircle step by rotating one leg back to create torque on a joint to complete a takedown or control hold.

Trapping: Occurs when you pin or grab the adversary's arms with one arm leaving you free to continue combatives with your other arm.

CHAPTER 2

Defending the Most Common Upper-Body and Lower-Body Attacks, Throws, and Counterthrows

Footwork and body positioning combined with timing, whether standing or prone, allow you to simultaneously defend and attack, leading to seamless combative transitions essential to *retzev*. The key to evasion is moving out of the “line of fire,” or the path of an opponent’s attack. In defending an assault or threat, *krav maga*’s essential philosophy is for the defender to close the distance and neutralize the threat. Clearly, positioning yourself where you can counterattack your opponent more easily than he can attack you is most advantageous.

Optimally, the distance between the defender and the assailant can be closed before the assailant can

1. orchestrate the assault to debilitate the adversary with strong combatives,
2. deny the assailant access to any weapon, and
3. achieve dominant control.

If a weapon is successfully deployed and put into action, closing the distance allows the defender to either deflect-redirect or parry the weapon in conjunction with body defenses while delivering withering counterattacks.

Most advantageously, a *kravist* will automatically move quickly to a superior and dominant position relative to his adversary, known in *krav maga* parlance as the *deadside*. Achieving *deadside* positioning often provides a decisive tactical advantage, especially when the defender can deploy a cold or hot weapon in addition to his personal weapons. Your finishing strategy should revolve around your capabilities and preferred tactics involving long, medium, and short combatives combined with evasive maneuvers and weapon deployment. Positioning becomes even more important when facing multiple adversaries.

Straight-Punch Defenses

As emphasized, krav maga combines, whenever possible, a deflection with a body defense to avoid an attack (including those with a weapon) and uses retzev counterattacks to neutralize the threat. Your defensive hand used to deflect the strike should always lead your body. In other words, your arm deflection should precede the rest of your body's defensive movement by fractions of a second. This gets you out of the line of fire or "off the line" to provide a double layer of protection, redirecting a threat while at the same moment moving yourself away from the threat. The following are select defenses and combinations.

Note: there are terminal applications of force not represented here. We train military units in these techniques and will only do so in person. Please contact us at david@israeli.krav.com for more information.

Sliding Parry with Eye Strike

This defense allows you to deflect an incoming rear punch or cross while delivering a nearly simultaneous same-side eye strike.



Parry the strike with your palm heel or lower forearm. *Attack* the assailant's incoming arm with your deflection.



Use your same-side arm to immediately strike the assailant's eyes. It is an "opener" for you to continue *retzev* combatives.

Sliding Parry While Stepping Off the Line

This defense allows you to deflect an incoming rear punch or cross while simultaneously moving slightly away from the punch as you deliver your own counterattack strike to the throat, chin, nose, midsection, or groin. Note that this defense and the following related defenses enable a defender to use the same defense (albeit with opposite movements) against a straight punch to close on the assailant and neutralize the threat. Your hand leads your body defense to redirect the adversary's punch by sliding down your adversary's right arm while your right arm delivers a half-roundhouse counterpunch to the throat, chin, or nose.



Defending from your left outlet stance.



Step to your left while bringing your left cupped hand diagonally across your face close to your right shoulder. The key is to deflect and step off the line, moving both feet together while simultaneously counterpunching. Do not lunge; keep your feet equidistant by moving them the same distance. You may also punch low to the assailant's body, targeting his liver, or deliver a hand strike to his groin. (These last two counterstrikes are useful if an assailant has a height advantage and you cannot readily reach his head to counterattack.)



This defense is readily followed up with trapping the adversary's right arm and placing him in a standing triangle "blood choke." Be sure to secure his right shoulder tightly against his right carotid artery while using the radial bone of your right arm against his left carotid artery. You could also drop him to the ground with an *osoto-gari* type of takedown.

Modified Standing Triangle Choke

Slip your counterpunch arm around the assailant's neck, placing your biceps against one side of the main arteries. These arteries, the common right and left carotids, carry blood to the brain through the carotid sheath. Trapping the assailant's shoulder against the other side of the main arteries, clamp down in a figure four to execute a blood choke. Lastly, a number of strong takedowns are available from this triangular choke position, including taking the assailant down into formidable choke positions on the ground. In addition, there are number of devastating throws one may use to break the assailant from the modified triangle hold.

Notes:

1. For the sliding parry defense, if you misread the assailant's straight punch—for instance, he throws a left punch instead of a right—stepping off the line properly will still allow the defense to work. You will have avoided the punch with a body defense (stepping off the line of attack) while counterattacking. In essence, you will “split” the assailant's hands with your counterpunch. The immediate danger is that you are still to your adversary's liveside: he still may have the ability to mount an effective counterattack. *The preferred defense is always to move to his deadside, minimizing his ability to counterattack.*
2. The inside sliding-parry defenses can be used when the defender is on the ground and slightly on his side. The assailant is braced against your topside shin with your other heel on his leg or hip to keep him at bay (sometimes known as the modified “Z guard”). The key is a strong body defense moving away or deadside to the punch with a proper slide and simultaneous counterpunch into a choke hold. Be sure to slide fully up his attacking arm as you simultaneously counterstrike using an eye rake or punch. This will set up additional combatives, including (but not limited to) a short hook to the head or throat, and also position you on your side for a straight armbar.
3. These sliding defenses may also be used with great effect against outside sucker punches if the assailant is slightly in front of you. The finishes can be the same as described previously. Timing—as with all defenses—is crucial. You must step out of the line of attack in time to deflect and counterpunch.

