

KRAV MAGA

FUNDAMENTAL STRATEGIES



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THE CONTACT COMBAT SYSTEM OF THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES

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Foreword: Col. Corey L. Britcher

As a martial artist for over thirty years and a Law Enforcement Defensive Tactics Instructor, I am constantly looking for that program that will take my officers to the next level. When I was promoted to colonel and took the helm of the Bureau of Law Enforcement, one of my first priorities was to revamp our program. At that time, approximately 99 percent of our use-of-force incidents were hands-on with a violator, and many times the officer ended up getting injured. Upon closer examination, officers were reacting to an attack with a simple defense and then waiting for the next attack. Additionally, the tactics were difficult and, without constant practice, needed to be retaught every year. There had to be a better way.

I had always been impressed with krav maga but never had the opportunity to train in the system. Upon learning that there was a Police Krav Maga® program, I immediately set out to find out about it. Enter David Kahn. When I reached out to him, he explained the program and offered to come to Pennsylvania and run a course. That was in 2014. Now, as a Level-2 Police Krav Maga and Civilian Krav Maga instructor, I am hooked on the program. Not only are the techniques effective, efficient, and easy to retain, the kravist mind-set is also something that is missing in most law enforcement programs. The concept of (use-of-force compliant) *retzev* turns an officer with basic skills into a winner. This mind-set allows the defender to overwhelm the attacker and successfully take the individual into custody while limiting the risk for injury to all parties.

I cannot say enough about the level of instruction that David Kahn offers, the krav maga system, and the information within this book. *Krav Maga Fundamental Strategies* is a must-read for any dedicated kravist.

Col. Corey L. Britcher, Ret.
Director Pennsylvania Bureau of Law Enforcement
Fish & Boat Commission

Foreword: Paul Karleen

Why a book on krav maga strategies? To answer that I need to begin with a few personal reflections. For a number of reasons, nearly a decade ago I sensed the need to acquire some skills to enhance my own physical safety and that of my family. The online information I found about Israeli Krav Maga as taught in a nearby facility intrigued me. So, I signed up, not knowing the impact this would have on my life. As I got more and more into training under the superb instruction of David Kahn, I learned quickly that I would be improving my physical conditioning. And I felt a new sense of empowerment at being able to execute techniques as I practiced with my partners. But, most importantly, new ways of thinking gradually started to come in alongside increased technical proficiency: I started to acquire an ability to assess what was going on around me wherever I found myself—in a store, in a parking lot, in a crowd at a ball game, or simply walking in our neighborhood—and envisioning what I would do if danger came my way. “How would I respond if those three people suddenly jumped me?” “What would I do if that guy over there was armed and hostile?” “Would a kick be the best tool?” “How many punches could I land?” “What if he’s had some self-defense training?” “Maybe I should just retreat.” I was connecting my everyday situations to the techniques I was honing. I was planning.

No one reading this book should miss the fact that Israeli Krav Maga was born from real-life, deadly situations in Eastern Europe and refined in the struggles of what was at that time the young modern state of Israel. As someone who has recently been in that country, I can attest to the presence of a constant condition of alertness that is still there. The nation has both the tools to defend itself and plans that will enable it to survive. Grandmaster Haim Gidon’s krav maga carries in its history and philosophy the key components of 1) physical techniques and 2) the ability to apply these techniques successfully to situations. In a real sense, Israeli Krav Maga provides a metaphor for survival in life: be prepared the best you can for what can happen and be equipped to face those challenges.

David Kahn, as a lifelong student of Grandmaster Gidon, long ago established himself through teaching and writing as a highly effective teacher of techniques and one of the world’s premier exponents of krav maga. In recent years, David has turned his attention to identifying the features of street violence situations and how Israeli Krav Maga can best be used to meet threats and attacks effectively. In this book, we have the results of his thinking—a viable set of strategies for krav maga (and, indeed, for any systematic approaches to unarmed self-defense) that will enable you to assess, plan, and envision your responses to situations. They constitute David’s latest and best insights into the problem of “What would I do if ... ?” These strategies match techniques to real-life situations and are the icing on the krav maga cake.

This is a book about *thinking* as embedded in the IKMA curriculum, and particularly *thinking the right way*, so that you are kept from harm. As Shakespeare put it, “All things are ready, if our mind be so.”¹ Successful self-defense comes from both physical training (techniques) and mental training (strategic thinking). These chapters are designed to sharpen your mental approach to self-defense. Learning effective techniques is important; being able to use them effectively *at the right time* is just as important. Techniques alone won’t carry the day—you have to train for the situations where they are needed.

The preceding book in this series was *Krav Maga Combatives: Maximum Effect*. That volume stressed that successful unarmed defense is centered on choosing the best technique and then executing it properly—in such a way that the attacker is repelled, and you are kept safe as you carry out the technique. This book on strategy now takes us a step further: we have to be able to use the most effective technique *for a particular situation*. To do this well means that we have thought *ahead of time* about what we would do in a situation and have *built that into our physical training*. This means that I have to train in such a way that I mentally anticipate being ambushed when I am walking through a crowded parking lot, or expect that a single attacker may very well be accompanied by one or more friends, or that, if someone tries to stab me, he is likely to come at me over and over.

Look up “strategy” in a dictionary and you’ll find that one of its synonyms is “preparation.” Wise Benjamin Franklin once said, “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” I definitely do not want to fail when confronted with a situation where I can be injured or even killed. But preparation in this volume is primarily in our heads as we ask ourselves, “What will it take for me to be ready for an ambush, for multiple attackers, for a sucker punch, for someone who tries to take me to the ground . . . ?” and on and on. There is not much detail in this book about the features of the techniques themselves. Instead, we assume that you already know techniques or are in the process of learning them. Here we want you to learn to apply them in particular situations. In krav maga training, we prepare initially through practicing techniques. But we don’t start thinking about how and where we will use them until after we have acquired a certain degree of physical proficiency. This book will help to get you to that level—*the how and where*.

Thinking strategically means that I calculate the likelihood that something bad can happen to me. This is not pessimism, but realism, especially in the day in which we live. Thinking strategically is the opposite of having my head buried in the sand. As corrections officer and martial artist Rory Miller has said about strategy, “Here’s a rule of life: You don’t get to pick what bad things happen to you.”² If I anticipate the worst and prepare for it, I will have no difficulty in coming out on top in a situation of lesser gravity.

Effective strategic krav maga thinking comes from two acquired skills:

1. William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act IV, Scene 3.

2. Rory Miller, *Meditations on Violence: A Comparison of Martial Arts Training & Real World Violence* (Wolfeboro, NH: YMAA Publication Center, 2008), 4.

1. Anticipation during physical workouts of what I as a defender will do—*I build my strategy into my training*. In other words, part of my strategy is ingrained in my mind and is expressed through my practiced physical response. I learn to move and act defensively in ways that correspond to what is presented to me, and I can do it *without thinking*. So, for example, I learn in defending against a knife thrust how to move my hands and feet and how to take away the knife, but I also learn that my attacker is not likely to stop with one jab—he is likely to stab over and over until I am out of commission. I therefore build such thinking into my execution of the technique itself, practicing it with my training partner until it is second nature.
2. Development of the ability to *rapidly assess situations as they present themselves*. I will have acquired the skill of evaluating an attack against me—on the spot—and comparing it to situations that I have already previewed in my mind. I am thus able to compare in real time this new state of affairs to situations I have previewed, and my subsequent physical actions come as a result of my assessment of what I am facing.

In either case—whether through training that facilitates instinctive responses or through development of rapid evaluation skills—I am relying on strategic approaches.

So read, enjoy, and put some icing on your own self-defense cake!

—Paul Karleen, Ph.D.
Senior Instructor IKMA (Gidon System)

Introduction

We are proud to present *Krav Maga Fundamental Strategies*. This book's goal is to dive deeper into krav maga's core self-defense strategies and fighting insights. Importantly, these practical, battle-tested stratagems are equally applicable across the spectrum of martial arts and fighting systems. We thank the many readers, kravists, and other self-defense enthusiasts who are interested in this seventh book of the line. Hopefully, it will remind all martial-arts practitioners of the epicenter of their studies: not just mastery of core basic tactics but an overall strategy to escape a violent encounter unharmed. Perhaps this book will also help rekindle the fire of advanced martial artists and masters to rethink and once again inculcate the tactics and principles that are most likely to work when (self) de-escalation, avoidance, escape, and—if necessary—counter-violence is required.

