

KRAV MAGA

The official Israeli self-defence system

by Matt Cheung

[HTTP://WWW.ANGELFIRE.COM/ART/MAA](http://www.angelfire.com/art/maa)

Copyright and disclaimer

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form. Do not distribute.

Single copies maybe printed or stored for personal use only. Electronic copies may be obtained free of charge from <http://www.angelfire.com/art/maa>

© Copyright 2001 Matt Cheung. Wudang Martial Arts Center. <http://www.angelfire.com/art/maa>
Some content used with permission of Krav Maga Association of America, Inc.

**- KRAV MAGA-
THE OFFICIAL ISRAELI SELF-DEFENCE SYSTEM**

CONTENTS

PREFACE TO KRAV MAGA 4

HISTORY OF KRAV MAGA AND IT'S FOUNDER IMI LICHTENFELD..... 7

PRINCIPLES OF KRAV MAGA..... 11

TECHNIQUES OF KRAV MAGA..... 13

BELT AND LEVEL SYSTEM IN KRAV MAGA..... 15

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER: STATE OF ISRAEL'S VIVID HISTORY..... 17

PREFACE TO KRAV MAGA

A self-defense system called Krav Maga™ also called the official Israeli self-defense system was created by Imi Lichtenfeld about forty years ago. Idea of Krav Maga is to teach anyone, regardless of age, physical prowess and experience how to defend themselves against a variety of attacks.

Because of Krav Maga's effectiveness, Krav Maga has gained acceptance in many of the world's best military and para-military organizations. This style has been accepted into the training programs of the Special Operations Battalion of the Military Police of Rio de Janeiro, the municipal guard of that same country, the G.I.G.N. of France, the FBI, the L.A. SWAT teams and the Beverly Hills Police Force.

As mentioned, Krav Maga ("Contact Combat" in Hebrew) is the official self-defense and fighting system used by the Israeli Defense Forces (I.D.F.), Israeli Police and Security Services. It is also taught in institutions associated with the Israeli Ministry of Education, and since 1964, Krav Maga has been taught to civilians all over the world.

After development and refinement during years of conflict, Krav Maga emphasizes easy learning techniques that have been battle-tested in real, life threatening confrontations. Krav Maga is different than most other martial arts systems (but not all) because there are no rules in Krav Maga. All things that are available is accepted and any attack and defense combination is welcomed to the art.

Most of the techniques themselves are combat-oriented versions of techniques borrowed from martial arts such as jujutsu, aikido, boxing, karate and judo as well as a number of lesser known but equally effective martial arts systems.

Krav Maga was developed in an environment where the Israeli military could not devote many hours hand to hand combat training for their personnel. Therefore, the Krav Maga system was created with great importance placed on bringing students to a high level of skill in a relatively (comparing some traditional arts) short period of time. There are no katas or rules in the system. As it is said anything goes when you are fighting for your life.

Students of Krav Maga will learn kicking and punching techniques that emphasize quick speed attacks to vital areas such as the groin, eyes and throat. Low kicks to the knee may be also used. Defenses against armed multiple attackers are thought and students learn also basic weapons such as knife, short staff and bayonet rifle to include in their repertoire. Defenses against different types of submission holds like full nelsons, chokes, bear hugs and lapel grabs will be thought so that students have at their knowledge which way to respond to an attack.

While learning starts from basics, students rapidly progress to full speed sparring, where wear protective equipment is used to cushion blows and protect the vital areas. This type of training allows examination of technique, and introduces the student to a small sampling what real attack situation may be like.

As Krav Maga is a survival system dealing with personal safety issues in the context of defending against both armed and unarmed attackers. It is considered to be a modern, highly refined, street fighting system, designed to be utilized against muggings, street attacks, and sexual assaults. Emphasis is placed on using exactly what is appropriate and needed to the situation.

Initially designed to give the Israeli Defense Forces a centralized self-defense system, Krav Maga today has blossomed in popularity due to its realistic focus on personal protection techniques and its casual but simultaneously serious environment.

" So you may walk in peace."

HISTORY OF KRAV MAGA AND IT'S FOUNDER IMI LICHTENFELD

The history of Krav Maga is linked to the development of the state of Israel's military forces and life of the founder, Imi Lichtenfeld. As told, development of the state of Israel and the need for the Israeli military to protect its country in one of the worlds most hostile areas, gave base for creating Krav Maga.

