

# **Black Belt Krav Maga**

**Elite Techniques of the World's Most  
Powerful Combat System**

**DARREN LEVINE  
RYAN HOOVER**

*Photographs by Dominic DiSaia*

Ulysses Press 



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*In memory of Marni Levine*

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## About This Book

*Black Belt Krav Maga* is a compilation of advanced techniques selected from Krav Maga Worldwide's carefully designed and vastly evolved Black Belt Level curriculum. Like *Krav Maga for Beginners* and *Complete Krav Maga*, this book is not meant to be a complete and exhaustive description of all Krav Maga black belt techniques; rather, it features unique training modules selected from some of our system's most advanced hand-to-hand combat and defensive tactics material.

This book will address sophisticated handgun threats, carjacking scenarios, our approach to third-party protection, edged-weapon threats, defending edged-weapon attacks by using a blunt object or edged weapon, defending blunt objects with blunt objects, and performing progressive tactics and techniques to neutralize hand grenade and improvised explosive device (I.E.D.) threats. Needless to say, all of the topics presented are extremely high risk and involve the potential use of deadly force. Some of the sections will be based more on principle than technique, taking into account the many variables that may affect intricate technical responses.

This book also provides some general information about the actual weapons, the assailants and, where applicable, weapons to be used for defensive and/or offensive functions. It also discusses training methodologies, use of force, legal considerations and more.

It's important to note that this book was not written in an effort to replace training with an updated and presently certified Krav Maga Worldwide instructor. This book is meant to serve as a resource for advanced instructors and an introduction for other instructors and students wishing to further their knowledge in the system. It bears repeating that the scenarios presented in this book are of extremely high risk, and no medium can replace actual supervised training.

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# What Is Krav Maga?

Krav Maga was originally developed in Israel as the official system of self-defense and hand-to-hand combat for the Israeli Defense Forces, the Israeli National Police, Israeli Special Operations and other security units. More recently, Krav Maga has been taught extensively to civilians, law-enforcement agencies and military units in the United States, and to our allies throughout the world. Cognizant of the different use-of-force standards between Israel and the United States, important steps were taken by Krav Maga Worldwide to refine and adapt Krav Maga techniques for use by American law enforcement and civilians.

More information about the history of Krav Maga can be found in *Complete Krav Maga* and *Krav Maga for Beginners*.

## The System

Krav Maga emerged in an environment where extreme violence was common. Krav Maga has a worldwide reputation as being an ideal means of defending one's life, or the life of a third party, whether the threat involves unarmed assailants, armed assailants or multiple assailants. The Krav Maga Worldwide system has received international recognition as an innovative and highly practical self-defense system ideally suited for three distinct entities: law enforcement, military and civilians.

Potentially lethal-force scenarios in this book include: advanced threats involving a handgun, carjacking scenarios involving handgun threats within and around motor vehicles, handgun defenses when the attack is directed at a third party, defenses against threats with an edged weapon, using a blunt weapon or common object to defend against a blunt weapon attack, using a blunt weapon, edged weapon or common object to defend against an edged weapon, and threats involving an assailant with an explosive device.

Perhaps the most important characteristics of the system are:

**Practical Techniques** The main emphasis of the Krav Maga system is on effectiveness, simplicity and sound, logical problem solving. This is a street-fighting system that provides realistic defenses against a variety of aggressive attacks, whether the assailant is armed or unarmed, and whether the attack is directed at you or a third party. The system is well integrated, which means techniques and principles that are taught will be applicable in more than one situation, allowing students to learn to deal with reaction time, defenses and counterattacks that will apply to a multitude of different attack

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**Efficient Training Period** Students attain a high level of proficiency in a relatively short period of instruction. Krav Maga training today has been further refined to meet the needs of citizens and law enforcement personnel tasked with other priorities, missions, endeavors and responsibilities in daily life. Krav Maga Worldwide's training methodology is specifically designed to build a warrior in a minimal amount of time, and the system allows students to achieve life-saving skills in a relative short period of time.

**Retention of Training** The Krav Maga system is based on common principles and natural, instinctive reactions to danger. It's due to these facts that Krav Maga techniques can be retained with minimal review and practice.



