

DISRUPT • DAMAGE • DESTROY • DISENGAGE

KRAV MAGA

REAL WORLD SOLUTIONS TO REAL WORLD VIOLENCE



GERSHON BEN KEREN

TUTTLE

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Acknowledgments

Preface

I am foremost a martial artist. I say this because many people are under the impression that Krav Maga is little more than a collection of self-defense techniques that stresses function over form. Depending on the audience being taught, this may be the case—if you have three days to train a military unit who is getting ready to deploy, you are not going to spend time teaching them all of the subtleties and nuances of striking, blocking, etc. You are going to teach them the fundamentals, and rely on aggression and determination to fill the gap. However, where there is the opportunity to devote a longer period of time to training, then effort can be spent learning how to strike more efficiently, to move more effectively, and to place yourself in more advantageous positions, etc. This is where Krav Maga starts to become more than simply a military combatant system, and progresses towards being a full-fledged martial art.

I am a strong believer in the development of fighting skills and attributes, rather than simply learning techniques. If you are unfortunate enough to be attacked by a knife-wielding assailant, it is not your knowledge of a technique that will allow you to successfully defend yourself, but your ability to control range, dictate the movement of the fight, and have the necessary speed, movement, and timing to block, control, and dispatch your assailant. Too many times people believe in their ability to defend themselves because they “know” the appropriate technique to do so. This book contains the techniques—the knowledge—but to use it successfully, everything in it must be practiced, and the techniques tested under high stress and duress.

My choice of techniques to present was based on the desire to explain some of the fundamentals of the Krav Maga system I teach, and show certain ideas which are contained in it; such as the reuse of movements, and the similarities between dealing with knife and gun. I describe some of the dynamic and situational components of violence so that you can gain a better idea of what real world violence looks like. I am also a great believer that much of the violence that targets the individual can be predicted, identified, and avoided—and I have tried to bring this out in some of the scenarios that are described.

When we shot the photographs for the book, we made the decision to shoot them in real time, and we wanted to express the movement and dynamism that exists in a real life conflict. This process involves photographing techniques demonstrated at full pace, and full force, over and over again, and then selecting individual photographs from the over 10,000 that we took, to get “snapshot” moments that illustrated a particular part of the technique. None of the photos you see in the book were staged or performed statically. As painful and as time consuming as this process was, I believe it gives you a much better idea of what violence and the responses to it look like, as well as allowing you to have faith and conviction that the techniques described actually work.

We also made the decision to try to shoot, where possible, in the situations/scenarios where certain assaults and threats are likely to occur, e.g., at ATMs, in bars, etc. This will help you visualize the techniques and the attacks more clearly, and give a more realistic context to them.

Krav Maga Yashir is a systematic approach to self-defense, not merely an encyclopedia of techniques. There are common movements, ideas, and principles that are shared by every technique in the system. If you truly understand one technique, you understand them all, and by understanding them, you will be able to create solutions and responses to attacks that you have never trained for or experienced before. This, for me, is the pinnacle of Krav Maga training.

I am a full time Krav Maga instructor, and there are very few days when I am not on the mat.

teaching and/or training. The system I teach continues—and will always continue—to evolve, and I am grateful to my instructors in Israel and in the U.S., who continue to extend my experiences and knowledge, so that I can better provide my students with the solutions that they need to survive real world violence. My hope is that this book will go a long way towards communicating this same teaching, and that it will improve your survival chances should you ever find yourself in a potential violent situation.

OSS/Respe
Gershon Ben Ker

Introduction

What Is Krav Maga?

Krav Maga, meaning “Contact Combat,” is a method of fighting taught to soldiers and military personnel by the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces). It is a proven method of self-defense that has been tested to be effective in one of the toughest and most hostile environments on the planet: Israel and the Middle East.

Using natural reflexive actions to deal with threats and attacks, Krav Maga works with the way your body will naturally respond when subjected to the high stress and elevated emotions that are part of a violent confrontation. The training is based on what you will do when assaulted, not what you think you will do, or would think you should do. Techniques and solutions that deal with one problem/attack are reused to deal with others, thus reducing the total number of techniques that need to be learned and trained.

Krav Maga techniques are simple, brutal, and no-nonsense, with no regard to aesthetics. They are 100 percent utilitarian in nature and are designed to be performed effectively in any emotional state—whether you are tired, surprised, or stressed, etc. Krav Maga never assumes a state of preparedness (there are even training stances that reflect this lack of readiness).