Israeli Krav Maga self-defense can be summarized as the fierce, optimum orchestration of counterviolence designed to prevail against any aggressor. General principles are applied and customized to meet the needs of a particular situation. A few mastered “families” of krav maga tactics are highly effective against the overwhelming majority of threats and attacks. By design, krav maga defenses largely harness instinctive adaptable gross motor movements to contend with the unpredictability of an attack. Each defense combines deflections and redirections, evasive body defenses, and simultaneous or near-simultaneous counterattacks against vulnerable anatomy with extreme prejudice delivered to overwhelm an attacker. Most importantly, krav maga self-defense is devoid of any rules. The system conforms to your strengths; you need not conform to the system. This is, in part, the genius of how founder Imi Lichtenfeld built krav maga. Grandmaster Gidon continues to improve the foundations of krav maga and evolve the self-defense and fighting system.

Good tactical minds think alike. Whatever your martial-arts or defensive-tactics background, hopefully, the following material can add some additional defensive solutions to your repertoire. Our goal is to augment your capabilities—to add additional arrows to your proverbial quiver. In the interest of providing a concise approach, I have tried to summarize here many essential topics from my previous six books: *Krav Maga* (2004), *Advanced Krav Maga* (2008), *Krav Maga Weapon Defenses* (2012), *Krav Maga Professional Tactics* (2016), *Krav Maga Defense* (2016), and *Krav Maga Combatives* (2019).

This book draws on materials from nearly every level of the curriculum. All the tactics you will read and evaluate are linked to our previous books and video materials. Notably, several weapon defense series photos provide a preview of the forthcoming book *Krav Maga Weapon Defenses II*.

While my objective is focused heavily on presenting krav maga's fighting insights, I believe providing access to short overviews of krav maga's emphasis on avoiding and preventing violence is paramount. Furthermore, I believe it would be both unprofessional

and irresponsible as well as fail to do the IKMA curriculum justice were I not to include a summary of Israeli Krav Maga's approach to conflict avoidance, De-escalation Education™, and de-confliction, and escape. Violence avoidance and prevention are, without question, the best collective pre-conflict and post-conflict survival practices. Remember, the only violent battle you are sure to win is the one you avoid.



David Kahn, Grandmaster Haim Gidon, and Michal Gidon.

As the highest-ranking krav maga instructor in the world, Grandmaster Haim Gidon continues to evolve and improve the defensive system. Krav maga founder Imi Lichtenfeld appointed Haim as his successor and in June of 1996 awarded him his eighth dan (black belt). As he honored Haim, Imi simultaneously declared that ninth dan and tenth dan (red belt) were to come. Imi knew Haim would improve the krav maga system and, to be sure, Haim has. The Israeli Krav Maga Association (IKMA), headed by Grandmaster Haim Gidon, is krav maga's original governing body and is recognized by the Israeli government.

After Imi's passing in 1998, Haim followed in Imi's legendary footsteps and became the highest-ranking krav maga instructor in the world. He is the only current krav maga instructor to receive an eighth dan awarded directly by Imi. As Haim improves the system weekly in his gym in Netanya, Israel, he follows Imi's fundamental tenet that krav maga must work for all types of defenders. Constant improvement, evolution, and tactical flexibility make Israeli Krav Maga a phenomenal fighting and self-defense method. Israeli Krav Maga's pledge (and this is one of the keys to its brilliance) is that it can teach nearly anyone to successfully defend against proximate violence.

The study of real-life encounters sometimes necessitates modification or revision of tactics and the addition of new ones. Importantly, while certain krav maga defenses are specific, especially those against weapons, the application of these defenses must be adaptable to accommodate a violent situation's volatility. In short, we apply general principles and then

customize them to meet whatever threat your opponent presents. Once again and most emphatically, krav maga emphasizes that there are no rules in a potentially deadly encounter so that you can make the best use of your capabilities to survive and escape unharmed.

Regarding the future of krav maga, dubious claims seem to constantly surface about krav maga's origins and evolution. Doesn't it make sense that the original governing body of krav maga, the IKMA, through its professional committee of the highest-ranked Israeli instructors, would be best able to develop the system to meet today's most modern threats? Moreover, we do not approach our specific krav maga training as an exercise program or fad. We do not just make up tactics for the sake of being different or putting a personal spin on the system to sell it to the public. The tactics and strategies we teach are designed by no-nonsense, tactically minded people, who are (forgive the pun) deadly serious about safety training. For those who convert these tactics and strategies for your own use without attribution, you know who you are. We know who you are as well.

Civilian Krav Maga Tactics

Security-minded civilians master krav maga to construct a defensive shield against violence, *not to develop an offensive capability to perpetrate violence*. Krav maga training's goal for civilians is simple: to deliver you from harm's way using autonomic responses that both harness and hone krav maga's instinctive tactics. The tactics become not second nature but first nature.

The ultimate goal is that you never hesitate about resorting to overwhelming, optimized counterviolence in the face of an unavoidable threat or attack. When there is no other choice but to defend yourself, you may be compelled to maim, cripple, and even use lethal force against an attacker, but only if under the totality of the circumstances such defense measures are legally justifiable. In actual fights, the combatants, even if they have formal training, often dispense with any complex learned training and resort to primitive combative tactics fueled by anger and bloodlust. The depth of violence will largely depend on the participants involved and how quickly animal instincts hijack the situation. In krav maga, breaking bones, injuring ligaments, and destroying an eyeball are optimized and emphasized both tactically and strategically to end the attack—provided these debilitating tactics represent proportional force. Women are often victims of violence and crime because the assailant thinks he can get away with it without injury to himself. Krav maga is designed to exact a steep physical toll on anyone who will not listen to reason and is intent on harming you.

In the basest, most primal sense, when faced with a life-threatening situation, the kravist understands how to inflict terrible, debilitating wounds on an adversary. There is no pity or compassion in a self-defense situation, but only if, once again, the counterforce is legally justifiable. In general terms, the party who significantly damages the other party first usually prevails, provided he presses the counterattack home to neutralize the threat.

The Language of Krav Maga

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

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 furthest 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.

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

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

L-parry: A defensive arm movement that leads a defense by delivering a mini-forearm chop to an incoming attacker's arm. The defensive rotational arm movement is best delivered when the deflecting arm is bent 70 or so degrees to optimally extend the arm.

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

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

Parry: A redirection of an incoming strike.

Retzev: A Hebrew word that means "continuous motion" in combat. The backbone of modern Israeli Krav Maga, retzev enables 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 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: An arm or leg directly opposite that of an opponent when you are facing each other. For example, in this situation your right arm is "same side" to his left arm.

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.

Tai sabaki: A 180-degree or semicircle step executed by swinging one leg around behind yourself. Often used 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.

The Optimum Use of This Book

In this seventh book we continue to expand the reader's understanding of self-defense and fighting at the beginner, advanced, and expert level of Israeli Krav Maga tactics. This book is designed for the responsible, security-conscious civilian to enhance his or her chances of surviving an unavoidable violent encounter without sustaining serious injury. These techniques derive from my translation of the IKMA guidelines. Some of the photos included to help illustrate and undergird the principles portray partial technique execution. A significant number of the full techniques, along with step-by-step descriptions, have been included in previous books and will be included in forthcoming ones.

Developing a personal defense strategy solely grounded in proven tactics is essential. While targeting your adversary's vulnerable anatomy is always a key to winning a violent encounter, many situations require some specific defensive-priority and reaction stratagems. One indisputable self-defense tenet is to get off the line of an attack. Another crucial strategy is to optimally deflect or redirect a weapon for maximum control and subsequent confiscation. If you are faced with multiple (un)armed adversaries any coherent strategy can be rapidly taxed to its limit. In other words, any built-in margin for error is drastically reduced. Therefore, you cannot simply rely on what your untrained instinct tells you to do. Instead, krav maga dictates that you harness your natural instincts and training, and optimize your inbred survival mechanisms. To survive an unavoidable violent onslaught uninjured, you must internalize a few core interrelated and interdependent fight strategies. Your self-defense path must become first nature through correct mental and physical training. Hopefully, this book will combine with any previous professional self-defense knowledge to enhance your personal survival blueprint.

