

Carsten Draheim



KRAV MAGA

Effective Techniques for Self-Defense



The official KRAVolution
training book

MEYER
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SPORT

Krav Maga

For purposes of better legibility, we have decided to use masculine (neutral) forms of address, and *they* to achieve gender neutrality where applicable, throughout this book. Of course, the content is applicable to all people irrespective of gender.

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CARSTEN DRAHEIM

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EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES FOR SELF-DEFENSE

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The background of the page is a solid red color. In the upper left corner, there is a white vertical bar. To the right of this bar, the word "Foreword" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The rest of the page is white, with a jagged, white line separating the red area from the white area below it.

Foreword

Foreword

1 The Principles of Krav Maga

2 Fundamentals of Defensive Techniques

3 Fundamentals of Offensive Techniques

4 Attacks and Threats from Various Distances

5 Training Tips

Appendix

FOREWORD

Don't get hurt! — I. Lichtenfeld

Upon closer analysis, this quote from Imrich "Imi" Lichtenfeld (Imi Sde-or), the founder of the Krav Maga system, summarizes everything that makes Krav Maga so successful around the world as a system of self-defense.

Conceived in the violent, anti-Semitic attacks in Europe during the 1930s, and constantly developed since, Krav Maga has become one of the most successful self-defense systems worldwide and forms the basis for a variety of professional systems of military and police units.

What makes Krav Maga so unique from fighting sports and martial arts is its uncompromising nature, its effectiveness at all costs. Imi was responsible for training the Israeli armed forces. It was important to prepare them for the worst-case scenario as quickly as possible, regardless of prior experience, age, or sex. He also had to ensure that when they were eventually in the reserves, they would be able to quickly recall the close-range combat system they had learned, in short training sessions, and without too much strain on their level of fitness.

Instead of telling the trainees what soldiers should do in case of an attack, Imi tested the soldiers' initial reflexive reactions to the stress of a self-defense situation—namely, from an attack. He applied techniques to these reactions and polished them by also analyzing the resulting movements of the attacker. After leaving the army, Imi devoted himself to suiting the Krav Maga system to the needs of civilians.

Unlike in sports, real combat situations are not concerned with rules, points, and sportsmanlike fairness but rather solely with surviving a situation in which there are no rules.

That is what makes Krav Maga so incredible, because there is no silver medal for the first loser in violent conflicts. Success is the only standard. This means defending yourself with anything at your disposal so that you can come out of the situation as unharmed as possible.

This certainly applies to civilian life. The goals may be quite different for professional users. Everything that makes the average person in the present able to defend themselves as successfully as people in the 1930s is the result of evolution. Everyone can fight. Imi's greatest benefit lay in helping people who had to prepare for combat as quickly as possible to rediscover these inherent fighting skills.

The path to success, now as it was then, was the knowledge that only natural reflexes can function in times of stress. This approach, coupled with Imi's technical prowess from various martial arts, such as boxing, wrestling, and jiu-jitsu, and supplemented with fundamental technical behavior, is now the basis of modern Krav Maga.

Even though the skills necessary to fight successfully are within us, they still have to be (re-) discovered and improved through regular training in most people. This book is thus directed toward the no-longer entirely inexperienced Krav Maga students, the so-called Kravists, but cannot and should not replace regular Krav Maga training and the development of individual skills.

Following my first book, *Krav Maga: A Comprehensive Guide for Individuals, Security, Law Enforcement, and Armed Forces*, which deals with instructional methods of Krav Maga training, I received numerous questions asking why this first book contains almost no techniques. I would like to close the "gap" with this book.

At the time, because of my membership in a society, I was not permitted to write about techniques, but my first book was already seen as a "betrayal of secrets."

Together with my team of trainers and international Krav Maga experts, I founded an independent Krav Maga society in 2017: *KRAVolution*. The success of *KRAVolution* was overwhelming, and we are now not only represented with more than 150 Krav Maga trainers and numerous schools in Europe, but also in Israel, the United States, Canada, and South America. Thousands of Kravists regularly take part in training sessions with us. Police officers and members of the military are also trained. This is ideally provided by trainers who themselves belong to the respective occupation.

Since founding the society, we no longer train in accordance with a curriculum, but rather more in line with the Krav Maga principles developed by Imi.

With these principles we train in Krav Maga with professional users such as police officers or soldiers who provide their daily service on the street or in various crisis areas, and also on the mat when training with professional fighters.

I too teach by a progress plan for specific techniques, or a curriculum: at least for Krav Maga beginners and intermediate students. At the end of the book, you will find a table with the curriculum that I use.

