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MORTAL THREAT DEFENSE

Krav Maga, which means Contact-Combat in Hebrew, is not a "martial art," but a continuously evolving training system first developed for the IDF in the 1950's. The system was designed to create a close-quarter combatant within a very short timeframe, who could then prevail hand-to-hand against an enemy with substantial martial arts or street-fighting experience. Krav Maga is grounded in human physiology, psychology and reaction time. Rather than repeatedly drilling in rigid engagement techniques, Krav Maga practitioners learn to analyze a hostile environment, gauge the opponent's capabilities according to his posture and select appropriate action, all within a split second before engagement.

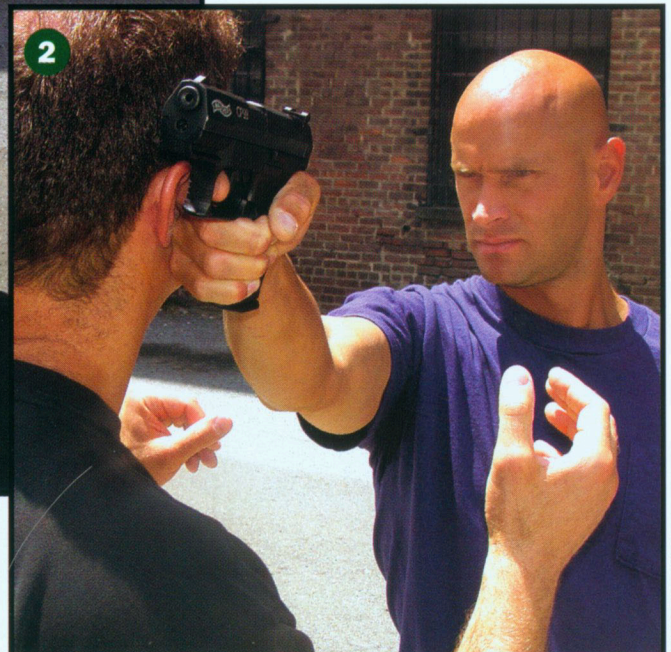
In Krav Maga, the trainee is not taught to defend against a specific weapon or hand strike, but to counter the opponent's intent before the attack is initiated. Training begins with techniques to overcome fear, analysis of survival chances in a threat situation and a comprehensive study of reaction times and pressure points. This leads to making rapid decisions and taking the best course of action, using the tools at hand. After learning to maximize the use of his mind, the Krav Maga trainee turns to the capabilities of his physical body, increasing the speed of his moves over the longest ranges, all while under extreme exertion. Most techniques are executed using principals of body weight and gravity, so that even under fear and hyperventilation, one can still mount an effective defense or attack without using great force. In Krav Maga, simplicity is the key.

This is one of my preferred techniques in a life-threatening situation against a handgun.

Your enemy's intent can range from execution to hostage taking, but if your hands are still free, you must take your best chance when you have it. Reaction time is crucial here, because although the actual pulling of the trigger takes less than a second, the decision to do so extends that lag time. Usually, even in an execution situation, your assailant will not fire immediately. He might be preparing himself psychologically (or savoring the moment), and that delay is essential to your defense. But no matter what you think his intent might be, you should execute your defense with the full intent to prevail and save your own life.