The most advantageous use of this book is to practice each principle as presented under safety-observant training conditions. It cannot be overemphasized that Israeli Krav Maga relies on a few core self-defense strategies and tactics adaptable to thwart most violent encounters. Obviously, no book is a substitute for hands-on learning with a qualified Israeli Krav Maga expert instructor. Be sure to thoroughly vet any instructor with whom you decide to train. I will hazard a guess that instructors who complete three-day civilian "krav maga" certification courses without serious, legitimate prior krav maga experience are suspect, as is someone who purchases a purported krav maga black belt every year. The same goes for an organization that sells a black belt to such an individual. **BECAUSE NOT ALL KRAV MAGA IS THE SAME. . .**®

Best Use of Training Partners

The importance of a determined training partner who is prepared to challenge and attack you cannot be overstated. The reality is that committed attackers are not going to stop the attack until you stop them. Obviously, in training, one must not injure one's training partner, so strict control of combatives and range must be honored. At the same time, the attacker does not give up until the defender correctly attacks using anatomical targeting that would debilitate the attacker.

In large part, the difference between professional training and amateur training is the intensity and commitment of a realistic simulated attack. Note that when participating in a higher level of training, real attacks can be orchestrated; *however using real knives and live firearms is neither recommended nor wise*. The internet is replete with true-life videos of the most common attacks, from the push to heinous killings. Realistic training examples include retracting the arm used in a punch or knife attack to immediately attack again, choking at 100 percent, swinging 100 percent at the attacker's head with a padded glove or with a foam baton, and yanking back one's replica gun-wielding hand as a gunman would, should someone try to disarm him (such as when a defense is initiated).

Foremost, in learning krav maga, as skill levels permit, a partner must simulate the intensity and barbarity of a concerted attack. This is one of the first and most important lessons Grandmaster Haim Gidon taught me. This distinguishes the Israeli Krav Maga taught by Haim, his top instructors, and his students. In my opinion, the level of training in Haim's gym is unsurpassed in the krav maga world. For sample videos check out Grandmaster Gidon's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/gidonsystemkravmaga/>). There are myriad videos in the marketplace of people grunting and showing aggression, but the attack is often timid, uncommitted, and unrealistic. One cannot improve without realistic training and tactics that represent the realities of a determined attack. It is that simple.

Israeli Krav Maga Self-Defense Strategy Insights

This book provides select fighting-concept summaries from my translation of the IKMA curriculum. Many of these updated insights have never before been published. While I explain these as krav maga doctrines and principles, *any* tried and proven self-defense framework is likely to incorporate them. In other words, in this book, wherever I have used “krav maga,” one might easily and accurately substitute the words “practical self-defense.”

Real violence is horrific, shocking, ghastly, gruesome, and sickening to assign just a few adjectives. Those who have experienced concerted, injurious violence understand this observation well. If you are fortunate never to have experienced serious violence, the importance of viewing and digesting videos of real armed and unarmed attacks cannot be impressed on you enough. Videos of prison violence depicting nearly every conceivable type of unarmed and edged-weapon assaults along with group attacks are especially informative and sobering to watch.

Your mind-set must be to survive and escape unscathed—this is what it means to “win” in krav maga. Remember, while it is true that in a significant number of violent altercations combatants often know one another, in a street confrontation you’ll likely not know anything about a looming adversary. Even if he lacks bad-ass tattoos, is diminutive, looks like a bookworm, or is otherwise unimposing, he should not be taken lightly—what you don’t know about someone’s intent and capabilities can get you seriously injured or killed. My personal approach is to consider that any person who challenges or confronts me could be trained and dangerous. This thinking reinforces my resolution to avoid physical confrontation even at the expense of my ego or the social indignity I might experience.

Assuming there is someone out there better trained, stronger, faster, and more physically capable also dovetails with my strategy of expecting the unexpected. Keep in mind further that if you have no avenue of escape, you must up the ante by, for example, jamming a finger underneath an attacker’s closed upper eyelid and then screwing your finger deep into an attacker’s eye socket to exert maximum damage; arguably this could change the level of return violence he might try to visit on you. Despite your defensive capabilities, though, remember that anyone who will not work with you to de-escalate, de-conflict, or let you escape could cause you serious injury or death. That is why krav maga is designed to be so brutally efficient when necessary.

Throughout the book for brevity and ease of reading, I have listed some of the topical and sub-topical IKMA wisdom in bullet-point format.

The Strategy of Training to the Proven Threat Categories: Incorporating Select Statistical Observations

The following summary statistics are helpful in understanding violent trends and, hence, to train to the threat. In other words, when training time is limited (as it is for most people), it is logical to determine what the most common attacks are and plan your training accordingly. Keep in mind that studies indicate that 85 percent or more of the world's population is right-handed. Therefore, you are more likely to face a right-handed threat or attack.

In 2018, FBI statistics reported that the following types of weapons were used in U.S.-based aggravated assaults. These statistics are relatively consistent over the last decade:

- Personal weapons:³ 25.2 percent
- Firearms: 26.1 percent
- Edged weapons: 17.3 percent
- Other weapons: 31.5 percent

The 2018 FBI statistics report that the following types of weapons were used in U.S.-based robberies. These statistics are relatively consistent over the last decade:

- Personal weapons (“strong arm”): 42.8 percent
- Firearms: 38.5 percent
- Edged weapons: 8.3 percent
- Other weapons: 10.4 percent

With these attack and robbery threat statistics in mind, might it not make sense to allocate your training time accordingly? Obviously, weapons threats require serious training time and should not be neglected. In other words, wouldn't it be wise to focus on training scenarios that mimic, for example, facing a strong-arm robbery threat from personal weapons roughly five times more than the threat of an edged-weapon robbery? And for aggravated assaults, isn't it logical to focus one quarter of your training time on defending against personal weapons and a little less than one fifth of your training time on edged-weapon attacks?

3. Personal weapons are any parts of the human body, such as hands, feet, elbows, knees, teeth, and the crown of the forehead.

CHAPTER 1

Disengagement Strategies

The most important virtue krav maga can teach you is not to use krav maga—unless you truly have no choice. Many fights begin with social violence or a situation from which you could simply walk away. A moment of socially stoked anger can literally cost you everything. Conversely, not acting can also cost you dearly—including your life. When facing the specter of social violence, how do you best avoid it? How do you walk away without feeling emasculated, de-fanged, or that you backed down? Ultimately, how do you disengage while maintaining your pride and dignity?

Emotional control is krav maga’s staunchest pillar. While such restraint is perhaps the most difficult tactic to learn and employ, it may be the most important. Despite any indignation or effrontery you may experience, you need to prioritize de-escalation, de-confliction, and disengagement. Of course, this is more easily said than done. Humans have subconscious ideas governing social violence that revolve around a vestige of rules where physical mayhem or death *is not* the preferred outcome. Alternatively stated, the typical contest where someone gets taught a lesson by asserting social dominance through either intimidation or physical force usually does not involve grave injuries or murderous intent. In stark contrast, raw violence is the use of physical force without constraint and where mayhem or death *is* the preferred outcome. In every book we produce, along with every class we teach, we try to emphasize krav maga founder Imi Lichtenfeld’s wisdom in his own words. Imi stressed that the “most necessary thing is to educate you—and that is the hardest thing—to be humble. You must be so humble that you don’t want to show him that you’re better than him. That is one of the most necessary things for pupils. If a pupil tells me, ‘I fought him and beat him,’ it’s no good.”⁴

The bottom line is that some people will tolerate impudence and abuse while others will not. Ultimately, those who will brook no challenges may have a shorter or longer fuse, but, with enough provocation or an actual threat, it will ignite. A large part of your “awareness” is understanding your personal capacity and limits. Obviously, the amount of verbal or

4. Julia M. Klein, “Don’t Get Hurt,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 9, 1984.

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physical abuse you will accept or what actions cross your proverbial line on the concrete, carpet, mat, grass, gravel, or snow is your decision. Paramount is knowing where the line is for you. You can push the line back (assuming a verbal or gestural provocation—not a physical assault) by using a self-recognition or self-evaluation tactic. This means that you recognize your vulnerabilities, accept them, and create effective coping or deflecting mechanisms. You can then prevent a hostile person from baiting you into reacting as an excuse to commit violence against you.