Imrich Sde-or (Imi Lichtenfeld) born in Budapest in 1910, Imi grew up in environment where sports, law and education were respected. Imi was encouraged by his father to engage in a wide range of sports, including martial arts. Imi's father, Samuel, a circus weightlifter and wrestler, worked later also at the police forces and actually served for many years as Chief Detective Inspector.

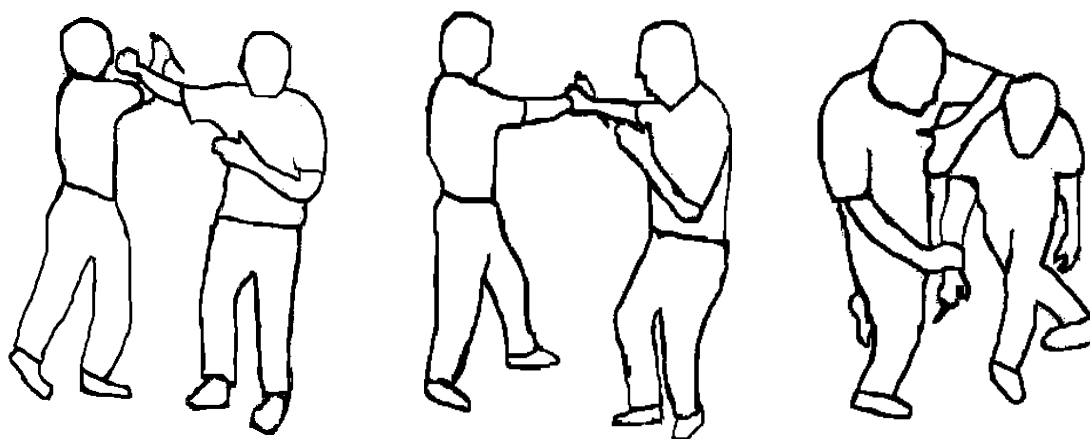
As the prove of Imi's physical talents, Imi won the Slovakian Youth Wrestling Championship in 1928, and in 1929 the adult championship (in the light and middle weight division). That year he also won the national boxing championship and an international gymnastics championship. Little bit later Imi's athletic activities focused mainly on wrestling, as a contestant and a trainer.

In the mid thirties, atmosphere in Bratislava started to change. Fascist and anti-Semitic groups rised, with their meaning to upset the public order and harm the city's Jewish community. Imi was involved with groups of young Jews whose aim was to distrust the anti-Semitic activities that were also supported by some political powers. Imi became the uncrowned leader of a group of young Jews, most of them with a background in boxing, wrestling, and weightlifting. This group attempted to block the anti-Semitic bands from harming Jewish community.

Between 1936 and 1940, Imi was involved with many forcefull protests to the current political powers and was forced to fight in streetbrawls and confrontations. It was in these fights Imi understood the difference between streetfighting and competition fighting.

In 1940, pursued by the government, Imi left his home and boarded the Petchko, the last immigrant ship to escape the Nazi clutches. His efforts to find a new home took two years. Later he proceeded to volunteer for service in a Czech military unit of the British armed forces. The unit served during World War II in Lebanon, Syria, Libya, and Egypt. This combat experience led him to further refine his skills.

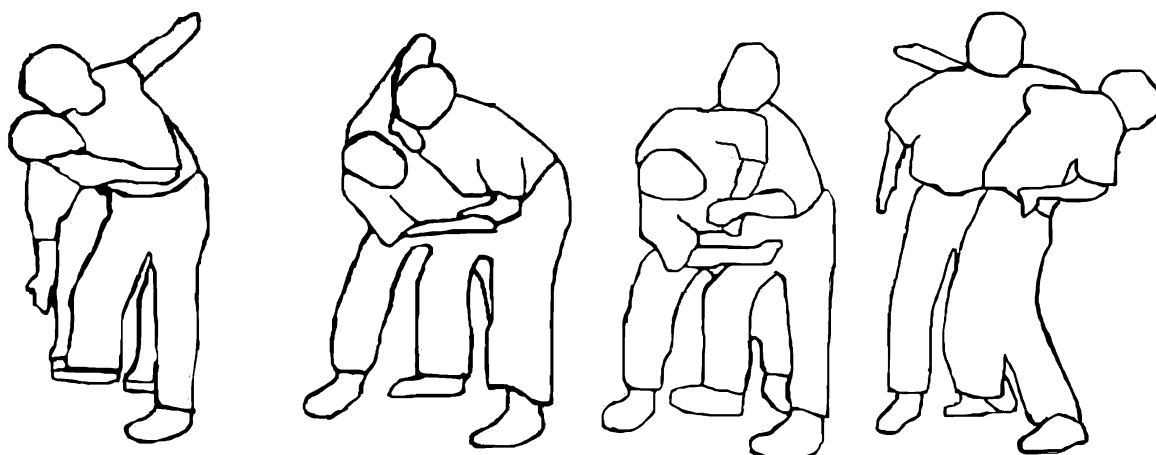
When discharged in 1942, he requested and was allowed to immigrate to Israel. After noticing Imi`s extensive self-defense skills, Imi was recruited by Isaac Sadeh, the commanding officer of the Haganah in 1942. Later Imi began to teach Kapap (hand to hand combat) and physical exercise to the most elite special forces units of the Haganah, Palmach, and Palyam.



