



Editor-in-Chief Vivian Van Dijk: "I tried out Aviram's unique training program, and it is impressive! Knowing that after an intense five-day I could beat a black belt karate or a boxing champion with my newly acquired defense and fighting techniques motivated me to further explore one of Aviram's seminars. As I never made it further than a green belt in karate, it is about time I make it to the next step and join a Krav Maga Training from Boaz Aviram."

**Restoring the Pure Krav Maga With Expert  
Instructor: Boaz Aviram**

**"I came to the IDF Fighting Fitness Academy with an extensive seven years of sports fighting martial arts experience. In the first two hours of my training, I realized that in fact those seven years of intensive martial arts training were a waste—I learned more in the first two hours of Krav Maga in the IDF than I did in the seven years of martial arts."**

Long before the days of drones, and well before the era of GPS-targeted missile strikes, men fought in battle with hand-to-hand combat, techniques that have since become more sport in today's modern world than they are necessity.

Now, a fitness regime drawing from cultures all around the world, such as Muay Thai, Jiu-jitsu or Judo, can most likely be found in any city. Unfortunately, while many learn the surface techniques of these time-tested moves, most people are unaware of the deep philosophies that accompany the martial arts or the rich history behind them.

Such is the case with Krav Maga, a name that has carried a lot of buzz with it as a fitness trend. But for the New York-based

Krav Maga expert instructor, Boaz Aviram, the Hebrew self-defense system is much more than just a trend—and he wants people to understand that and learn the purest version of Krav Maga.

Krav Maga is derived from a Hebrew word meaning "contact combat," and its focus is a series of techniques that disarm an opponent in the fastest, most-efficient manner. By identifying a possible threat and taking preemptive measures to quickly eliminate the threat, combined with employing the knowledge of pressure points to vulnerable parts of the body, Krav Maga has risen to become one of the most distilled methods of hand-to-hand combat.

The history of Krav Maga dates back to the early 1900s, with the Hungarian-Israeli man, Imi Lichtenfeld. As anti-semitism spread throughout his neighborhood when he was a young adult, Lichtenfeld made use of his background in wrestling and boxing to help protect his Jewish countrymen from their persecutors. However, he realized that this type of fighting greatly differed from the structured boxing competitions he was used to. So he began to rethink how he fought, paying greater attention to the element of surprise and quick, severe disarmament of opponents—what later became the foundation of Krav Maga.

In 1940, Lichtenfeld left Europe for safety in what is now known as Israel, bringing with him his extensive understanding of hand-

to-hand combat. When Israel nationalized in 1948, they set up the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), and there, for 20 years, Lichtenfeld served as Chief Instructor for Physical Fitness at the IDF School of Combat, making Krav Maga the official form of combat for Israeli fighters.

Fast-forwarding to current times, we have the present-day version of Lichtenfeld in Boaz Aviram, who also served as the IDF's chief instructor for Krav Maga for 20 years, including instructing the sky marshals for the Civil Aviation Authority of Israel and numerous worldwide law enforcement agencies. Today, he's made the hand-to-hand combat techniques adaptable and accessible to the average citizen as a means of self-defense.



**"The thing that sets apart Pure Krav Maga from the rest of the martial arts, is that it has the know-how to teach humans how to defend themselves in a matter of a few days to a few weeks."**

To teach the pure, unadulterated version of Krav Maga and not the watered-down, fitness-driven replicas that unfortunately prevail, Aviram is the instructor. Either through his studio, his instructional book, "Krav Maga—Use of the Human Body as a Weapon," or his DVD series, "Pure Krav Maga: Self-Defense Mastery," Aviram effectively communicates the methods and philosophy of Krav Maga in such a way to transform the ordinary, easy-prey citizen into one who is confident and prepared to prevail in any situation.

"Rather than repeatedly drilling in rigid engagement techniques, Krav Maga students learn to analyze a hostile

environment and stop the opponent's capabilities according to his posture, selecting the appropriate action within a split-second before the engagement. The Krav Maga trainee is not taught to defend against a specific weapon or hand strike, but rather 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 time and pressure points. This leads to rapid decision-making of taking the best course of action using the tools at hand," explained Aviram.