*Darren Levine (right) demonstrates the appropriate way to defend against a stick attack.*



**Performing Techniques Under Stress and Other Conditions That Replicate Reality** Unique training methods are a key ingredient to the Krav Maga system and are specifically designed to replicate the realities that exist in a true life-threatening encounter. The training is designed to improve one's emotional and physical response to danger. Unique training methods are used to develop the ability to recognize danger at its earliest stages, to go from a non- or low state of readiness to a state of action without hesitation, to develop a warrior's mindset, to engage and overcome an adversary, and to escalate and to deescalate to appropriate levels of force.

**Use of Force Issues** Krav Maga Worldwide training enables people to defend themselves and deal with the most violent armed assailants they encounter, while remaining acutely aware of reasonable use of force and civil liabilities that arise during a violent encounter.

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# Training Methodology

While many of Krav Maga's techniques and tactics are certainly singular in their effectiveness, it is the exclusive delivery system that Krav Maga Worldwide utilizes to train its operators that quite possibly sets it apart from other self-defense training systems. Techniques, in a vacuum, are useless. Without developing aggressiveness or fighting spirit in students, the techniques will not matter because under duress the defender will be unable to react in a timely or effective manner. The student/defender must train in a way that will promote and enhance decisive action under extreme stress and/or fatigue. Therefore, Krav Maga Worldwide places a great premium on "training methodology" as one of the most important ways to enhance survivability in a violent encounter. A up-to-date, certified Krav Maga Worldwide instructor is not only tasked with teaching techniques in a manner that can be assimilated quickly, but devising and implementing training methods and drills that allow students to gain confidence and pressure-test abilities (in a relatively safe environment).

In Krav Maga training sessions, the emphasis is on "replicating reality." By studying real-life violent encounters, we discover where victims fall prey to aggressors. What is it that occurs during a fight for one's life where people fail in their effort to react correctly to specific and non-specific dangers directed at them? The use of creative training methods to build the desired physiological and emotional response to danger is as vital as the physical techniques that exist in a defensive tactical system. What happens when an assailant really wants to hurt, torture, rape and/or kill you? Has your training included operating under the stress of real-life conditions?

Students should be trained in a way that pushes limits, overwhelming them physically and emotionally. One must be forced to fight when attention is seriously challenged and divided, when vision is impaired and when fatigue of the body tries to persuade the mind and spirit to quit. Pushing students to these limits conditions them to control breathing, auditory and visual impairments and the like while in a combative situation—to keep fighting even if shot, stabbed or broken.

This section is not meant to be a tutorial on how to structure a Krav Maga class, nor will it address all of the training methods incorporated into Krav Maga Worldwide classes. The purpose of this section is to introduce and detail elements of training that should be a part of any good self-defense system.

## Position of Disadvantage

As addressed in previous books, Krav Maga self-defense techniques are almost always trained from a neutral position or from a position of disadvantage. While it's certainly possible that a defender recognizes a threat early, training from a position of disadvantage (in the dark, with the emergence of an unknown threat or threats, while physically exhausted, with divided attention, having to make

multiple tactical decisions in a correct sequence, functioning while injured or from a restricted position, etc.) is designed to inculcate in one a warrior spirit and skill sets that help one to overcome physical, emotional and spiritual obstacles. In other words, since students are often put into worst-case situations in their training sessions, performing in a true-life encounter where one is required to defend when more distracted, with a lower state of readiness, fear, etc., permits them to succeed because the training methods employed help them to react and perform effectively under the conditions they will face in real combat. They succeed because “you perform as you train” (or may even less) and the training drills have specifically prepared them to succeed under such difficult circumstances.

## **Unfamiliar Surroundings**

In addition to training from positions of disadvantage (in reference to the student’s body), it’s also important to train in unfamiliar and less-controlled surroundings. Always training on matted floors with mirrors and familiar points of reference, is not conducive to the most realistic training. Therefore, students should be exposed to training in areas such as parks, offices, parking garages/lot, vehicles, etc. The unfamiliar surroundings, in addition to varying terrains and obstacles, will broaden a student’s understanding of the need for different solutions under different conditions. It’s also fun!