It doesn't matter if you are standing, sitting down, laying down or in any other physical position—Krav Maga teaches you to fight from where you are, not where you would ideally want to be. It teaches defensive tactics against both unarmed and armed assailants, as well as against multiple attackers. No possible scenario is ever excluded or discounted when training solutions to violence—it can happen, it's trained.

Krav Maga teaches a “survival” mindset of never giving up, however insurmountable the odds against you may seem. In the IDF, the system has one goal: To get a new recruit combat-ready, both emotionally and physically, in the shortest possible time.

Krav Maga is constantly evolving, simplifying, and improving techniques, developing and evolving new ones, and making others redundant and obsolete. This makes it the most up to date and relevant system of self-defense available.

Based on systematic concepts and principles, Krav Maga teaches the practitioner how to think, understand, and assess a situation dynamically, and to choose existing techniques to deal with a problem, or create “new” solutions as necessary. It is not just about learning and memorizing techniques, but empowering the individual to act as the situation dictates. This makes Krav Maga a realistic system of self-defense that can be used by civilians, law enforcement officials, and military personnel to deal with any potential threat, attack, or violent situation in which they may find themselves.

Krav Maga Yashir

Krav Maga is an umbrella term that is used to refer to a variety of fighting systems that adhere to the concepts and principles first laid out by Imi Lichtenfeld in the 1940s. Krav Maga systems are not so much defined by their techniques (as different units within the IDF may have different responsibilities and remits) as by the principles upon which these techniques are founded. This means that whi

different Krav Maga systems may share similar techniques, they may also include significant differences—and also teach different solutions to the same situation, depending on various situational factors.

Krav Maga Yashir (*Yashir* meaning “direct” or “straight” in Hebrew) is a system of fighting and self-defense based on the blueprint that Imi Lichtenfeld first laid down in the 1930s and 1940s. It operates according to the five basic principles that are shared by all Krav Maga systems:

- Attack should be as close to defense as possible.
- Make yourself safe before attacking.
- Movements should be instinctive and reflexive.
- Attacks should focus on vulnerable target areas, e.g., eyes, throat, groin, etc.
- Use the environment to assist in your defense/attack.

These common Krav Maga principles are the foundation of certain distinct concepts that are used within the Krav Maga Yashir system (and that will be referred back to and elaborated throughout the book):

- Action is Preferable to Reaction
- Disrupt, Damage, Destroy, and Disengage
- Every Defense is an Attack
- Control the Environment, not the Individual
- Assume the Assailant is Armed, Assisted, and Able

Action is always preferable to reaction—it is always preferable to be the assailant rather than the victim. If violence is inevitable, then it is better to be the person initiating the assault rather than receiving it (when first hit, most people will crumble emotionally—you want this to be your assailant rather than yourself). If you miss, or are denied, the opportunity to make a preemptive assault, and are therefore assaulted, your first step must be to disrupt your assailant’s initial attack, preventing them the opportunity to follow it up. You must next look to inflict damage on them before destroying them and/or disengaging. No movement you make should ever be seen as purely defensive. If you have to block an assailant’s strike, your block should be looked on as an offensive response that can cause pain or damage to your attacker. This could act as a disruption to their attack, giving you the opening to launch your own damaging strikes—attack should be as close to defense as possible.

Aggressive and violent confrontations don’t happen in a vacuum, they happen in an environment that has objects in it that you can use, both as weapons and as barriers. The environment will always contain objects that can be used against you, and possibly other individuals that can cause you harm. A fight is not just about you and the individual you face, but about everything else within the environment. At the same time, you should never underestimate the primary assailant you face, and you should assume that they are both armed and able to deal with you.

The Krav Maga Yashir system takes this situational approach to dealing with violence and trains accordingly, putting attacks and threats into their appropriate contexts and altering situational components—such as location, assailant motive, relationship with the assailant, etc.—to demonstrate how these components can alter the solutions you choose to use. This book will describe and demonstrate Krav Maga techniques within this context, not just showing how a particular technique should be performed, but also how the attack or assault developed and was carried out, and which non-physical solutions could have been put in place to avoid having been targeted in the first place.

The book is organized into three parts. The first looks at the basic fighting skills you need to develop in order to survive a violent confrontation (how to move, position yourself, block and strike, etc.); the second part describes various armed and unarmed assaults and the situations in which they occur; while the third part looks at some of the dynamic factors that can occur within a fight, such as being caught in a headlock, ending up in a clinch, etc., and how to deal with this.