**"The number one lesson I want my students to take away is that they need to be aware of the danger ahead of time, and be certain that the best thing for them is that they react on any possibility before it actually happens. When it happens it is too late!... In fact, they need to learn how to realistically attack, to be aware of the magnitude of the dangers, and learn to identify the human body's vulnerable pressure points."**

"In Krav Maga, simplicity is the key," added Aviram. This simplicity is also seen in the way that it uses gravity and body weight as an advantage in a compromising situation. "After learning to use the maximum of his mind, the trainee turns to the physical capabilities of his body, building up techniques that work under extreme exertion. Most techniques are executed using principles of gravity, so even when

fear and hyperventilation take over, one can still mount an effective defense and attack without using great muscle contraction," Aviram said.

To learn more about Krav Maga and the instructional classes, workshops, DVDs and books by the Krav Maga Expert Instructor, Boaz Aviram, please visit the Website [www.kravmaganewyork.net](http://www.kravmaganewyork.net).



Vivian Van Dijk - Editor-in-Chief  
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## A Conversation With Krav Maga Expert Instructor: Mr. Boaz Aviram

### As a child, what did you want to become?

As a child pondering what I wanted to become, I was thinking about becoming a psychologist. As a youth, I actually trained in martial arts, and I wanted to help people to learn to defend themselves.

### In which town did you grow up?

I grew up in the suburbs of Tel Aviv, Israel.

Do you think your background has influenced your chosen profession in fitness? If so, what specific element in your background is most pervasive in influencing your current approach in your profession?

I did have a tendency to get into street confrontations as a child, and so I decided to learn martial arts to be able to handle those confrontations more gracefully. I got into the martial arts, and fitness came as an essential part of it.

### What inspires you in your job?

Upon immigrating to the United States, I started teaching Krav Maga and doing security work. Then I switched careers and became a Certified Public Accountant specializing in auditing investment partnerships. All the while, I had kept teaching Krav Maga as a hobby. Fifteen years later, I decided to publish a book about

Krav Maga and share my knowledge with the world. I realized that the name Krav Maga gained momentum around the world, but knew that no one really knew exactly what it is or how to teach it. I was thinking that when I die, the knowledge will be lost, so I wanted to leave something behind to protect against that. I also thought that it would take many centuries to reinvent the wheel and figure out what is true Krav Maga or how to methodically teach and learn it. So I self-published a book that was picked up by a publisher within a few years. The book is called Krav Maga—Use Your Body as a Weapon!

With my investment partnerships accounting audit experience, I had confidence that I would be able to publish a technical book explaining what is Krav Maga and this form of self-defense, what it is not, how to teach and train, and how not and why! I think I was successful with that. I think others with vast martial arts experiences also think that it is the best martial arts book, in terms of self-defense, ever published!

I think what the book is able to do is to simplify the complexities of the process of hand-to-hand fighting and self-defense, and to draw a complete picture of what it requires. It also should motivate those who are interested in the truth and those that were discouraged before, as they were lost and could not really see how training and learning would eventually help them in a confrontation.

Misperceptions are common as people are used to comparing what they can do with what they see in the film industry. Camera tricks cause the reality of learning to be lost. There are many that learn something and believe it could help them. My book logically argues what you can and cannot achieve.





**In which way do you consider yourself an innovative creator?**

Using my analytical skills, I managed to logically put together all the inclusive ingredients and interconnect them. No one has ever done this before, to basically argue what type of training and method is better for self-defense! I think the key is documenting, analyzing and explaining to the laymen what it is and how to do it and why, all using logic! Before that, people came with good empirical ideas about the methods of training and various rationale with some applied to the topic, yet most of it did not.

I was fortunate to step into this position at the right time and place, and learn everything. I could see the techniques work while I trained others. It was in fact a daily challenge of teaching, and at times my leadership was put to the test when

other experts tried to test my skills during demonstrations.