## **Scenario Replication**

Scenario replication is a vital part of Krav Maga Worldwide training. Simply changing environment or body postures, without situational scenarios, is not enough. In order for students to learn to critically analyze danger in an environment and gain situational awareness, they must apply Krav Maga principles appropriately. They should be put to the test by using creative and relevant facts to enhance the training session. Situational drills will often determine appropriate pre-contact behavior, defensive techniques, tactics, use of force, etc. For example, a 35-year-old man “placed” in an elevator with one seemingly inebriated and slightly agitated 60-year-old man would likely undergo completely different adrenal, technical and tactical responses than the same man carrying his 10-month-old baby on an elevator with three belligerent and argumentative 20-year-olds. Without creative scenarios based on accurate accounts of real street crime, it’s difficult for students to imagine circumstances that would force different physiological and tactical responses. Moreover, it’s extremely difficult to react decisively under varying circumstances if training only consists of compliant or relatively compliant partners, in which the context is always the same or is never addressed.

## **Training Partners**

It’s massively important to train with others and to train with as many different types of people as you can: short, tall, young, old, big, small, athletic, fast, strong, etc. A resisting “opponent” is invaluable.

to realistic self-defense training, and everyone has a different “feel,” a different energy and a different approach. Being exposed to these differences is important to practical training.

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## **Training Drills**

Finally, training drills bring all of the other components together. Drills in Krav Maga classes account for anywhere from 10 to 30 percent of the allotted time, but training drills comprise as much as 50 percent of the total system. This is important to note since some other systems have great techniques and poor training drills, while others have poor techniques but great training drills. The Krav Maga Worldwide approach is to give equal or nearly equal relevance and attention to both.

How do professional football players prepare for game day? You may be surprised to learn that very little of practice time is devoted to actually playing inter-squad games. Training consists of the use of thoughtful, creative and carefully devised training drills that, in a concentrated format, improve skills and mentally prepares player for the stress of high-level, violent competition. Therefore, the effective use of drills must replicate the conditions present in a professional football game. In reality, the training session should bring the athlete to a point where performing in the game is easier than the high-level drills they must perform in preparation for a contest. Players must be pushed to their limits physically, emotionally, spiritually in practice sessions, without being injured, so that they're available at game time. These practice sessions should produce the same chemical, physiological and psychological responses that exist during an official and highly contested war-like game.





In dealing with deadly force scenarios, it's obvious that we cannot train under 100 percent realistic conditions. If we did, we would severely, even fatally, injure participants during the training session. So, how can we prepare our students to survive violence, not only the physical attack but also the assault that is inflicted on all their senses and emotions? Trainers must build the mind-body component that ultimately controls whether or not one can respond with an effective physical technique to defeat an aggressor. You may be able to kick and punch in a controlled environment, but how do you respond when you're in tremendous fear, when you're fatigued, when your attention is divided, when you're injured but you must keep fighting? What good is it to learn effective techniques inside a controlled training room? It means nothing if you're not able to manage your body and mind and perform the defensive principles and techniques you've learned over hours, weeks, months and years of training.

Every training drill must have at least a singular purpose to prepare the student for that which he/she will need in a street war. Every training drill must challenge the defender to perform under the most uncomfortable conditions, in which each one of their senses and emotions is tapped, tested and severely challenged. Stress inoculation is a way to train people in preparation for battle. Students can be trained to avoid freezing during a violent encounter. Students can be trained to see when tunnel vision is occurring. Students can learn to "manage" physiological and emotional responses in order to operate at maximum capacity, while maintaining situational awareness. Students can be trained

control breathing in order to reduce fatigue. Students can be taught to overcome fear and turn fear into a positive force for survival.

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While there are many benefits to training drills, some of the most important are:

- Improved reaction time
- Improved vision and awareness of the environment
- Controlling fatigue by breathing while under stress
- Ability to make correct tactical decisions while functioning under stress
- Enhanced critical thinking and physical performance
- Overcoming fear and confusion when being hit or disturbed
- Increased student confidence
- Better understanding of techniques, principles and goals
- Improved class morale
- Improved fitness level using a combat-functional process
- Increased class energy

There are many genres of drills that can be employed to achieve these goals. For the purposes of this book, we'll highlight four:

**Aggressiveness Drills:** Designed to develop or enhance fighting spirit in students; such drills often require students to get through some sort of barrier or obstacle before, after or while performing combatives or self-defense.