Yet, in the advanced stage, it's not explicitly about katas "set in stone," the sequence of which is firmly defined. On the contrary, Krav Maga is of course not a traditional or competitive martial art, but pure self-defense, and fighting for sheer survival. You have to protect yourself and others as quickly as possible.

If the Kravist is more comfortable performing a knee blow in place of the technically recommended elbow, that's completely fine, because it's about the practitioner's own instinctive movements. The approach lies in finding a comprehensive solution for every type of attack but with the knowledge that it is impossible to have the right technique on hand for all attacks.

Specifically, this is sometimes heavily impaired by uncontrollable factors like stress and adrenaline release during a real attack. Training hundreds or thousands of techniques would also contradict the basic mind-set of Krav Maga. In a serious situation, they would not be apparent because of the aforementioned factors. Of course, it helps to train the techniques every day, but that would also certainly not be enough if things get serious. It's not about always studying a technique and studying it some more but rather about understanding the principles and acting in accordance with them. Your own reaction capacity and ability to act under stress are honed through Krav Maga training.

Most Kravists, regardless of whether they are civilians, police officials, or military, generally have no time for intensive daily training. Krav Maga was conceived for people who are not professional athletes and who cannot train every day. In a serious situation they have to rely on their reaction capacity and intuitive behaviors. This is the essence of Krav Maga training. It hones the flow of reaction and movement patterns with minimal training effort, with the goal of remaining capable of acting under stress.

The Krav Maga system thus intentionally consists of a limited number of opportunities for action. If you can escape the danger through alertness and flight, you will get away.

What sounds simple often leads to astonishing results in training. In our "civilized world" have we actually unlearned how to properly detect risks, unlearned how to run away sooner and from a potential escalation? Yes, I feel that we have and often rely on everything going well and that some bystander will help, which is often not the case; even martial artists, like I once was, have a very hard time with this manner of avoiding a fight.

Only when I can no longer flee do I defend myself with everything at my disposal. In this instance self-defense isn't about coming out of the fight as the victor, but rather the intent to flee and the goal of not only bringing myself to safety, but also others—family

members, colleagues, and friends. What I nicely describe here as “everything at my disposal” means nothing other than the fact that war, which Krav Maga was once developed to train soldiers for, is always hard and brutal!

As are the Krav Maga combat techniques that stem from these principles: uncompromising, unfair, hard, and brutal, and thus highly effective. To put it more directly, Krav Maga techniques and the aggression that their consistent employment entails, and which are used as a form of defense, sometimes even consider (depending on proportionality) neutralization of the assailant to effectively halt their attack.

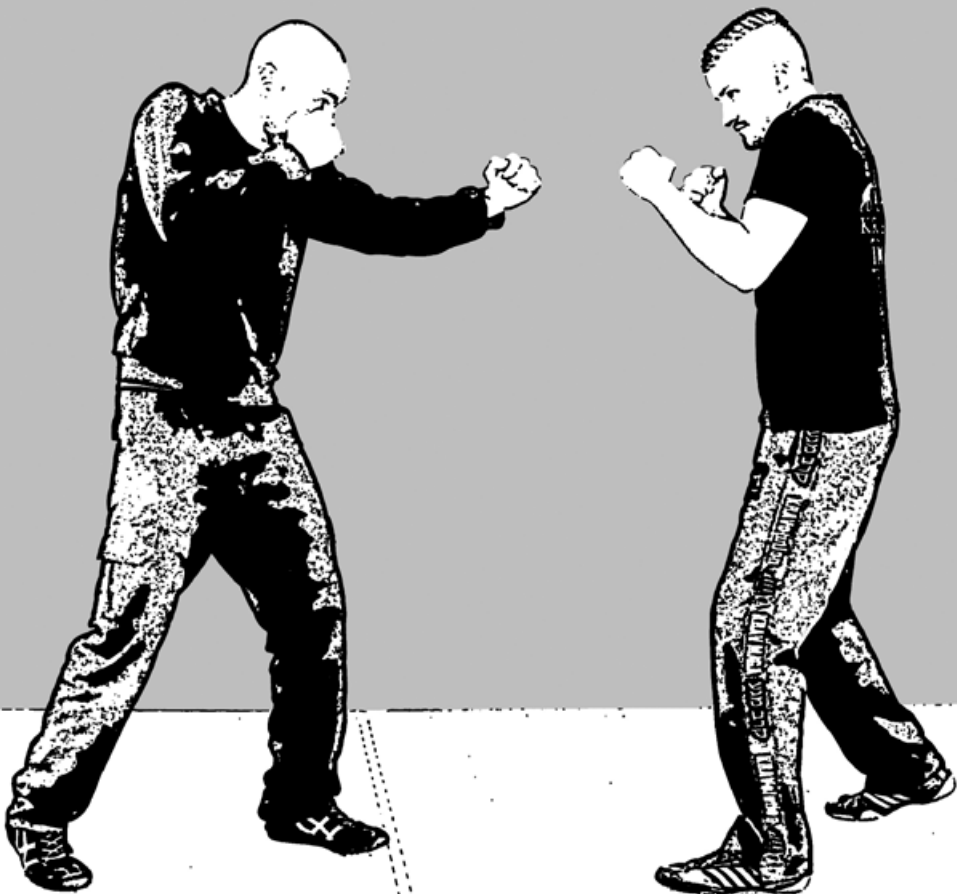
Becoming petrified with fear, seeing the danger fall upon you and doing nothing, is not an option. It’s all about the right attitude, the mind-set for consistently and uncompromisingly defending yourself, because in the end this is much more important than any self-defense technique you can learn! If you don’t know what you should do, do something. The assailant will not go easy on you if you’re frozen with fear and aren’t defending yourself. Don’t be an easy victim. Defend yourself.