In the mid-1940's, Imi worked with the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), teaching its members physical fitness, swimming, wrestling, use of the knife and defense against knife attacks. During this period, firearms were outlawed and in very scarce supply. They were hidden away from the British and only used for special missions. The fact that firearms could not be used had a great influence on the development of the style.

In 1948, when the State of Israel was founded, Imi became the chief instructor for physical fitness and Krav Maga at the IDF. For the next twenty years, Imi worked with the IDF, developing and refining his method for self-defense and hand-to-hand combat. After retiring from active duty from the IDF in the 60`s, Imi began adapting the style for civilian use. He established two schools, to Netanya and in Tel Aviv.

The work in the following years and up to today, was to design the system to confront every day attacks and street confrontation problems. Imi further refined his techniques to be used for civilian needs.



One result of progression was Krav Maga's use of belts. At first Imi didn't want to use belts in training, because it was a military system, but trying to get recognition from other martial artists he designed a belt system based on the Judo and also started training in Judo gi`s.

Later Imi decided that belts shouldn't be a part of the system because it originally did not have any reason to use belts and the use of belts did not have any realistic or practical meaning in the system. So the system of grades was kept, and the belts was replaced with a system of Practitioner/Graduate/Expert levels. The Krav Maga training suits today consist of black pants and white t-shirts. Some countries still uses the belts in the curriculum, but not in training.

Imi and his senior instructors formed the first Krav Maga Association in 1978, and in 1995 the International Krav Maga Federation was formed in Netanya, to help spread system to around the world.

After years of training, many changes was made to the system both technically and visual, but Imi never forgot the basic lines of the system: simplicity, effectiveness and realism.

Imi Lichtenfeld died on Jan 8th 1998, at age 88.

PRINCIPLES OF KRAV MAGA

It can be said that the Krav Maga is not a martial art, but rather an art of self-defense. Using the student's size, strength and abilities, the attacker's own force is used against him, as is often the case in many martial styles. The movements are designed on basic body movements, making their use easier, more reflexive and more effective in self-defense situations. The sequences of moves are short, designed for real life situations, with no rules, and trained to the level of reflex action.

Krav Maga was formulated to fit everyone -- man or woman, child or adult -- to protect themselves in case of attack. Krav Maga is designed specifically for self-defense. The philosophy is based on the idea that while the practice of self-defense may not be compatible with every personality, ignoring the need for self-defense will not make you safe from violence.

Krav Maga is comprised of two main parts: self defense and hand to hand combat. Self defense is the foundation of Krav Maga.

Students learn to defend themselves against hostile actions, to avoid injury, and to quickly overcome their assailant. Krav Maga defenses address a wide variety of aggressive acts, such as punches, kicks, chokes, bearhugs, headlocks, grabs, as well as defenses against multiple assailants and assailants armed with a firearm, edged weapon, or blunt object. Students apply the relevant Krav Maga principles and techniques in a multitude of situations, even in unfamiliar or adverse circumstances, such as dark surroundings; from a sitting or lying position; with limited freedom or movement; or under extreme stress and/or fatigue.

Hand to hand combat constitutes a more advanced and sophisticated phase of Krav Maga which teaches how to neutralize an opponent quickly and effectively. It embodies elements related to the actual performance of the fight: tactics, feints, powerful combinations of different attacks, the psychological dimensions of the fight, and learning how to use the environment to your advantage.

In addition, Krav Maga incorporates specialized training methods to not only challenge students physically, but to also instill into the student a special mental discipline meant to strengthen the spirit and to develop the ability to deal with violent confrontations under high stress. These training methods have been used in Israel's most elite units and have proven themselves in real fighting.