**Fatigue Drills:** Designed to push students to and just beyond a feeling of exhaustion and motivate them to do even more; fatigue drills typically involve a lot of aerobic and/or anaerobic movement devised to exhaust specific body parts or the entire body.

**Awareness Drills:** Designed to increase students' ability to recognize and/or track current threats or impending threats; these drills often require students to identify a target or threat and respond with the appropriate combative or tactical reaction, often while performing other tasks.

**Stress Drills:** Designed to develop or enhance the ability to perform under varying levels or types of stress; such drills typically require students to perform more than one task at a time, switch from one activity to another quickly, respond under extreme duress and/or uncomfortable circumstances, and may combine elements of other drill types.



Below you'll find a sample of Krav Maga training methods to create effective and correct responses for real-life, horrific and violent encounters. Krav Maga Worldwide instructors have been exposed to hundreds of similar drills, and all of the drills listed here can be modified for basic or advanced students. The training methodologies employed by Krav Maga Worldwide are intended to get students to a level of proficiency quickly, while providing a realistic yet safe and enjoyable training experience.

## **Training Methods Review**

- Train from a position of disadvantage
- Train in unfamiliar surroundings
- Perform scenario replications
- Train with multiple partners
- Use drills to bring it all together

When designing or implementing drills, it's vital to understand the goal of the drill and any inherent dangers. It's also important to make sure that principles are not violated as a result of the design of the drill. For example, do not create a drill that trades sound tactics for aggressiveness. Drills are essential to real Krav Maga training, but poorly designed or implemented drills can be dangerous and counterproductive to students. Ultimately, the more variables students can be exposed to in training without severely compromising their safety, the better prepared they will be should they ever find themselves facing a violent encounter.

# ***1. Down-Up Drill***

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**PEOPLE NEEDED** 2

**SKILLS NEEDED** Stance, straight punches

**EQUIPMENT** 1 tombstone pad

**DRILL** The student punches the tombstone pad at 50-60 percent speed/power. When the instructor yells “Down!” the student sprawls into a push-up position, springs to his feet, and proceeds to punch the pad at 100 percent speed/power until the instructor yells “Time!” The student returns to 50-60 percent speed afterward and waits for the next command.

## **VARIATIONS**

1. Target is stationary in the original exercise. To make it more difficult, the pad holder sprints to a new location in the room while the partner is sprawling.
2. When the instructor calls “Down!” he also calls a direction left or right. The student performs a log roll in that direction until the instructor calls “time!” The student then gets up.

## **SAFETY IN TRAINING**

- Make sure all punchers are facing the same direction. Do not combine variations 1 and 2.
- Explain how pads should be held.

# ***2. Find Your Partner Drill***

**PEOPLE NEEDED** 2

**SKILLS NEEDED** Stance, straight punches

**EQUIPMENT** 1 tombstone pad

**DRILL** Partner A lies face down with eyes closed. Partner B moves to a spot in the room. The instructor yells “Go!” Partner A gets up quickly, surveys the room for Partner B, sprints to him, and then attacks with straight punches.

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## VARIATIONS

1. Vary the combatives.
2. Turn off the lights.
3. Add obstacles to the room.

## SAFETY IN TRAINING

- Remind students to be careful not to collide.
- Explain how pads should be held.

### ***3. Combatives with Strength Exercise Drill***

#### PEOPLE NEEDED 2

**SKILLS NEEDED** Stance, straight punches

**EQUIPMENT** 1 tombstone pad or kick shield

**DRILL** Partner A holds the tombstone pad with his back to a wall. Partner B punches the pad at 60 percent speed/power. When the instructor yells “Go!” Partner B sprints to the opposite end of the room and drops and does 5 or 10 push-ups. Partner B then sprints back and attacks the tombstone pad at 100 percent speed/power. When the instructor yells “Time!” Partner B returns to punching at 60 percent speed/power.

## VARIATIONS

1. Turn off the lights.
2. Have students give knees instead.
3. Have students do squats rather than push-ups.

## SAFETY IN TRAINING

- Remind students to have control when re-engaging target after sprinting.
- Explain how pads should be held.