I had a pretty good idea that the knowledge I had acquired had been lost, that people perceived it differently than the pure essence of what it was. Once and for all, I was able to document and explain the essence of hand-to-hand fighting and self-defense.

**Which basic elements of creativity did your family teach you?**

My father was a colonel in the Israeli Defense Forces. My mother was a school teacher. They were both hard-working people and problem-solvers in their own. Their example taught me a lot. I had good technical skills as a child, with good grades in math and physics, as well.

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# KRAV MAGA

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**You specialize in Krav Maga, and have served as the Israeli Defense Force's Chief Instructor for Krav Maga, their unique training system of hand-to-hand combat. Would you please explain what Krav Maga is and its origins?**

Krav Maga's founder was Imrich Lichtenfeld (aka: Imi Sde-Or). He was a European Jewish athlete who excelled in boxing, gymnastics, swimming and wrestling in his youth. Imi's father, Samuel Lichtenfeld, was also a European Jiu-jitsu pioneer. He ran a police athletic gym named Hercules, where he trained his son to excel in sports and win championships.

When the Nazi youth started to inflict violence on the Jewish population, Imi engaged in street fighting, protecting the Jewish community in Bratislava during World War II, and then immigrated to Israel. On his route, he was arrested by the British Forces and got an ultimatum to join the British Brigades for two years.

When he was done with his service he was allowed to settle in what was then Palestine before it became the state of Israel. He started to teach the Israeli Underground forces fitness, swimming, and hand-to-hand combat. When Israel became a state, he was chosen to be the first Fitness and Krav Maga Chief Instructor in the Israeli Defense Forces.

As a soldier in the British Brigades he was introduced to Fairbairn hand-to-hand

fighting methods. With his genius mind, he developed his fighting skills much further. Fairbairn trained in Kung Fu and Jiu-jitsu and served in the Shanghai police. After getting beaten up by local gangs, he tried to figure out what was the essence of unarmed fighting. He later became an expert and trained military special units that fought in World War II. Fairbairn's training courses included boxing, kicking and use of a knife—basically, intensive training of most aspects of hand-to-hand fighting, dealing with how to surprise, to be efficient and aggressively prevail. His training consisted of pressure points, striking and kicking methods executed on dummies built from sand bags, killing methods, and defensive tactics.

Imi's principles surpassed Fairbairn's, as he was wise enough to pay attention to details and draw conclusions from his gymnastics, fighting sports, and his need to teach thousands of Israeli soldiers and teach them quickly.

His punchline was the concept of reaction time, and simultaneous defense and attack, recognizing the limits of reaction time. Later, Imi's idea was to create counter techniques to all the other martial arts to have peace of mind that his fighters will prevail in street or battlefield confrontations.

His top student and successor in the IDF, Eli Avikzar, had learned Karate, Krav Maga, Aikido and Judo, and helped Imi in developing counter techniques against Judo Karate and Aikido as well. Imi had already developed counters for boxing and wrestling. In fact, over time this led to a modification of all the other martial arts' methods of attacks and defenses in order to make them much more efficient without restrictions. In a way, it mapped the human fighting capabilities with a new navigation system, finding a way to virtually instill it into students' bodies during training.



This system of self-defense and hand-to-hand combat was used and developed by the Israeli Defense forces using Imi's unique experience and principles. The name Krav Maga was a unique Hebrew tag for hand-to-hand combat to differentiate it from the other martial arts that were taught in Israel. I replaced Eli Avikzar in his role of Chief Instructor in the IDF. I think the biggest contributor factor to Krav Maga is being in a position with responsibility to train someone in unarmed fighting adopting sound business ideas—i.e., to know your competition, devise solutions to beat the competition, together with a sense of being responsible to your soldiers, and faith in a possible brutal

confrontation. These were the driving forces to the IDF Krav Maga instructors.