The goals of Krav maga training are: courage, emotional stability, patience and respect. The student learns these principles through workouts, practice and the development of their skills.

As with many martial systems, the intent is to remove the student from the need for violence, while preparing them to meet it when violence occurs.

The main principles of Krav Maga

- Avoid injury
- Take advantage of natural reflexes
- Act in the minimum time required
- Using human body's vulnerable spots
- Use of the body's natural weapons and all objects that may be close at hand
- No Rules

TECHNIQUES OF KRAV MAGA

The techniques of Krav Maga are based on transference of energy and explosive action. The strikes are powerful and designed for maximum effect to specific target areas. Students are trained to be fully aware of their surroundings and the potential for violence. As with most martial styles, the beginning student practices blocks, punches, kicks and specific strikes, along with defensive moves for grabs and attacks. As the learning progresses, the student moves to more sophisticated techniques against longer-range situations and multiple directions. Some holds are taught so to subdue an opponent. Face-to-face combat begins with this level, to accustom the student to the "feel" of an attack.

Further training teaches additional holds, as well as releases from the holds. Specific defenses, immobilization techniques, and throws are also added to the curriculum. As the student gains skill, weapons training begins using knife, staff, club and nunchaku. As the black belt level is reached, training with rifles having fixed bayonets is taught, based on the military roots of the system.

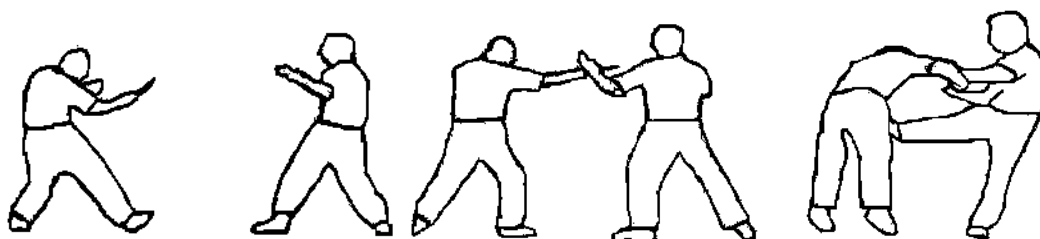
The lethal nature of the Krav Maga system simulates real life situations. It teaches people how to save lives and to cope with common street violence. To be effective in the streets, Krav Maga cannot include rules and limitations. Therefore, there are no sport competitions for Krav Maga because it is designed to remain a realistic fighting system.

Students are instructed in state-of-the-art defensive principles that apply to a variety of threatening attacks that occur during commonly documented street crimes. Students train from a position of disadvantage in real time and real speed.

Defensive maneuvers are combined with simultaneous counterattacks until all potential danger is eliminated. Unique training methods are employed to simulate violent street encounters. This is necessary to place students under extreme stress while performing Krav Maga techniques. Students learn to go from a passive to an aggressive state quickly. Krav Maga also teaches students to function with their attention divided; while fatigued; and when they are faced with a multitude of spontaneous attack scenarios.

Krav Maga Techniques for Self-Defense consists following levels:

- Defense against punches and kicks
- Releases from bear hugs and chokes
- Defense against knives and clubs, guns etc.
- Defense against multiple attackers
- Various types of arm blows and kicks
- Sparring under pressure and controlled fighting



For the Military and Law Enforcement Professional training also includes:

- Versatile use of a weapons, including explosives
- Taking control of individuals without maiming
- Dealing with terrorist/hostage situations.

BELT AND LEVEL SYSTEM IN KRAV MAGA

There are two systems to describe the level of student. First is Judo based belt system, where all students begin as white belts and can move up to yellow, orange, green, blue, brown, and then black belt.

Yellow–Brown Belt: Basic Self-Defense

1st–5th Dan Black Belt: Advanced material including military applications and teaching

6th Dan Black Belt & Up: Recognition of services to the style of Krav Maga

Another system is levels, there are practitioner, graduate, expert and master levels. Each of the P, G E levels have 5 grades and the Master have 3 (this system is used f.ex Scandinavian countries). After the first 8-12 weeks practise, students should be ready to test for their yellow belts or 1st practitioner level.

Practitioner 1 & 2 equals Yellow belt.

Practitioner 3 & 4 equals Orange belt..

Practitioner 5 & Graduate 1 equals Green belt.

Graduate 2 & 3 equals Blue belt.