### ***4. Touch the Knee Drill***

## PEOPLE NEEDED 2

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**SKILLS NEEDED** stance and movement

**EQUIPMENT** None

**DRILL** Students face one another in fighting stance about 5 or 6 feet away from one another. One is the attacker and the other the defender. The attacker lunges forward, attempting to touch the defender's knee. The defender, while maintaining a good fighting stance, tries to evade the attack by moving his feet.

*Notes:* The attacker must attack EACH TIME from a distance of 5 or 6 feet. The defender should make it a point to move his feet and not fall into the trap of keeping his feet still while moving his hips back. Level changes should be made by bending at the knees, not at the waist.

## VARIATIONS

1. The attacker touches the shoulder.
2. The defender can use his hand to block the attack

## SAFETY IN TRAINING

- Warn students to beware of head butts.

## *5. Double-Hand Balance Drill*

## PEOPLE NEEDED 2

**SKILLS NEEDED** None

**EQUIPMENT** None

**DRILL** Students stand facing one another approximately 1½ feet apart; feet are shoulder width apart and hands are raised to approximately shoulder level. With palms facing one another, each student simultaneously tries to draw the other off balance. This is done by briskly pushing or pulling the

opponent's hands only. Students should be loose and allow their hands to absorb any changes in balance.

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## ***6. Combatives Crossing Drill***

**PEOPLE NEEDED** 4

**SKILLS NEEDED** Punches/Knees

**EQUIPMENT** 1 tombstone pad, 1 kick shield

**DRILL** Two pairs of partners (at least) line up on opposite sides of the room. One pair has a tombstone pad and a puncher, while the other has a kick shield and a student prepared to give knees. When the drill begins, students attack the pads with the appropriate weapon. When the instructor yells "Switch!" students giving combatives run across the room and begin attacking the new target (if the student was punching, he now knees, and vice versa). When the instructor yells "Switch!" again, they return to their original partner. This repeats until the instructor calls "Time!" at which time the groups switch roles.

*Note:* This drill works best when students have to crisscross each other while running across the room. For example, some groups should run north-south, others run east-west and others run on a diagonal between.

### **VARIATIONS**

1. If your class is divisible by 3, add 1 student in the middle (place the third student between the other two and this student runs back and forth giving combatives while the other two hold pads).
2. Just punch or just give knees—don't mix combatives.

### **SAFETY IN TRAINING**

- This drill can be somewhat dangerous because the students can very easily run into each other. Before beginning the drill, the instructor must tell the students: "NO ONE GETS HURT IN THIS DRILL! YOU GET TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM AS FAST AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN WITHOUT AS MUCH AS BRUSHING AGAINST ANYONE'S SHOULDER."
- Explain how pads should be held.

## ***7. Pad Scramble***

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**PEOPLE NEEDED** Minimum of 8

**SKILLS NEEDED** Straight punches or knees

**EQUIPMENT** Punch shields or kick shields

**DRILL** Divide the class into 2 groups and line the groups on opposite sides of the room. Place one pad for every 2 students in the center of the room (for example, if there are 20 students, place 10 pads in the center of the room). Students start lying face down, facing away from the pads. On the instructor's command, students crawl as fast as possible toward the pile of pads. Students who get to the pads first get to hold, while the others have to punch the pads for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

### **SAFETY IN TRAINING**

- Students must CRAWL, not run, to the pads, to minimize dangers.
- Explain how pads should be held.

## ***8. Breaking through the Crowd Drill***

**PEOPLE NEEDED** 6 to 10 per group

**SKILLS NEEDED** Varies

**EQUIPMENT** Varies

**DRILL** This drill is a variation on many distraction drills used to create situations in which the defender does not know where or when the attack will come. The defender stands a few feet away from a crowd of people with his eyes closed. While the defender's eyes are closed, the instructor silently designates one person in the crowd to be the attacker. On the instructor's command, the defender opens his eyes and walks through the middle of the crowd, which is also walking toward him. If and when he is attacked, he responds aggressively.

*Notes:* The type of attack should be appropriate to the class level. For beginning students, the attack



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