An attempt to de-escalate a situation and walk away.

Both Imi and Grandmaster Gidon underscore that “the hardest thing is to be humble.” Emotions must be contained, moderated, and controlled. Most importantly, you must recognize impending social violence to prevent it from controlling your immediate future. Imi understood that true power rests in self-control. If you can swap angry emotions with alternative calm emotions, your anger will release or dissipate, preventing aggression and violence. This cognitive restructuring is the key to any anger management strategy. To be sure, learning emotional competency is a process that requires effort and practice. Without question the ability to ignore hostile language and words is not easy. When you can control yourself, you are best prepared to try to control the vortex of chaos surrounding you in a conflict. If you want to avoid conflict, you must master yourself.

Simple logic dictates that if a verbal attack is unfounded or doesn't have truth behind it, you have no reason to become upset about it. Of course, once again, this is easier said than done. When an aggressor attempts to slam one of your “go” buttons or yank one of your triggers, you should be mentally prepared for it because you have practiced an appropriate non-hostile response. Methodically harnessing and controlling your breathing is universally known to be instrumental in developing this invaluable capability. Usually the process of a deep inhale with a four-second hold, followed by a two-second pause, followed by a four-second exhale, works well. If you are confident that you can physically subjugate another person, you have the ultimate supremacy. The key is not to feel compelled to exercise power. This avoids legal entanglements that could cost you a small fortune, not to mention your liberty and the stigma of being a convicted felon.

Understanding the Difference Between Anger and Rage



Anger.



Rage.

Anger is a state of incremental arousal. Emotions govern everything when a hostile person attempts to dominate you. They immediately hijack reason. When your heart rate rises just ten percent, any disputed truth becomes less and less relevant. The altercation devolves solely into a matter of winning or losing. People often ramp up their anger threshold to anger's pinnacle—rage. The difference between anger and rage is that the latter is the supreme form of anger, where someone has discarded any social or legal inhibitors about using violence. Someone who is enraged is no longer attempting to peacefully negotiate. Physical violence is highly likely. Hot rage is a term applied to someone on the precipice of violence. This point of no return can be egged on by onlookers or a need to look tough and not back down in front of observers.

In my research on anger, I read an informative article entitled, “Anger Is Temporary Madness: The Stoics Knew How to Curb It” by philosophy professor Massimo Pigliucci.⁵ Among Pigliucci’s insights, which draw from the Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca, is that mankind has long understood the vicissitudes of anger and its consequences. Seneca’s *On Anger*, written in the first century CE, posits that anger is a temporary madness. Even when anger might be justified, Seneca emphasized that one should never act on the basis of emotion because, though “other vices affect our judgment, anger affects our sanity: others come in mild attacks and grow unnoticed, but men’s minds plunge abruptly into anger.” Seneca concluded that anger’s “intensity” was in “no way regulated by its origin: for it rises to the greatest heights from the most trivial beginnings.” Another Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, admonished: “Remember that it is we who torment, we who make difficulties for

5. Massimo Pigliucci, “Anger Is Temporary Madness: The Stoics Knew How to Curb It,” [getpocket.com](https://getpocket.com/explore/item/anger-is-temporary-madness-the-stoics-knew-how-to-curb-it?utm_source=pocket-newtab), n.d., https://getpocket.com/explore/item/anger-is-temporary-madness-the-stoics-knew-how-to-curb-it?utm_source=pocket-newtab.

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ourselves—that is, our opinions do. What, for instance, does it mean to be insulted? Stand by a rock and insult it, and what have you accomplished? If someone responds to insult like a rock, what has the abuser gained with his invective?” (Though some people do talk to plants.)

Recognizing Your Own Triggers



A finger-pointing trigger.



A rude-gesture trigger.

CHAPTER 2

Training and Legal Strategies

Mental Training

Mental training girds you to be resolute, aggressive, and decisive. Equally important, preparing yourself ahead of time for a bad situation expedites your information assessment and processing ability. In a nutshell, mental training allows you to harness your full capabilities to achieve optimum performance. Physical and mental training are analogous to two adjoining pages of a book. While you can fold one side of the book over to only look at one page (metaphorically representing either mental or physical training), the two pages are inextricably bound together.

The importance of combined mental and physical training cannot be overemphasized. Israel is synonymous with resilience. Resilience is to never give up no matter what the odds. Krav maga is representative of Israel's defensive strategies in myriad ways. Smart tactics, precise targeting, and optimized force coupled with expert timing can defeat nearly any adversary. A smaller defender, even when outnumbered, can defeat a much larger attacker with correct strategy, application of force, daring, and fortitude.

Visualizing and practicing realistic violent situations can notch down your anxiety and stress level in a time of need. Without such preparation you are likely to experience magnified stress-induced deleterious emotions and physical effects. As noted earlier, when the body is under stress, the SNS and adrenal-cortical complexes induce physiological changes. Cortisol is a stress hormone that, when released in a significant dose, will make it difficult to remember things that are not deeply ingrained. The longer a victim remains ensconced in fear, the longer it will take for the victim to recover or react. The subconscious mind winnows the gap between reaction and action on the action/reaction power curve. Stated alternatively, the subconscious mind cannot be cognitively controlled. Hence the strategic importance of a trained instinctive/conditioned response for self-defense. Responses to violent stimuli can require from less than half a second to three times that long to register in most

people. Optimally, with correct training you can respond in a quarter of a second or less—a reaction time that can be achieved by highly-trained, motivated individuals.

Mastering yourself (exerting self-control), including overcoming any and all residual doubts, is required to successfully navigate and cope with stress to create a positive outcome. Self-control or self-regulation, as we discussed, is the conscious ability to control your emotions, and hence, your behavior. Keep in mind that without training, your primitive brain hijacks your higher functions to deliver you from harm the best way it knows how. Stress seizes both your cognitive and somatic body responses.

Confidence may be thought of a mental state devoid of anxiety and doubt. A positive outcome is usually determined by how you perceive the threat, not the reality or danger of the threat in and of itself. The more you train to thwart a realistic attack, the more confidence you gain. This, in turn, reduces anxiety and fear. In training, or even in a real situation, if you do not succeed with a particular defense, be confident that you can instantly and seamlessly adapt and still defeat the threat. As they say, no plan completely survives first contact. Walk into (or walk away from) a situation with complete confidence that your skill set will deliver you from harm's way.

If you lose a physical battle, whether in practice or having survived a real situation, view it as a learning opportunity; don't castigate yourself. Grandmaster Gidon has made use of this principle to continue to improve krav maga. Since the early 1990s, Haim has had top ground fighters from all over the world visit his gym in Netanya. By having his students work against these skilled opponents, Haim has been able to develop a curriculum based on a no-rules mind-set, which has helped to make the system more complete. (Similar training on Ben Zion Street has also been conducted with blade specialists.)

Survival Stress Coping Strategies

Krav maga and similar reality-based survival systems focus on the following proven coping mechanisms:

1. *Visualize the proper response.* Visualization prepares us mentally and physically for combat. Mental rehearsal of what we may have to do if the subject makes a hostile move will decrease anxiety, allow enhanced performance, and help “tune” the nervous system for combat.
2. *Come to terms with the possibility of injury or even death.* Create a state of mind that will help to control an increasing heart rate when confronted with danger. When we encounter a life-threatening situation, we should be thinking, “This is something that I knew could happen to me. I don't like it, but I'm ready for it.”
3. *Prioritize the threats.* Deal with the most immediate one first.

4. *Perform tactical breathing.* You may be aware of your dry mouth or an increased heart rate and breathing rate. If circumstances permit, try to exhale for a count of four, pause for a count of two and breathe in for a count of four. Do this several times to keep the heart rate within 115 to 145 BPM.

The human brain can be divided into two sections: the subconscious mind (limbic system) and the conscious mind (cerebral cortex system). The subconscious mind governs our primordial survival mechanisms by reacting rather than “thinking.” The subconscious mind searches through past experience in a dangerous situation to identify a suitable response. While serving as the emotional center, the subconscious mind controls physical reactions (as opposed to physical actions). Subconscious reactions or “thinking without thinking” are decided within the first nanosecond of a threat. This is the foundation for krav maga’s instinctive movements and tactics.