Graduate 4 & 5 Brown belt

Expert 1 -3 equals Black belt 1-3 dan

Expert 4 -5 equals Black belt 4-5 dan

Master 1 - 3

Present day the IKMF has local associations and affiliations in Israel, the United States, France, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Great Britain, Brazil, Thailand and throughout the world. Krav Maga is used nowadays by the IDF including the special forces units and the Israeli police and security branches, and by many other elite units in North America, South America, Europe, and around the world. The Krav Maga has also become, as Imi wanted it to be, a major source of civilian self defense instruction.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER: STATE OF ISRAEL'S VIVID HISTORY

Because creation of Krav Maga is linked, at least some level, to the development of the state of Israel's military forces, it's also useful to get deeper look what was happening in Israel at those first years when State of Israel and Israel's defence forces were formed.

The map of Israel in 1948



Starting from The War of Independence (1947-49)

The war was fought along the entire, long border of the country: against Lebanon and Syria in the north, Iraq and Transjordan - in the east, Egypt, assisted by Sudan - in the south and Palestinians and volunteers from Arab countries in the interior of the country.

It was the most costly war of Israel's history, more than 6,000 Jewish fighters and civilians died.

At the war's end in 1949, the state of Israel was confronted with a number of problems: hundreds of thousands of new immigrants and a festering refugee problem on its borders and maintaining a defense against a hostile and numerically superior Arabs. Faced with such problems, government sought to ensure a fluid transition from existing prestate institutions to the new state apparatus. It announced the formation of a Provisional Council of State. A key element was the integration of Israel's independent military forces into a unified military structure. On May 28, 1948, Ben-Gurion's provisional government created the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) *Zvah Haganah Le Yisrael*, and the same time maintenance of other armed forces were prohibited.

When this proclamation was challenged by the Irgun, a ship carrying arms, into Tel Aviv harbor. Ben-Gurion ordered Haganah troops to fire on the ship, which was set a flame on the beach in Tel Aviv. By January 1949, Ben-Gurion had also dissolved the Palmach, the strike force of the Haganah.

In July 1950, the Law of Return was assigned: "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *olah* (new immigrant)."

Between May 1948 and December 31, 1951, approximately 684,000 Jewish immigrants entered the new state, thus providing a Jewish majority in the region for the first time in the modern era. The largest single group of immigrants consisted of Jews from Eastern Europe; more than 300,000 people came from refugee and displaced persons camps.

After independence the areas in which 90 percent of the Arabs lived, were placed under military government. The government created three areas to be ruled by the Ministry of Defense. The first was the Northern Area, Galilee Area, The second was the so called Little Triangle, located between the villages of Et Tira and Et Taiyiba near the Jordan border (Transjordan). The third area included much of the Negev Desert.

In April 1950 King Abdullah of Transjordan annexed the West Bank and East Jerusalem, thus creating the united Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Ben-Gurion thought this would mean an end to independent claims on Israeli territory and material claims on confiscated Arab territory. Abdullah, was assassinated in July 1951. And Israel was boycotted by all its Arab neighbors.

Surrounded by enemies and having to integrate thousands of immigrants into the new state, government attempted to make the IDF the new unifying symbol of the fledgling state. Israel needed a unity of purpose, which could be provided by a strong army that would defend the country against its enemies and help assimilate its culturally diverse immigrants.

In 1953 Israel's defense Minister Pinchas Lavon, had authorized intelligence chief Benjamin Gibly to launch spying in Cairo and Alexandria in an attempt to embarrass Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser. Operation failed and the Egyptians caught and executed the spies.

In February 1955, Ben-Gurion returned to the Ministry of Defense and was able to promote his hard-line defense policy. This resulted in a number of raids against the Egyptians in response to attacks on Israeli settlements originating from Egyptian-held territory. Biggest concern was the rising power of Nasser had signed an agreement to buy arms from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. But President Eisenhower refused to supply Israel with weapons.

Because Egypt threatened Western interests in the Suez Canal, there where secret talks with Britain and France about the possibility of Israel striking at the Sinai Peninsula, while Britain and France moved in on the Suez Canal, to protect Western shipping from combat.

In 1955 the IDF routed the Egyptian army at Gaza and on 1956, the French and British took over the Suez Canal area. After intense pressure from the Eisenhower administration, the European powers accepted to a cease-fire. And in March 1957, Israeli troops were forced to withdraw. Although Israel was forced to withdraw, the raids from Gaza ceased, UN peacekeeping forces separated Egypt and Israel, cooperation with France led to more arms sales to Israel, and the army's performance had strengthened the position of the IDF.