I came to the IDF Fighting Fitness Academy with an extensive seven years of sports fighting, martial arts experience. In the first two hours of my training, I realized that, in fact, those seven years of intensive martial arts training were a waste—I learned more in the first two hours of Krav Maga in the IDF than I did in the seven years of martial arts. My mind was transformed, and I became totally devoted to Krav Maga, which led to my fighting experience being distilled and principles extracted, unified and applied on all levels of the Krav Maga matrix.





**What sets apart Krav Maga from other techniques and why do you favor this approach? Is it difficult for the average person to learn?**

Well, what was hard to ignore was that while in the IDF, Krav Maga was taught, but in the Civilian Schools that were run by same former IDF Instructors, students were never taught a complete system.

Lethal elements were extracted to the point that many principles were lost. Sometimes if even just one screw is missing, a machine will not work. While many martial artists had found that Civilian Krav Maga was still a great system, I did not.

Since I had the chance to experience both, first the original IDF Krav Maga and then the civilian Krav Maga, I realized what was done. The same problem persisted in many

martial arts. Masters did not wish to teach too quickly, and many times did not wish too many people to know their secrets. In a fighting military, it is best if all special units get top training; but in civilian life, this was not always the best interest of the school owner, because it could create commercial competition.

Once the reputation of Krav Maga went forward, it seemed like people became mesmerized with the name Krav Maga, which was new in the martial arts world. They sought anything that had flair and left the door open to many martial artists who never really knew true Krav Maga, who thus started to claim they could teach it. In fact, when I left the IDF, I had no replacement. They had to search for an instructor that was not trained in the IDF system and the lineage was broken.



The thing that sets apart Pure Krav Maga from the rest of the martial arts, is that it has the know-how to teach humans how to defend themselves in a matter of a few days to a few weeks.

Students learn to see the whole picture of what could possibly happen in a face-to-face confrontation, break it down to the last detail, and then put it back together and test it, so that they gain complete confidence in their knowledge—theoretically, logically and with sufficient experience thorough specific drilling. They do not go through the standard martial arts curriculum, but instead learn enough to draw sound, conclusive principles and fighting experience.

**For 20 years, you have instructed the Krav Maga sky marshals of the Israel Aviation Authority, and numerous**

**U.S., European federal and local law enforcement agencies. What keeps you inspired as you teach?**

It is my pleasure to see another human who feels he should learn how to defend himself and take responsibility to protect himself, his dear ones and society-at-large, learning how to really do it and becoming fascinated that he gained the confidence and the know-how. I was fascinated with Krav Maga in the first few hours that I trained.

I doubt myself on a weekly basis, and whenever I see something new that is related to hand-to-hand combat, I go back and test it with my formulas. I always come to a conclusion that I really do not need to add nor subtract anything from my curriculum.





In addition, during training courses, it is a rule of thumb that there are new students who have never learned any fighting sports, who are now training with experienced martial artists in the same amount of Krav Maga training hours. At the end of the course, someone who is a novice to the martial arts always outperforms the experienced one during sparring. It seems that it takes a little longer to unlearn bad techniques than it does to instill good habits.

**What can you tell us about your Krav Maga studio in New York City where you teach your Self-Defense Mastery Intensive Learning Course?**

I rent a studio for a few days and meet my students. It is a simple studio with wooden floors, but a professional environment

with clean bathrooms. I also teach other instructors in their own studios around the world. I have had a few students with vast experience in martial arts, including several forms of so called "Civilian Krav Maga" who read my book and were impressed with it, and came over to get training. They later invited me to teach in their countries.

**Is there certain equipment required for your program to be most effective? If so, what specifically is needed?**

The equipment is punching mitts to practice strikes and kicks, boxing gloves to protect from injury while sparring, wooden sticks, rubber knives, and rubber pistols.

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In addition, pistols using pressurized air or gas are used to simulate a reality-based pistol threat defense, giving the student in the attacker role the opportunity to “kill” his hostage and the student in the defender role the opportunity to “save his life.” Most important, it is a great tool for students to test the tactics behind the pistol disarming techniques and see why they are different from some of the other techniques out there. The rest of the training is done with trained “wooden dummies”—the students bodies combined with their brains!