The conscious mind is our higher brain. It is chiefly responsible for higher cognition and analysis. The conscious mind engages when you have the time to assess a situation thoroughly and respond deliberately. When you are caught off guard and are overwhelmed by stress, your conscious mind shuts down. All decision-making processes transfer to your subconscious mind. As noted, your subconscious mind is basically an instinctive command response or a data bank of trained muscle memory.

Strategically, you must reduce the reaction time from recognition to reaction. *Instincts will always govern your cognitive response under stress.* Krav maga hones these instincts and recognizes that action will usually beat reaction in the action/reaction power curve. In other words, if an assailant launches at you, he has the initiative. You need to catch up. But you can and usually must “cheat” to catch up by recognizing kinesic indicators. For example, as noted previously, if you see or are confronted by someone who is clenching his hands, moving onto the balls of his feet with a forward lean, coiling a shoulder, blading the body, or stiffening the neck, these are individual or collective kinesic indicators that he may be primed to attack.

The Importance of Realistic Training

Training hardwires your brain to instinctively move your body to bypass conscious thought, thereby streamlining the self-defense process. Strategic training must attempt to simulate a real attack for you to understand the speed, ferocity, and strength a determined attacker may direct at you. Imi understood that actual violence differs greatly from choreographed training. Martial artists who have devoted many years to training have catastrophically found their skills to be inapplicable when facing a violent street-smart attacker in a volatile, violent environment.

Realistic and effective training under simulated stress allows your brain to navigate and better cope with danger. The more you engage in mental and visual training with realistic expectations and scenarios, the more attuned your brain becomes, through neuroplasticity,

to performing under such conditions. Using proper visualization during training, ensure that you condition your brain to envision success while also contemplating failure and then dismissing it.

Most important, realistic training helps to alleviate fear, panic, and other sensations as you prepare your body and mind to take the proper course of action, but they must never be mistaken for a real attack. The key is to expedite or even eliminate step one, where you visualize a proper response and step two, where you contemplate death or injury, as noted above. Additionally, people often freeze during the danger recognition and visualization response by denying they are about to be caught in a violent maelstrom. The goal of training is to streamline each of the four steps collectively, making the process first nature.

With an untrained mind and body, it's difficult to process or accept that someone else intends to do you serious bodily harm. Denial is the most common obstacle to taking appropriate action against someone about to attack you. To prevent denial, krav maga's strategy is to embed your subconscious reaction with the proverbial "(I have) been there, done that (through a training scenario)."

To avoid freezing under pressure, you must train under pressure. To begin, practice with a training partner or trusted friend. Direct your partner to simulate attack situations using extreme control to build many slow repetitions. Initially, do the mock attacks and corresponding defenses at half-speed to stay safe and avoid injury. (I recommend learning these sparring techniques under a qualified Israeli Krav Maga instructor, if possible.) Only as you develop control and a working familiarity with both the tactics and your training partner can you begin to move at full speed. Remember, the moves are designed to neutralize an attack at its inception using, when possible, preemptive strikes. If practiced without caution or incorrectly, you can easily injure your training partner.

As your training advances, your tactics must also work against determined resistance. Therefore, realism must always be injected into your krav maga training. For example, with proper safety training equipment and under a qualified krav maga instructor's supervision, punches and kicks must eventually be thrown at 100-percent speed and power in multiple salvos. The strikes must be retracted quickly and not held out, telegraphed, or overexaggerated. Similarly, chokes, grabs, and takedowns should be performed with full speed and power yet under controlled conditions.

In summary, mental and physical conditioning allows you to stave off panic and channel your adrenaline into action. To develop stress inoculation, be sure to include taxing training scenarios that are near as to real life as possible. They should create an adrenaline surge and the nervousness that are sure to come with a real conflict. These physical manifestations can quickly unnerve an inexperienced kravist, and you must develop your mental toughness accordingly.

Mental dominance over your fear and firm belief that you *will* overwhelm your attacker provide a decisive advantage in a violent encounter. Truly believe that your training will carry the day regardless of an attacker's physical size, possession of a weapon, or the fact that

CHAPTER 3

Defensive Engagement and Disengagement Strategies

Krav maga's overarching strategy is to adopt whatever practical measures are necessary to best deliver you from harm's way. Krav maga strives to teach you not to be susceptible to a surprise assault. The Israeli Krav Maga curriculum places a heavy emphasis on developing the ability to recognize, avoid, and preempt physical conflict. Here are six commonsense safety observations and measures:

1. The obvious and best solution is to remove yourself from the situation before an impending attack can occur. Common sense should always prevail.
2. Recognizing an attacker's (un)conscious body language, proximity, and overall behavior pattern produces decisive clues.
3. Situational awareness of whom and what to keenly observe is all-important. Recognize who or what might constitute a danger or threat.
4. Generally, human behavior is overwhelmingly predictable. Identify what are peaceful human versus threatening behavior displays.
5. Subtle cues, "tells," or "precipitators" observed in a potential assailant's behavior, especially when collectively assessed, provide an early-warning indicator.
6. Body markings, such as tattoos and clothing, can suggest someone's background, affiliation, values, attitude, and behavioral proclivities.

Being proactive overcomes victimization. If an environment projects an overall negative feeling or "vibe," heed your internal warning and take appropriate safety measures. In an unfamiliar environment, scan for threats, paying particular attention to potential assailants' proximity and hand movements. Always trust your instincts and intuition. Even a minimal amount of threatening behavioral information should be enough for you to put your defenses on high alert. Make use of your peripheral vision and constantly assess your surroundings. Note that your peripheral vision will identify movements more quickly than a narrow focus will allow. As mentioned previously, situational awareness is a compromise between being carefree and being paranoid. Most people have this innate capability. If someone acts

nervously, secretively, or unnaturally and is within attack range, beware; take the appropriate defensive precautions.

Self-defense may be thought of as recovering from being caught unaware, the –5, and using superior counterviolence in the same way a criminal or sociopath intends to use violence in the attacker’s assault on you. Many people are wholly unprepared to face down violence even when they see it coming. These victims of violence do not understand indicators or they do not recognize the foreshadowing “tells.” An example of a “–5” situation is where you are caught at a disadvantage with your hands in your pockets as an aggressor quickly approaches you with his fists raised and clenched. Another example would be a victim engrossed in typing on her mobile device and a knife wielder attacks her.

For self-defense, the aphorism “forewarned is forearmed” is literally and figuratively on point. Keep in mind that when you are mentally focused or consumed with something such as a thought or having a conversation, you are apt to lose focus on your surroundings—a “–5” situation.

- When you are observing, remember not to use single-point focus; rather, make maximum use of your peripheral vision, combining it with a slight head swivel to see your 270- to 360-degree blind spots.
- Avoid staring at people who may concern you; be subtle with your observations.
- Fortunately, with minimum focused threat recognition training, there is a good chance you’ll spot trouble and steer clear of it.

Pre-Violence Indicator Recognition

When facing street violence, you can usually identify verbal, behavioral, and physical manifestations indicating that violence is imminent. Recognize it or not—and it is decidedly important that you do—it is highly likely there will be some indicator prior to an attack. This all-important situational awareness capability allows you to avoid a “–5” situation.

- When assessing body language, evaluating a potentially hostile person is best done in combination with his physical manifestations and words.
- When nonverbal gestures do not align—someone smiling at you while coiling his shoulder and clenching his same-side fist—nonverbal gestures usually take priority in predicting behavior.
- Nonverbal gestures or “tells” should be prioritized; these are strong indicators of someone’s intentions and true feelings.

Perception/Recognition

Perception enables and facilitates a defender's speed and counterviolence of action. Successfully reading hostile body language allows you to recognize an aggressor's decision to engage in violence before he physically initiates it. Recognize impending violence when it is still in the aggressor's strategy stage rather than his committed stage. By developing a honed attack-recognition capability, the kravist can suppress his stress response that might cause panic or a delayed reaction. Preventing such a vulnerable response is accomplished by overriding one's own dilatory startle response with a trained reaction. This cuts down on the action-reaction curve, which generally puts a defender at a disadvantage.