As happens so often in life, there are many ways to succeed in violent situations, and thus in Krav Maga. The techniques presented in my book are thus not guaranteed to be complete or immaculate. They merely reflect my experiences from many years of Krav Maga and should help take the reader a few steps further in their own KRAVolution, with the goal of being able to defend themselves and their loved ones.

To drive the point home once more with the words of Imi Lichtenfeld:

“So one may walk in peace!”

The Principles of Krav Maga



Foreword

1 The Principles of Krav Maga

2 Fundamentals of Defensive Techniques

3 Fundamentals of Offensive Techniques

4 Attacks and Threats from Various Distances

5 Training Tips

Appendix

1

THE PRINCIPLES OF KRAV MAGA

The principles of Krav Maga can largely be reduced to just one sentence: use your natural reactions and movements to defend yourself, and combine them with a counterattack. Furthermore, every resulting technique must function under stress and thus be easy for anyone to remember.

Effective self-defense primarily consists of a technical and a tactical element. Both elements should be *equally* considered when finding the solution in the respective self-defense situation.

Technical elements (referred to in Krav Maga training as *checkpoints*) are defined as the conscious or unconscious body reactions, conscious or unconscious defensive movements, and the fastest possible, ideally simultaneous, effective counterattacks. All three technical elements must be reflected in one defensive strategy. Depending on the situation and the available reaction time, either the conscious (muscle memory) or unconscious (base reflexes) portion will be more prevalent.

In order to make a technique good and easy to learn, and thus able to be remembered in times of stress, it may not deviate too strongly from your natural reflexes. The counterattack is a reversal of aggression, and thus acceptance of the dominant position in the conflict. It's important to use the appropriate resources with reasonable intensity for as long as possible so that you incur as little harm as possible and can escape the situation.

Tactical elements refer to active movement, loosening oneself from the attack and reassessment of the situation, as well as orientation in the surrounding space. The goal is optimization of the defensive or counterposition, followed by setting a time frame for orientation. This, in turn, serves to detect further risks and secure flight from the danger situation. If there are multiple dangers in a situation, these are referred to as *primary* (direct) and *secondary* (subordinate) *threats*. In a dynamic situation, secondary problems can quickly turn into primary problems and vice versa. That is why tactical orientation is a fixed component of any defensive strategy in Krav Maga.

1.1 TECHNICAL ELEMENTS OF A KRAV MAGA SELF-DEFENSE TECHNIQUE

Technical checkpoints

1. Defensive movement—the defensive technique must function under stress and be easy for anyone to remember.
2. Body movement—the body moves out of the line of attack as quickly as possible, as a reflex or deliberately.
3. Counterstrikes—defense is ideally direct, simultaneous, or directly successive. The counterattack must be directed at vulnerable points.

1.2 TACTICAL ELEMENTS OF A KRAV MAGA SELF-DEFENSE TECHNIQUE

Tactical checkpoints

1. Early detection of dangers and subsequent reaction with flight or fight—establishing readiness to fire in military Krav Maga.
2. Moving yourself out of the line of attack and finding a new position if necessary.
3. Distance—technique adjusted to the distance from the assailant.
4. Scanning—orientation and alleviating tunnel vision.