Gershon Ben Keren

The Krav Maga Yashir system was developed by Gershon Ben Keren, a Krav Maga instructor who has spent the past 20 years training with a variety of Krav Maga and military trainers in Israel, and in 2010 was inducted into the Museum of the History of Martial Arts in Israel by Dr. Dennis Hanover (founder of Dennis Hisardut). He also holds a 2nd Degree Black Belt in Kodokan Judo, and a 1st Degree Black Belt in Kosen Judo. Gershon Ben Keren has an academic background in Psychology with particular regard to aggression and violence. He combines this with his experiences in the security industry to present Krav Maga in a contextualized way, rather than by simply demonstrating/explaining physical techniques. The system referred to in this book is the product of Ben Keren's training and reflects the different approaches that various IDF instructors have taken in teaching Krav Maga. The strength of the Krav Maga Yashir system is that it is influenced by the experiences and teachings of several different senior IDF instructors and trainers, and builds on the combined experiences and approaches, rather than simply reflecting the ideas and methods of one.

The system looks to stay true to the principles, concepts, and ideas first laid down by Imrich Lichtenfeld, while at the same time looking to incorporate the teaching and training methods of more traditional martial arts. Krav Maga Yashir is also influenced by modern security training protocols advocated by various military, law enforcement and private security agencies.

PART 1

Basic Skills (Stances, Movement, Blocking, and Striking)

Stances and Movement

A street fight is not a fight, it is an assault. Nobody who attacks you actually wants to fight; they merely want a victim that they can physically punish, rape, or steal from. A “fight” would imply that an aggressor wants to give you the opportunity to participate and “fight back”—but no aggressor wants to be met with resistance. This is the reality of violence. This is why real world violence differs so markedly from combat sports and sparring, which are voluntary (and controlled) acts of violence in which both participants willingly agree to engage. Real life violence is something that is forced upon you, not something you consent to—usually in locations and situations which are designed to inhibit your movement and ability to disengage and which are advantageous to your assailant.

The only time that you will have the opportunity to adopt a stance is when you have picked up on any available pre-violence indicators in the situation, such as a person moving towards you in a purposeful and aggressive manner, or someone becoming verbally abusive towards you. You will be able to adopt an Interview Stance, for example, in the Pre-Conflict phase of violence (see below).

The Timeline of Violence

All violence happens along a timeline and can be broken down into five distinct phases: The Non-Conflict phase is one where there is no sign of harmful intent in the environment; the Conflict-Aware phase is where you initially become adrenalized, but have not yet ascertained if the danger is directed towards you; the Pre-Conflict phase is where you have recognized and assessed that an aggressor has harmful intent is towards you but they haven't yet made a physical assault, e.g., they may be verbally abusive towards you; the Conflict phase is the assault itself; and the Post-Conflict phase is everything that occurs once the assault has ended (such as disengaging to safety as well as seeking medical attention, getting legal advice, etc.).

The Interview Stance

The point of the Interview Stance is to get you into a physically strong position, while at the same time not appearing overly aggressive—you don't want to escalate the situation at this point by giving your aggressor a reason to pull a knife, gun, or other weapon. Neither do you want to appear overly timid or fearful. Instead, you want to communicate through your body language that you don't want any trouble, but at the same time you are confident in your ability to handle any attack. Your goal should always be to avoid a physical confrontation, and if you can, you should either try to discourage your assailant from attacking or de-escalate the situation. You should also put yourself in a position to be able to make a preemptive assault if you recognize that a physical confrontation is inevitable because you were unable to de-escalate or disengage from the situation.



Most violent encounters involve a verbal confrontation that precedes any physical assault. Depending on the motive of the aggressor and their emotional state, it may be possible to de-escalate the situation and resolve the conflict without having to engage with them physically.



An aggressor's body language and their ability to communicate verbally will indicate whether they are about to launch an assault. If they respond to a question such as, "What can I do to sort this situation out?" with silence, with jumbled up words, or by simply repeating their complaint over and over again, you should take this as an indication that they are about to make an attack.

Key Points Regarding the Interview Stance



The aim of the Interview Stance is twofold: firstly, it should present you in a non-threatening way to your aggressor, and secondly, it should prepare you for a physical confrontation. If a person is verbally aggressive towards you, you don't want to escalate the situation by balling your fists and trying to intimidate them—if they are carrying a weapon, such as a gun or knife, they may feel that your aggressive posture necessitates them pulling their weapon (once somebody pulls a weapon it is very unlikely that they will put it away without using it). Your goal should be to present yourself in a non-threatening, but confident way. Your aggressor is probably used to people either cowering or posturing back when threatened, so presenting them with a different image can cause them to question the situation.