Many of the following observations and supporting photos are well-known; however, they bear emphasizing. An aggressor usually goes through two stages prior to an attack: (a) he makes the decision and (b) the decision is relayed to his limbs to initiate the attack. More will be said on this crucial self-defense aspect shortly, and accompanying photos will be offered.

Kinesic Indicators Recognition

Successfully reading hostile body language can allow you to recognize that an aggressor has decided to engage in violence before he physically initiates it. Gross motor movements often red flag someone who is adrenalized and about to explode. For example, you might need to articulate any one or a combination of the following twelve non-exclusive observations that compelled you to use a preemptive self-defense attack:

1. Fidgeting, shaking of one's limbs, muscle tremors, or clenching one's hands and teeth
2. Sweating, increased respiration or pupillary activity (dilation, constriction, and blinking excessively)
3. A forward lean
4. Moving onto the balls of the feet in preparation to attack
5. Coiling a shoulder or blading the body
6. Stiffening the neck
7. Puckering the lips or sneering
8. A change in breathing (fast-paced or measured)
9. Puffing up (as the chest expands to intake as much oxygen as possible), becoming loud to intimidate, and turning red in the face and neck (vasodilations as blood fills the capillaries)

10. Becoming pale (vasoconstriction occurs as blood rushes from the skin surface to the internal organs). This indicates an advanced stage of fear or girding oneself against an attack and is one of the surest indicators someone is preparing for violence.
11. Pupillary constriction toward something considered a threat or challenge along with momentary pupillary dilation, indicating the very moment a person is ready to act. “Looking through” a person can denote that a decision has been made to attack. Note: while pupil dilation and constriction can indicate an impending attack, an experienced fighter may turn on you without these physical phenomena precisely because he has done it before and it has become second nature.
12. Disrobing to free the arms (and legs).

An Attacker's Body Type



Ectomorph.



Endomorph.



Mesomorph.

You should also observe an attacker's body type—whether the opponent is an ectomorph (skinny/lanky bone structure), endomorph (medium bone structure), or mesomorph (thick/large bone structure)—to optimize your escape/evasion plan and counterattack. A slightly built opponent is likely to move quickly and have less mass behind his strikes while, conversely, a more thickly built opponent is likely to move less quickly but with added power. A medium build opponent will be somewhere in between these respective capabilities.

Watch His Hands and Shoulders

Watching a threat's hands and shoulder movement is paramount. Neural connections are most densely concentrated between the hands and the brain. Therefore, hand gestures may most directly indicate a person's emotional state, especially aggression; clenching one's fists, for example, is an obvious sign of aggression. If you do not see someone's hands, your alert level should go to its highest. The potential aggressor could have any type of weapon, including an edged weapon, firearm, or impact weapon. You are within your rights to demand to see someone's hands. If you move in an attempt to see what the suspicious person

CHAPTER 4

Anatomical Targeting Strategy: Works for Both the Attacker and Defender

To stop an assailant, krav maga primarily targets the body's vital soft tissue, chiefly the groin, neck area, and eyes. The amount of kinetic energy a strike generates to travel through an anatomical target depends on the velocity, the mass of the energy source, and the extent of the kinetic energy transfer. The efficiency of a strike determines the extent and duration of muscle motor disruption.

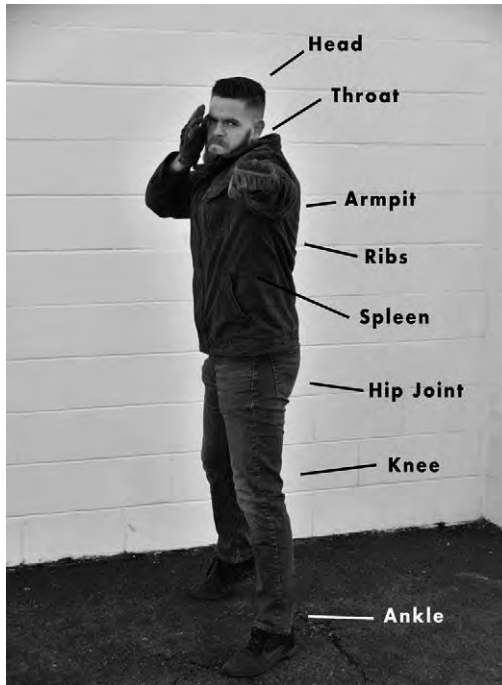
The human body has seventy exposed anatomical areas, including approximately two hundred targets that cannot be hardened or strengthened through training. These are areas universally vulnerable to damage through anatomical targeting using the most proximate weapon against the most proximate target. Other secondary targets include organs and bones such as the kidneys, solar plexus, knees, liver, joints, fingers, nerve centers, and other smaller fragile bones. Keep in mind that, if an adversary sees his body being dismantled, he will likely suffer emotional trauma that will further sap his will to keep attacking. You, as a defender, must also learn to protect these vulnerabilities on yourself. More will be discussed on this crucial concept shortly. Always keep in mind that whatever tactics you can do to him, he can do to you. To be sure, certain attacks can be lethal, but the body can perform miraculous feats even when severely injured. The body's resilience works for both victim and assailant. Adrenaline is a powerful energizer and allows the body to momentarily insulate itself against pain. Note: an assailant under the influence of drugs acquires yet another layer of pain insulation and artificially increased strength.

Some key concepts for anatomical targeting include:

- Injury breaks down human anatomical structure and function, including both tissue and bones—the aggressor's physical ability to harm you. This, in turn, affords you the chance to impose further strategic injury through *retzev*.

- Depending on the severity of the aggression or attack, your goal is to produce either superficial or longer-term physical trauma, or both, using the shortest possible path and time to disable the attacker.
- Superior anatomical targeting allows a defender to maximize the use of counterviolence. With correct targeting, a defender can achieve damage regardless of strength, size, physical ability, or professional training. Each successive combative should be more damaging than the previous to prevent the attacker from recovering. Focus on striking vulnerable targets that primarily involve the use of gross motor movements.
- When legally justifiable, administering sequential, injurious, physical trauma epitomizes effective *retzev*—continuous, opportune, complementary combatives. Target vulnerable anatomy, damage that anatomy, continue to damage it, and move on to the next anatomical target as necessary until the attacker no longer poses a threat to you or others.
- When two fighters are prepared and equal in skill, the fighter who initiates and commits without an overwhelming attack leaves himself anatomically vulnerable to counterattack.

To be an effective fighter you must not telegraph your anatomical targeting intentions. Successful fighting tactics require sound judgment, anticipation, lightning-fast execution, and the ability to instantaneously summon several integrated combatives. Keep in mind that you don't want any type of fighting chess game; instead, the goal is to eliminate any and all of his future counter-movement and counterattack capabilities. In other words, achieve checkmate with your first or second optimized combative as soon as possible. Remember again that whatever *you* can do tactically, the attacker can also do. Human bodies generally move in the same way and have the same defensive and offensive fight capabilities.



Anatomical targets against a punch attack.

Protecting Your Head

Attackers understand the proven method of debilitating a victim with a blow to the head. The simplest linear type of attack works best when it targets the head. This is usually a straight punch, especially when a victim is unaware. The outcome of an ambush is most often decided in one or two seconds. (This is also true of a fight, although many fights can last longer.) Krav maga, obviously for good reason, places great emphasis on defending attacks against the head. A combative strike to the head transfers kinetic energy from the attacker's impact tool (knuckles, palm heel, elbow, foot, knee, or head) into the victim's skull. The injury types below can result from being struck in the head. Keep in mind that for defensive purposes, this same type of damage as represented in these photo examples can be strategically inflicted on an attacker.

When teaching, I often use the analogy that an attacker's head is the mainframe computer controlling his body (the machine). Disrupt the main circuitry and you disrupt the machine. Attackers fully understand this concept. Take note that an understanding of anatomical damage can be used both for and against you in your legal defense. If you have been attacked, you can explain in your legal defense that you feared the following types of damage if the assailant successfully struck you in the head. Hence your proportional defensive response.



A straight vertical punch to the temple.



An over-the-top-elbow strike to the skull.



A vertical drop-elbow to the base of the skull.



A straight knee to the temple.