There are also other checkpoints, including in the execution of a technique, such as the principle of “hard against soft, soft against hard.” This is about which part of your arms you use to block an attack. If the assailant tries to stab you in the stomach with a knife from below (p. 130, oriental knife attack), you block the muscular part of their forearm with the bone of your forearm, thus blocking soft with hard. However, if you block an attack by a pole or an iron rod, then you will not use your bones but the muscular part of your forearm, thereby blocking “soft against hard.”

I will only marginally address these particularities from here on out, because I already described them in detail in the first book. Only if it's highly relevant to the execution of the technique will I explain these principles further.

1.3 EFFECTIVENESS UNDER STRESS

In order to maintain control of yourself and the situation, it's important for the defender in a self-defense situation to strive for the greatest necessary aggression, never the greatest maximum.

This requires a high level of stress tolerance and self-control, as well as the swift processing and alleviation of stress. This is due to the necessity to simulate situations as realistically as possible and under physical strain in order to do justice to the system's requirements.

I personally benefit from it not only in everyday situations but especially in my job so that I can keep a cool head when things get dicey. People always ask me whether I have “fighting experience” outside of the mat or if I have had to “use” Krav Maga. I reply that I do it nearly every day: in my profession as the owner of multiple companies; communication with customers, suppliers, and employees; as the director of an international company that specializes in personal protection; and of course, as a Krav Maga instructor around the world.

Of course, I'm no street fighter nor a professional fighter. In my humble opinion, the real danger is significantly smaller if you recognize it as such early on and clearly address it! If there is still a confrontation, it helps to use your own adrenaline rush to act uncompromisingly and controlled, but not blindly.

This “switch-on/switch-off” principle, or the quick transition from a relaxed situation to a tense one and vice versa, is a primary component of the Krav Maga system and, alongside the subelements of technique and tactics, forms the basis for the development and application of defensive strategies in self-defense.

Naturally Krav Maga has a lot to do with prevention, especially in the civil sphere. If I can avoid a confrontation, this is always the better solution. If I see the danger, I will flee from it. Yet it is often not that simple, as life is sometimes not black and white, and such situations may be gray. It's not directly clear to you that a situation could result in an attack. Your gut feeling says, "Be careful." Your brain tells you, "Nothing can happen to you." But that is the moment when the attack happens.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF A KRAV MAGA SELF-DEFENSE TECHNIQUE

I'm not interested in writing a book about Krav Maga techniques, explaining them and creating colorful pictures for them, without presenting my own perspective as to why I think the technique I'm presenting and describing is appropriate.

I have been training and teaching Krav Maga for many years now. But after lots of "dull" training of techniques, only in recent years have I begun addressing the "why" of a technique and questioning it. Perhaps this was also the foundation for establishing a separate, and now internationally successful, Krav Maga society. This open mind-set and communication with professional practitioners in the police and military, martial arts masters, Krav Maga experts from other organizations, and especially with survivors of violence, as well as the bottom line of how we can use that, what we can do differently, is Krav Maga to me.

I never knew Imi Lichtenfeld personally, yet I am sure that this attitude is exactly what the developer of the art had in mind. I do not want to point fingers, but everyone who claims that they have the only true, definitive, or original Krav Maga self-defense is a charlatan. In this book I present solely my own, limited view of the techniques to the best of my ability, and would also like to justify my selections accordingly.

1.5 A KRAV MAGA TECHNIQUE, DIVIDED INTO INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE STAGES

The division of a Krav Maga technique into individual steps, which I refer to as *stages*, helps with the fundamental understanding of the tactical and technical requirements of a Krav Maga self-defense technique. These stages present a strategy for achieving the best possible result when defending against an attack.

In theory there are three basic stages within a Krav Maga technique.

The second stage is also concerned with so-called special needs. I would like to call this stage 2.1—namely, the stage of a technique for special needs, which is of special importance to professional Krav Maga users. These technical elements are primarily control, fixation, and transport techniques. Such special needs will not be further addressed in this book for civil self-defense. However, standing up from a position on the ground is a special need.

1.5.1 The First Stage—Building on the Initial Reaction

The first stage of the self-defense technique is the immediate reaction to a completed attack. This is determined by a reflexive reaction and protective movement.

Through regular training with muscle memory, these reflexes can be optimized and replaced with conscious defense motions, but this first stage must always be based on reflexes.

The *defense motion* is an immediate reaction to the attack, ideally in conjunction with *body motion*.

This defense motion, coupled with the body motion, is the first technical necessity for defending against an attack. This defense motion, or in other words the defense technique, thus also constitutes the first technical checkpoint. The movement of the body—that is, the body motion—is the second technical checkpoint within this stage.