**When it comes to self-defense, what is the number one lesson you want your students to learn/take away from your course?**

The number one lesson I want my students to take away is that they need to be aware of the danger ahead of time, and be certain that the best thing for them is that they react on any possibility before it actually happens.

When it happens it is too late! They get the know-how and the confidence that it works, as they are learning techniques, principles and going through various essential training drills, they put everything together without causing injury during the training process. In fact, they need to learn how to realistically attack, to be aware of the magnitude of the dangers, and learn to identify the human body's vulnerable pressure points. So in the first session, they learn a brief description of what is Krav Maga, what is an appropriate reaction time, what are the pressure points and how to manipulate them, and finally how to generate maximum force using the body's biomechanics and impact those pressure points. In following sessions, they learn various scenarios with various emphasize points and drill in various methods of attack, defense, and how to use leverage. They start with empty hands, and move to knives and sticks.



**Do you have a favorite fitness professional you look up to?**

I personally do not have a favorite fitness professional. One of the courses I took in the IDF was Fitness Instructors, so I am familiar with what needs to be done to be fit for many challenges. I used to lift weights and jog since I was a teenager. However, I do not build my Krav Maga courses on fitness. I separate them. Fitness is something that is specific for every individual and every purpose.

Generally, it is a good idea to be healthy and look the best you can. You also need specific fitness for what you normally do and what you specialize in. Some people are in better shape than others. Some people refrain from working out. Some work out to look and feel good, and some pursue extreme sports. I concentrate on a warm-up to prevent injuries in training, give my students

general direction, and answer questions about how to maintain their fitness. But the main purpose in my courses is to teach self-defense and not to make a drastic changes in a lifestyle.

I require my students to be able to at least walk half-an-hour a few times a week, do 10 push-ups, 10 sit-ups, and 10 squats. I also ask them to start stretching a few weeks before the course and to read my book. When I teach, I do 45 minutes of warm-ups with selected yoga stretching, so that no one will get injured as they punch, kick, block, or manipulate each other's necks. The idea is to have a student's attention to the last detail and practice sequential execution of techniques. Once it is done right, they increase the quantity and transition between techniques.





I had a few aerobics instructors who said that executing a few kicks in Pure Krav Maga is much harder than their aerobic drills. You will use your whole body in each strike and kick. You usually feel almost every muscle in your body after a day of intensive training. But you really use gravity instead of muscles. The momentum is achieved by shifting your body parts in various directions and generating force with gravity. So while your muscles are tired from a run, you can still generate force by shifting your weight instead of contracting major muscle groups to execute strikes and kicks repeatedly, even if you are hyperventilating.

#### What can you tell us about your other pursuits?

I like social dance and I use it for personal fitness. Travel and day trips are good for general fitness and artistic inspiration. I like to drive, too.

#### What is the most difficult thing in your job?

Scheduling students for intensive courses is probably the most difficult thing. The easiest part is teaching. You need to know how to control the commitments and ensure that everyone will have enough time in case of cancellations, so that no one will bear a financial loss.

#### What is the most fun part of your job?

It is fun to see people enjoy learning and getting basic confidence from learning how to protect their bodies and making their personality calmer.

#### Do you embrace the changes in the health/fitness industry regarding social media and technology influences?

Yes, I do. People usually want to see some information, a Website, YouTube video samples, literature, instructional videos, etc. I actually created the "Pure Krav Maga—Self-defense Mastery" DVD set with the idea that people with low income that are serious about learning self-defense could use to self-train in the whole IDF curriculum together with reading the book. The DVD set demonstrates a female novice going through the curriculum intensively, and while she is making any mistake possible she is being corrected as well, until she reaches sufficient proficiency.

#### Do you have any preferences for an artist and/or for creators of artistic work? If so, why is that? What special quality do you like in their work or personality?