Injuries to the Skull and Brain

Globally, there are a significant number of serious injuries and deaths caused by blunt force trauma each year. In the United States, violent assaults account for roughly 10 percent of all traumatic brain injuries.⁴⁰ *Skull fractures* account for up to 20 percent for all head trauma.⁴¹ Overall, traumatic head injuries are the most common cause of death among Americans aged forty-five and younger. Up to 75 percent of people with severe head injuries also suffer damage to the neck bones or other parts of the body directly related to the blow to the head. Therefore, deductively, one in five punches to the head could result in a skull fracture.⁴²

After age thirty your mortality risk increases after a head injury. Your brain shrinks as you age even though your skull size remains constant. Therefore, there is more room in your skull for the brain to be shaken and, consequently, sustain damage. As noted, blunt force

40. <https://www.brainline.org/slideshow/infographic-leading-causes-traumatic-brain-injury>.

41. <https://bestpractice.bmj.com/topics/en-us/398>.

42. <https://www.aans.org/Patients/Neurosurgical-Conditions-and-Treatments/Traumatic-Brain-Injury>.

CHAPTER 5

Representative Decision-Making Strategies

Krav maga training emphasizes that you practice both disciplined and legally justified mental and physical responses in handling confrontational situations. Here are some crucial krav maga situational analyses and self-recognition concepts:

1. Counterviolence must only be used as a last resort tool.
2. Until you are physically assaulted, you still have the options of avoidance, de-escalation, and escape.
3. Understand your own triggers: what you will accept and what you won't accept. It is best to remove all triggers prompted by social violence (when you can walk away).
4. Indecision and inaction can get you killed. The person committed to winning a violent confrontation unfailingly raises the stakes. He can often win regardless of tactics.

A few road-rage examples facing an assailant armed with an impact weapon serve as examples of:

5. Decision #1: Staying put in your vehicle and calling the police.
6. Decision #2: Exiting your vehicle while summoning help and using it as a barrier between you and an assailant.
7. Decision #3: Engaging an assailant who is destroying your property to stop him.



The decision to stay put in your vehicle and weather a storm of violence to your personal property may be natural and the best course of action. Most people are likely to be incredulous or bewildered by the onslaught of such violence and consequently freeze in place. Try not to freeze, and then immediately move away from the attack to another part of your vehicle to better avoid the danger of an object penetrating your windows. Of course, call the police immediately when facing an irate person. Note that most people do not practice dialing their phones under pressure and will fail in their initial attempt(s).

Exiting Your Vehicle to Escape an Assailant Coming at You



In this example, you can exit your vehicle (provided you are alone in the vehicle and do not have other passengers to worry about) and run around it, using it as a barrier between you and the assailant. Hopefully, you or a witness can immediately summon police help. You could also, of course, run away by simply leaving your vehicle and the scene.

A Strategic Choice: To Defend One's Property or Solely Rely on Legal Remedies





This series represents defending your vehicle from an *ongoing* attack by closing on the aggressor to deflect and redirect the overhead impact-weapon attack and remove it. Of course, in this type of direct confrontation you risk being injured or incurring liability should you use unreasonable force to defend your property. Accordingly, you must obviously weigh your response. Think about this now so you have a plan of action were this type of scenario to arise.

In the United States, you generally have a right to defend your personal property, including your automobile. The law allows a citizen to defend his property using objectively reasonable force, but not deadly force. However, as compelling as it may be to defend your property and stop an aggressor, your exercise of this right may not be the right strategic decision. Depending on the outcome, you could end up injured or have used excessive force in the eyes of a court. Historically, the law has always valued human health and life over the preservation of property. So, you should think ahead of a strategic planned course of action if you find yourself in this situation. If you do not plan ahead and visualize this type of unavoidable encounter, you may freeze or overreact at your peril.

I will use my home state of New Jersey's NJ Rev Stat § 2C:3-6 as an example of the rights afforded a citizen in protecting his personal (and real) property. In a case like the one in the photo example, you must be in control of the automobile you are driving, including being licensed and privileged in its use. You must rationally believe that the reasonable force you use is necessary to prevent or terminate the commission or attempted commission of a criminal trespass and battery against your vehicle.

Prior to using reasonable force, you must "request" that the intruder not damage your property unless that request is useless or dangerous to yourself or another, or if substantial harm would be done to the property before your request can effectively be made. Once again, deadly force may *not* be employed to repel a battery upon one's personal (or real) property. In other words, you may physically intervene with objectively reasonable non-deadly force to prevent active damage and harm to your vehicle. However, if the aggressor damages your vehicle and then walks away, thereby disengaging or breaking the continuum, you are not legally justified in using force to avenge yourself or settle the score. If the aggressor damages your vehicle and then attacks you, self-defense rules of engagement of course immediately apply.

NJ Rev Stat § 2C:3-6 (2014) Statutory Example

2C:3-6. Use of force in defense of premises or personal property

c. Use of force in defense of personal property. Subject to the provisions of subsection d. of this section and of section 2C:3-9, the use of force upon or toward the person of another is justifiable when the actor reasonably believes it necessary to prevent what he reasonably believes to be an attempt by such other person to commit theft, criminal mischief, or other criminal interference with personal property in his possession or in the possession of another for whose protection he acts.

Krav Maga Strategy and Methodology

What a defender does instinctively he does faster. A few instinctive defensive tactics will enable you to survive the most common violent onslaughts. In other words, developing a

CHAPTER 6

Strategies for Defending an Ambush

Krav maga understands that it is in an ambush situation or the “–5” (you are at a significant disadvantage) where you can successfully use a specific defensive tactic designed to counter a particular threat or attack. In other words, by necessity, the ambushed defensive party reacts first defensively, which could involve a preemptive strike but will more likely involve a deflection or shield against the attack to immediately transition to the counterattack. Conversely, when engaged in mutual combat, offensive capabilities take priority and come to the fore. As emphasized, 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 semi-automatic weapon followed by going fully automatic with that weapon to finish the threat. When facing a potential lethal encounter, every counter-violent combative should focus on inflicting injury or damage to render the aggressor incapable of further aggression. Examples of counter-ambush tactics while texting may be found in my book *Krav Maga Defense*.⁵⁶

The Elements of an Ambush

There are five general elements of an ambush:

1. When an ambush is executed, the victim is usually distracted, complacent, outnumbered, and caught in a state of maximum unpreparedness –5.
2. The chances of escape for the victim are minimized or nonexistent, as the attacker has chosen the site and circumstances.
3. The attacker often acts from concealment or closes on the unwitting victim.
4. The attacker affords himself the chance and avenue for escape.
5. The attacker possesses the intent—and usually the capability—to physically dominate the victim.

56. David Kahn, *Krav Maga Defense: How to Defend Yourself against the 12 Most Common Unarmed Street Attacks* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2016), 106–107, 119–120, 123–125.



An ambush while you are texting.



A parking lot ambush.



An ATM robbery ambush.



This series depicts an attempt to de-conflict and de-escalate a situation by trying to walk away. Yet, despite what may seem to be a temporary truce, your de-escalation reasoning did not work. Unappeased, the aggressor attempts a rear tackle against you. Note that if someone has shown aggression, you should not turn your back. Always disengage with an eye on the potential threat until you are a safe distance away. Nevertheless, if you were to turn and try to walk away, the aggressor may decide the situation is not over and try to attack you from the rear, in this case using a rear take-down tackle. As noted, you will have to react from whatever position you find yourself in, using combined preemptive and evasion principles.

Human Predatory Strategies

In an ambush or surprise attack, the attacker avails himself of a victim's shock and temporary paralysis to gain the advantage. The attacker chooses the time, place, and conditions most opportune for him to put a victim in the –5. A few key points to keep in mind:

- Criminals position themselves to attack in one of four ways: (1) surprise, (2) surrounding, (3) closing, and (4) cornering.
- A favored method is to corner a victim by trapping the victim (or a group) in a confined space with no escape.
- Similar to animal predators stalking their prey, human predators often wait in ambush. As with animals, humans can also sense danger and fear in their victim.
- Criminals often work in groups to surround, herd, surprise, distract, or simply overwhelm a victim.
- Attackers may close on a victim immediately to orchestrate a surprise violent ambush. Alternatively, an attacker may use ingratiating pseudo-charm to gain proximity and then attack.