1.5.2 The Second Stage—the Counterattack

The second state includes the counterattack from a technical and tactical perspective, and directly follows or is even simultaneous with the first stage. Best-case scenario: defense is thus also the offense.

This uncompromising counterattack can also be referred to as *counterstriking*. It consists of a reasonable, purposeful combination of offensive techniques with the goal of creating a time window in which safe retreat from the situation is possible, or the attacker is brought under control.

By tactically moving from the line of attack to an ideal position, you also avoid further attacks from the assailant in the short term. Orientation also plays a critical role—that is, acquiring new fields of view with regard to additional dangers and escape opportunities. This tactical movement forms the main strategy of every Krav Maga technique and is the underlying principle of the Krav Maga system.

This counterattack can also entail various techniques, such as firearm control during an attack with a gun, or the aforementioned special needs of professional practitioners.

1.5.3 The Third Stage—Orientation

Stage 3 includes more tactical checkpoints that immediately follow a physical confrontation, and which are understandably, often severely neglected in most martial arts but even in most self-defense systems I am familiar with as well.

In the civil arena, escaping the immediate reach of the assailant—namely, creating distance—is the necessary tactical strategy. Professional users can strive to obtain a secure position or control the attacker. Because acquiring a secure position is listed as the second tactical checkpoint, the third stage involves the subsequent orientation with the objective of detecting other dangers in time and determining suitable flight (or refuge) opportunities. This *scanning* of the area is the third and final tactical checkpoint, and marks the end of the defense situation.

In case of multiple assailants, the most urgent problem must always be taken care of as per the aforementioned structure, and this can only be punctual in the event of an ongoing assault. A bouncer once said to me, “In a group I always take the loudest one first.” Yet I doubt that this is always the right solution.

1.6 DISTANCES AND ALERTNESS—TIME LINE

The sooner a (potential) danger situation is recognized, the greater the opportunity for prevention and de-escalation. The term *time line* describes the time period between recognition of the danger and beginning of implementation of a defense strategy. The closer the danger is to the time of recognition, the shorter the reaction time, and the defense strategies become all the more complicated.

Early detection thus plays a central role. In order to describe a strategy for prevention and de-escalation, we use the time line based on insight from communication psychology.

A preventive, tactical approach requires awareness of the risk—namely, visual contact—and observation of suspicious or threatening behavior by potential attackers.

The *outer* radius is the public distance. This begins within the field of vision with a radius of about 4 m. Outside of this distance, people are usually classified as unthreatening, even if they are facing the defender and without any further alarming signals, meaning there is no alarm and thus no preventive measures.

This lacking level of alarm is marked with the color **green** in the following alertness color code. When training for situations, an unprepared, natural and neutral stance is selected as the starting position. This is also referred to in Krav Maga as the *natural position*, and in this book as the *reflexive position*.

This is also generally the starting position when attacks come from outside the field of vision and are trained later in Krav Maga, if they are not noticed sooner. Defending an attack from behind can only occur from the reflexive position, because otherwise you would have been prepared for it.

The *middle* radius is the social distance. This begins within the field of vision with a radius of about 1.5 m. People are observed more closely in this area. Preventive behavior is thus possible, and also advisable if dangers are present. This begins by turning and observing, and upon closer approach, by clearly addressing them with hands raised. The goal is to prompt the person to stop through verbal and nonverbal communication. Palms at chest level, facing forward, appear defensive yet de-escalating. A small sidestep and shifting of weight can stabilize your stance and prepare you for a quick movement.

The alarm level for the detection of danger in the social distance is marked in **yellow** in the alertness color code. Under 2 m this shifts to **orange**. The aforementioned position, the so-called ready position, is used as the starting position when training for situations in the yellow state of alertness. In this position the defender has the chance to react to an attack as quickly as possible by keeping their hands lifted in a "centered position" in front of their body. Of course, this always varies depending on the size of the attacker and the defender.

The *inner ring* is the area of about 1 m or closer, which must once again be divided into two subzones. These are the *personal distance* (>0.5 m) and the *intimate distance* (<0.5 m). This requires you to act in the interest of tactical prevention and self-defense. This so-called acting distance is depicted in the graphic as the color **red**.

When a person enters this zone, the defender must immediately become active. In Krav Maga training, situations at the red alert stage begin in a dynamic combat position. If the distance has been completely bridged, and there is no more space between the actors, this is referred to in Krav Maga training as the *zero distance*, for example ground combat.

This distance must be avoided at all costs so that you do not end up on the ground at all and, for example, preventing your own *takedown*. If this was not possible, I leave this distance as quickly as possible.