Two-Handed Sliding Parry with Knee Counterattack

This is a devastating counterattack using a two-handed deflection and body defense combined with a knee counterattack to the assailant's groin or midsection.



Defend from the left outlet stance.



Use both arms to deflect the adversary's incoming straight right punch. Turn both of your arms so that the forearms are facing in the same direction with your hands slightly cupped, palms down. This allows for a strong sliding deflection against the outside of your adversary's right arm. You must again step off the line to your left. As you step, propel your knee with your body weight behind it into your adversary's groin or midsection with a modified roundhouse knee.



Follow up with an over-the-top elbow, slamming down on the back of your adversary's neck combined with additional retzev combatives.

Note: you may also use a variation of this defense if your assailant attempts to “sucker punch” you and you are both facing the same direction. Once again you must step off the line and with a double forearm parry to deliver a powerful roundhouse knee to his midsection.

Inside “L” Parry against a Straight Rear Punch While Stepping Off the Line into Irimi Strike and Hanging Choke

This defense, similar to the inside sliding parry, allows you to deflect an incoming straight right punch from either side while simultaneously moving away from the punch, trapping your adversary’s arm, and delivering an *irimi* strike into a hanging choke hold position. The parrying movement covers no more than six inches and will lead the defensive body movement. It is important to note that this is not an uncontrolled swipe or grab at the assailant’s incoming arm (a common mistake when first learning the technique). The length of the defensive arm from the pinky to the elbow is used to deflect any change in the height of the adversary’s strike. The movement rotates the left wrist outward so your left thumb, which is kept alongside the palm with all the fingers pointing up, turns away from you as contact is made with the adversary’s arm to redirect his incoming strike.



Defend from the left outlet stance.



Using proper footwork, move off the line, leading the body defense with your left parry.



After parrying, hook the assailant's arm by cupping your left hand and pinning down the arm against the assailant's torso while delivering a counterpunch to the throat or jaw.



Once you have stunned the assailant, bend your elbow slightly and extend your forearm (using the radius) to deliver an irimi clothesline combative into a standing choke facilitated by "popping" the opponent's back forward with your left arm. Note: you may omit the initial strike and deliver the irimi strike right away. Keep your striking arm slightly bent to prevent your elbow from hyperextending. Strike the opponent's throat and then step through for the choke.



Maintaining tight control, step around the opponent and secure his neck in the crook of your arm. Cinch the choke and thrust your hips into the assailant, lifting him from the ground and loading your hips properly. *These hanging technique variations are only to be used in a life-and-death situation.*

Note: this defense is also used against a straight stab with an elongated weapon.

Hook-Punch Defenses

Hook-Punch Defense into Control #6

This technique demonstrates the instinctive nature of krav maga by harnessing one's natural response of flinching and "swatting" away an incoming attack. Importantly, however, you are not swatting away his incoming arm as much as attacking it with an outside chopping movement.



Defending from an interview, de-escalation, or when caught in the negative five.



Block and attack his incoming punch with the underside (ulnar bone) of your nearside arm against the assailant's incoming strike as you simultaneously step off the line of attack while punching to the assailant's jaw or windpipe. This combative must be justified, as it has the potential to seriously injure an adversary.



Secure his attacking arm at the wrist while delivering a straight knee to the thigh (green zone) or, if necessary, to the groin (red zone). See below.



Seize control of the assailant's arm by the right wrist. With your free arm, slam the top of your forearm (radial bone) into the crook of the assailant's elbow to fold it, allowing a Control #6 (*kimura* lock).



Wrench his shoulder both forward and up to assert dominant control for a controlled descent to the ground. Be sure to keep the assailant's shoulder and torso pressed to your body to assert dominant control.



Forcefully slide the assailant to the ground to your two o'clock (to prevent him from rolling or resisting). If appropriate, apply restraints.

“Instinctive” Hook-Punch Double-Block Defense

This technique demonstrates once again the instinctive nature of krav maga by harnessing one's natural response of flinching or placing two arms up to shield the upper body.



Defend from an interview or de-escalation position, or when caught in the negative five. Simultaneously intercept the punch with both arms bent about 60 degrees, making contact with the underside of your arms (ulnar bones) against the assailant's incoming strike.



Immediately use a chop to the carotid sheath. Follow up with additional combatives, including a straight knee to the thigh (green zone) or, if necessary, (not depicted) to the groin (red zone).



Seize control of the assailant's arm by the right wrist. With your free arm, slam the top of your forearm (radial bone) into the crook of the assailant's elbow to fold it, allowing a Control #6 (kimura lock).



Be sure to keep the assailant's shoulder and torso pressed to your body to assert dominant control. You have the option of sliding the assailant to the ground at your two o'clock (to prevent him from rolling or resisting) and then applying restraints. See Hook-Punch Defense into Control #6.

Hook-Punch Defense with Face Control into Choke

This technique demonstrates the continuous combat flow of krav maga by defending one of the most common attacks, a hook punch.



From your left outlet stance, move off the line of attack as you execute a 360 rotational outside block and counterpunch.



Simultaneously parry and attack using a straight punch, web strike to the throat (using the web of the hand to strike the Adam's apple), palm heel, or other option. Maintain contact with your parrying arm and force the arm down while using your free hand to cross-face him with your fingers in his nearside eye.



Continue to apply pressure to his face as you maneuver to take his back.



Execute the choke. Other follow-up options include ripping and tearing the assailant's face. You may also clinch the face from the rear to sprawl your adversary backward with the option of a knee to the base of the skull or spine.