Counter-ambush Strategies

To reiterate, a surprise attack will force you to react from an unprepared state. You need to recognize a trap or an inchoate ambush. If a stranger springs out of nowhere, he may have an accomplice flanking or lurking behind you. Train yourself with the mind-set of an attacker. Think how you would ambush yourself at any given moment and use that training to recognize potential dangers as you go about your daily life. When on the move and noticed or accosted by someone who arouses your suspicion, once again discard politeness and keep moving.

Using Objectively Reasonable Counterforce in a Surprise Ambush

Reacting to a surprise attack likely allows more latitude in the use of counterforce because you do not have time to rationally or reasonably analyze the situation. In other words, you are reacting instinctively and defensively and do not have time to calibrate your response. Krav maga's goal is just that: to have you react instantaneously without thinking. Once again, the overriding essence of krav maga is to neutralize an assailant immediately using objectively reasonable force. Nevertheless, the instant 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.

Human vision is limited by blind spots. You cannot see what is behind you; hence the effectiveness of rear ambushes. Therefore, if an adversary gets too close, he can deliver a knee

CHAPTER 7

Preemptive Linear Strike and Breaking-Up-a-Fight Strategies

When and How to Preempt an Attack

If you cannot avoid an imminent attack or use de-escalation communication tactics to control both the distance and an escalating verbal interchange, you should seek to preempt your adversary's imminent attack. While you could wait for him to expose his anatomical vulnerabilities as he attacks, I advocate that you instead take the fight to him. Remember, you must be able to articulate why you, as a reasonable person, knew that an imminent attack on your person was about to happen.

Therefore, with a preemption strategy in mind, target any anatomical vulnerability he exposes that he cannot readily defend because he is in motion. In other words, the opponent, even when skilled at delivering his attack, briefly leaves himself open to 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 his front knee. In short, preemption and fight timing are an instantaneous fusion of instinct and decision-making.

Two key elements are at work regarding when and how to initiate a preemptive counter-attack:

1. You deprive the opponent of the ability to change his position and defensive posture fast enough to thwart your attack.
2. You strike when the opponent commits to a step and momentary weight transfer, commits himself to a combative (example: straight kick or punch), or tries to deploy a weapon. In other words, the optimum moment to preemptively attack is as the opponent is preparing his attack. The opponent is, for a fraction of second, concentrating on his attack rather than defense and, therefore, is vulnerable to a preemptive counterattack. A counterattack might be opportune when he:

- Leans or steps forward
- Uses footwork to prepare for an attack
- Tries to feint
- Reaches for a weapon
- Is speaking

A preemptive attack is *not an attack into the opponent's attack* (incorrect timing). For example, a preemptive long-range kick is one of krav maga's most versatile and useful tools, providing you with an all-important preemption capability prior to the full initiation of an attack or the active deployment of a weapon. The instant you recognize an aggressive action, you can launch a straight kick or side kick targeting the opponent's vulnerable anatomy, principally his groin or forward knee. These kicks can use *glicha* sliding or *secoul* crossover step footwork to cover distance and place your entire body weight and momentum behind the strike. This is particularly true if the opponent raises his hands, signifying an aggressive action, or sequesters one or both arms behind his back, suggesting he is hiding a weapon. In other words, you should not end up squaring up with someone to fight; as he assumes a fighting stance or any type of aggressive posture, you should kick him. After landing a preemptive kick, follow up with additional *retzev* combatives as necessary. Your goal should be to thwart an assailant's freedom of action by recognizing the warning signs of impending violence, allowing you to physically stop an attack at its inception.

The Preemptive Straight Kick

A straight kick may be administered using either the front or rear leg. Strike the opponent's vulnerable anatomy with the ball of your foot. Usually the midsection, groin, or knee provide the best targets. Any type of kick may be used, but the straight kick is easy, fast, and instinctive, often flying under the radar. The key to the straight kick (and side kick) is using a sliding *glicha* step executed with your non-kicking base leg to close the distance while delivering maximum reach and power.



This series depicts a linear preemptive front straight kick.

The Preemptive Side Kick

A side kick must be administered using your front leg. If you were to use your rear leg, it would take too much time, as you would have to switch your stance, giving the opponent ample room to react. Strike the opponent's vulnerable anatomy with the heel of your foot. Usually the knee is the best target; however, you can strike anywhere on the body, including the stomach, ribs, or solar plexus. A glichu sliding step or a secoul crossover step is instrumental in delivering maximum reach, range, and power.



This series depicts a preemptive linear side kick.

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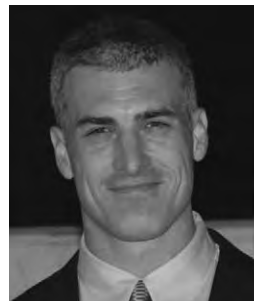
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About the Author

David Kahn, IKMA United States Chief Instructor, received his advanced black-belt teaching certifications from Grandmaster Haim Gidon and is the only American to sit on the IKMA board of directors. The United States Judo Association also awarded David a fifth-degree black belt in combat jiu-jitsu. David has trained all branches of the U.S. military, the Royal Marines, in addition to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. David has instructed at many respected hand-to-hand combat schools, including the Naval Special Warfare Advanced Training Command and TRADET 2, the Marine Corps Martial Arts Center of Excellence (MACE), U.S. Army Combatives School, the FBI Academy, U.S. Secret Service Academy, and the New Jersey State Police Academy. David serves as the lead Police Krav Maga® instructor certified by the State of New Jersey Police Training Commission. David has created a program for marquee NFL and collegiate football players, including his alma mater Princeton University, utilizing modified krav maga tactics for the sport of American football. David is regularly featured in major media outlets, including *Men's Fitness*, *GQ*, *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The New Yorker*, *Penthouse*, *Fitness*, *Marine Corps News*, *Armed Forces Network*, *Special Operations Report*, and *Military.com*. David is the author of *Krav Maga*, *Advanced Krav Maga*, *Krav Maga Weapon Defenses*, *Krav Maga Professional Tactics*, *Krav Maga Defense*, and *Krav Maga Combatives*. To date, he has won five national book awards. He also produced the *Mastering Krav Maga*® DVD series, Volumes I, II, III and IV, along with the *Mastering Krav Maga*® online program. This unique learning offering includes 500+ lessons, or more than forty-two hours of online lessons covering approximately 90 percent of the krav maga civilian curriculum. Please visit: www.masteringkravmaga.com and www.davidkahnkravmaga.com for more information.



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August 30, 2019

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Mr. Kahn,

Another outstanding response from the 35 participants you provided training to during the New Jersey State Police Fundamentals of Executive Protection Course. The Israeli Krav Maga, Gidon System close quarter defensive tactics and disarming training instruction and practical exercises are a perfect tool for Executive Protection.

The participants in the training were from Eleven U.S. State Police agencies including Arkansas, Arizona, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont. Also in attendance were the U.S. Federal Air Marshals, local police officers from New Jersey including the Newark Police Department, Essex County Sheriff's Office and the Rumson Police Department. All 35 participants gave the close quarter defensive tactics and disarming training instruction and practical exercises a perfect "ten" (ten being the highest grade). In the evaluation narratives, the words "outstanding", "excellent", "practical", "simple and highly effective" appeared multiple times.

Since the NJ State Police Executive Protection Bureau's first exposure to Israeli Krav Maga, Gidon System in 2003, all of our members over the last 16 years have appreciated the simple, highly effective, and concise techniques. The close quarter disarming techniques are a perfect fit for the environments we work in daily where we always consider innocent third party bystanders and public safety while neutralizing threats and other unwanted behaviors from people who want to cause destruction, harm and embarrassment.

All the training and instruction you and your staff including Joe Drew and Paul Karleen provided this past training, gave the participants effective techniques to be used in an unpredictable and increasing dangerous world. We look forward to future Israeli Krav Maga training opportunities and appreciate your tremendous generosity of your time and willingness to share your expertise with us.

Thank you,

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DAVID KAHN is the United States chief instructor for the Israeli Krav Maga Association (Gidon System). 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. The author of six previous books on krav maga, David Kahn teaches and resides in Princeton, New Jersey.

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