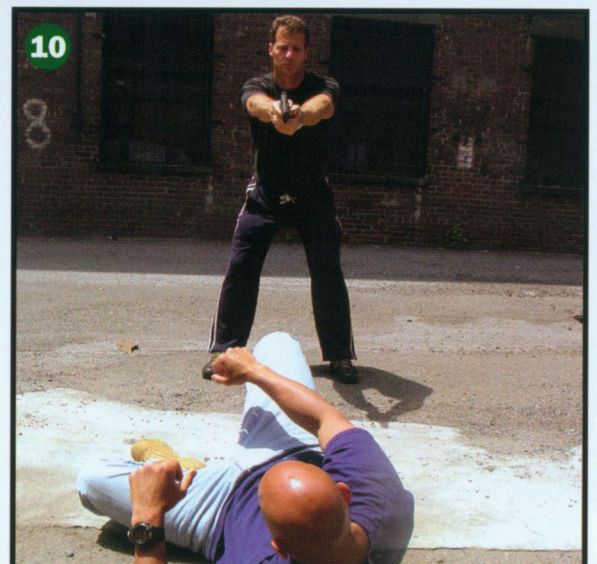
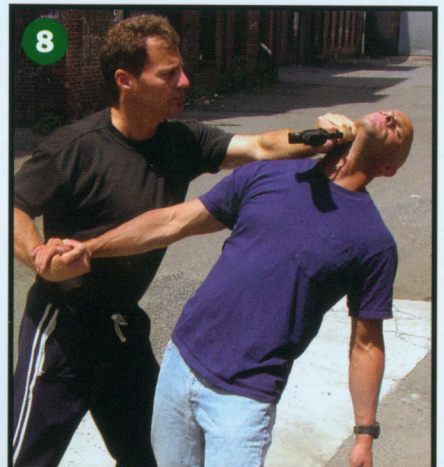
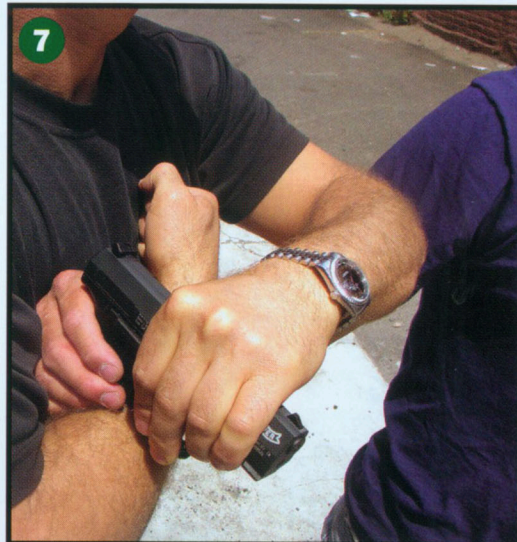
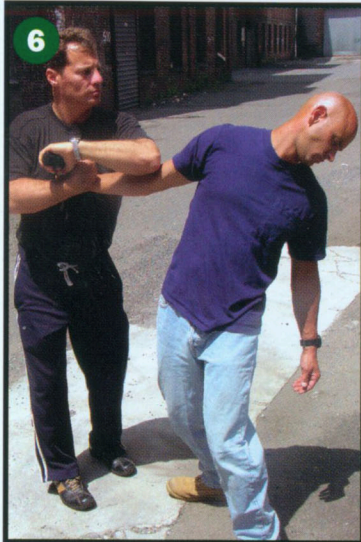
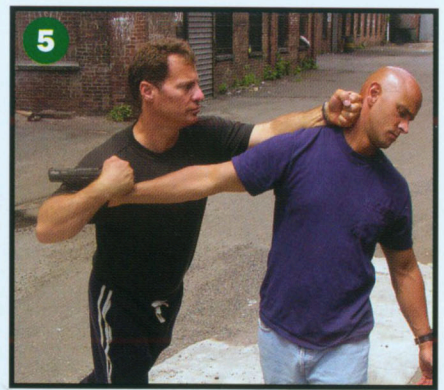
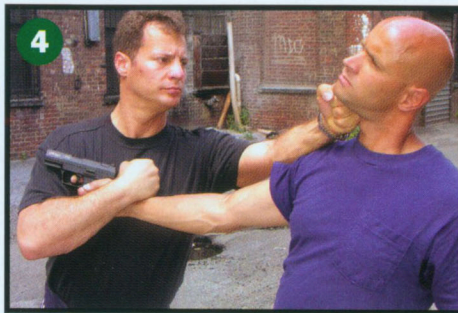
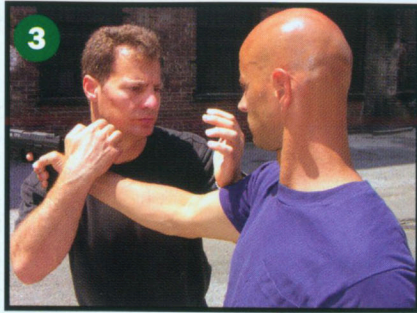
This technique can only be properly developed under training conditions with a certified Krav Maga instructor, and must only be practiced with a dummy weapon. ■

Boaz Aviram served as the IDF's chief instructor for combat fitness and Krav Maga, specializing in teaching the most advanced Krav Maga applications to special operations units. In twenty years of instructing, he has taught Krav Maga to sky marshals of the Israel Aviation Authority, as well as to numerous U.S. federal and local law enforcement agencies. He is certified by Israel's Wingate National Sports Institute as a Krav Maga Senior Instructor, and can be contacted at: boaz@kravmaganewyork.net.



BOAZ AVIRAM
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PHOTOS: STEVEN HARTOV



- 1- Be prepared to lose your hearing and some skin, but save your life.
- 2- Not just your head, but your entire body snaps around. Your skull is applying pressure to the gun barrel as you attack.
- 3- Your assailant will try to pull his gun hand back, so you form a "hook" with your right hand and drag it instantly toward the weapon...
- 4- Trapping his gun hand tightly between your chest, forearm and shoulder, as you strike with your left.

- 5- And strike again, repeating as necessary until he reacts "properly." Remember, he still has a free arm and two legs.
- 6- You've stunned him, so it's time to reach for the weapon barrel with your strike hand.
- 7- Keep his gun hand trapped tightly as you break the weapon from his grasp.
- 8- And strike him with the barrel.
- 9- Recover the weapon into your right hand as he goes down.
- 10- A reversal of fortune.