Art is always inspiring. I am picky about everything, to the last detail. You need art to balance it all together. Good artists can show the beauty of life, the emotions of the people, and the balance of architecture. Art is in fact beauty, the beauty that can be demonstrated in the way the art is presented or in the way it works, or both. Artists hone their skills. They require a lot of training, learning and discipline to reach their peak. They create something that is pleasing and useful. In a way, it enhances your life with some sort of sensation of harmony.

#### In which way do you think a profession in fitness and the arts are different and/or similar?

Krav Maga fitness is the art of enhancing human lives in looks, health and personal safety when it comes to hand-to-hand combat. Unfortunately, when it comes to hand-to-hand combat, many people are programmed to look for impressive fitness and acrobatic skills. However, when you learn Pure Krav Maga, you learn to see the essence of it. The grace is in the thought and logic put into it much more than the facial expression.

#### Do you aspire to collaborate in your profession with a creator from another innovative discipline? Or do you have a favorite company with whom you would like to work?

I am open to it, however I do not have anything specific on my mind at this time. It depends on what clients you cater to, but at the moment I am concentrating on people who feel they need to take an intensive self-defense class and learn everything about self-defense quickly.

I like the idea of making a movie about Krav Maga, but making it real, with no stunts, something that teaches people reality self-defense. Unfortunately, for the average TV watcher and movie-goer, the expectations are much different.

#### Do you follow any philosophical or psychological approach in your profession and/or daily life?

Yes, I do. Prioritization is one of the key principles in Pure Krav Maga. I try to apply it in all aspects of my life. Timing is another principle. Awareness and paying attention to details are essential, as well.

#### What is your favorite building in the world?

I like the Palazzo Ducale and the Kensington Palace. Both are beautiful palaces with different architectures and histories.



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#### What is your favorite hotel?

My favorite hotel is Hotel Centauro in San Marco, Venice. It is a small and old hotel, but it has a great atmosphere, is in a great location, and has a great breakfast and great off-season rates. Venice is great off-season, as you get the sensation you have the place for yourself.

The chain of Intercontinental Hotel is one of the greatest hotels, but it is not available everywhere and is also pricey. It is just so luxurious in its shower and bath and the dining and quality of food. Many of the hotel chains are individually built, run and managed, so they are not quite the same. I prefer hotels that have a decent espresso machine and nice furniture, as opposed to cheap-looking or modular furniture. The Thompson Hotels in New York City are great as well.

#### What would be your ideal home?

I think what is important for me to have in a home is peace and quiet. A nice view is always great, but in a way your home should be a place to get a good rest and be able to concentrate on your thoughts with no distraction, or do what you normally do in a home and even just enjoy looking at the walls. I am detail-oriented and I do not like mainstream design. I prefer a somewhat old furniture style, but like modern as well. I like the comfort and practicality of the design. I always prefer a home that is more of a castle with small windows than large windows. I also prefer to live in the country, but with a reasonable commute to the city. I like driving, so parking is essential for me and visitors.

#### Do you have any dreams for the future, personally or professionally?

I guess once in a while, but at this point of my life, I have to recognize that what life holds for me is unknown. I learn from my past, I pass a judgment, and I realize that I have acted the way I did for a reason. Then I try to keep busy, trying to do my best in what I am the best in, and eventually I will get something out of this. If not, at least it kept me busy.

The more attention I pay to details, the more I understand why. I think professionally, I hope to increase the number of people that will have the opportunity to check out Pure Krav Maga. In addition, I hope that more people who have never thought about learning self-defense will come across my

book and will want to learn it! I hope to convert more martial arts schools to teach Pure Krav Maga as a form of self-defense! If that will not happen, I will be content that anyone can read my book and find the secrets of how to learn self-defense. The system is also documented in detail, and therefore it is unlikely that it will get lost in the future.

#### Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

First, I want to thank you for interviewing me! Second, I think you have done a great job in asking the right questions and putting it all together so people can get the idea of what Krav Maga is.