Your head should be directly over your hips, so you are stable. If your head moves forward or backwards from this position you may still be “balanced,” but you won’t be stable, and this increases the risk of you being taken to ground. Your arms should protect the space in front of you, creating a “No Man’s Land” that your assailant’s strikes would have to cross to reach you.



You should appear non-threatening but in control. By using a hand gesture (open palm facing forward) that is the international signal for both “Stop” and “I don’t want any trouble,” you are sending a confusing message to your aggressor. When this is coupled with an upright and “dominant” posture, you are presenting yourself in a way that most assailants are not used to being met with, i.e., you are not covering or acting submissively, but at the same time you are not acting aggressively or appearing posture back. You are also in an excellent position to both defend yourself physically and launch any necessary preemptive assaults. Obviously if you are attacked by surprise then you will not have time to adopt such a stance; however, if someone verbally threatens you or acts in a manner that makes you uncomfortable, this should be your first response.

1. The foot of your least dominant hand should be the one you lead with. This keeps your dominant hand at the rear, from where it is able to generate the most power (for ease of communication, the techniques in this book will default to right hand dominance going forward).
2. Your feet should be on opposite corners of an imaginary rectangle, with your toes pointing towards your assailant—the feet control the direction of your hips, and it is the movement of your hips which will give power to your striking. This stance will also make you stable in all but two directions, meaning that if you are knocked from the front, side, or rear (you must always assume that there is more than one attacker), you will be able to stay on your feet.
3. Your head must be over your hips. Your head controls the direction of your weight, and if you are leaning forward or backwards you can easily be thrown off-balance in those directions. For the same reason, your weight must be evenly distributed between both feet. Make sure you hold your head upright and stand tall, so that you appear confident and in control.
4. Both legs should remain active. That is, they should be able to create movement without having to shift weight first. Keep the knees bent and the legs relaxed, so that they don’t have to be unlocked in order for you to move.
5. Your weight should be on your toes. Toes are for moving, heels are for braking. Don’t lift the heels of your feet too high, as when you move you will want to make sure that they can be placed down.

quickly if necessary, e.g., to be able to strike with power.

6. ~~Your hands should be placed out in front of you, with the palms of your hands facing your aggressor. Unlike clenched fists, this hand position is non-aggressive, and is understood in all cultures to be a non-threatening gesture. It is also the international sign for “stop” and “stay back.”~~

Controlling Range

If you are too close to a potential assailant, they will be able to strike or grab you without having to make any prior body movement. Therefore, you should always keep a suitable distance between yourself and your assailant, forcing them to have to move before they make an attack. If they make movement forward, to move into attacking range, you should make a corresponding movement backwards or away, to maintain your original distance. If you don't, and you stay within their range, you will be attempting to counter the speed of their arm/punch, rather than the relatively slower speed of their body. In most cases action beats reaction, so you will be unsuccessful in countering the attack if you don't force them to reposition their body, first.

Forcing them to move their body before making an attack will give you a larger movement to respond to, rather than having to react to somebody's arm speed. If they can punch or grab you without having to move first, you are limiting your chances of identifying the attack.



When you face someone who is acting aggressively towards you, you should attempt to control the range. You want to position yourself at a distance where, if they want to strike or grab you, they must move their body into range first. This larger body movement is easier to detect than an arm movement alone.



If an assailant is already in range, they can punch you or grab you without having to make any prior body movement. In this instance, you will have to react to the arm movement alone, which is a much faster and smaller movement than that of the body coming forwards—and so much harder to detect and respond to.

The simplest way to learn how to control range—before it becomes an inherent fighting skill—is to make sure that when you look at the center of your aggressor's chest, you are able to see some of the ground or floor in front of their forward foot with your peripheral vision. If the person is holding a knife, you need to roughly add the length of the blade to this distance, as the length of the weapon will give them a greater range (than a fist alone).

You need to be close enough for them to believe that they can, with one movement, reach you. If you are too far away they will simply close the distance on you first before making an assault.

violence is inevitable, you need to draw out your assailant's attack in such a way that it will commit them to their attack, and put them in a disadvantageous position.

This control of range should force them to commit all their weight forward when they make an attack. With their weight forward, they are both vulnerable to a counterattack, and at the same time slowed down in making further attacks, as they will have to readjust their weight to do so.

Relative Body Positioning

Aside from controlling range, you should also attempt to control your assailant's movement by continually moving offline. Power is derived from the hips, and people are at their strongest when their hips are lined up facing you—this is also a position which allows them to step directly toward you and take advantage of this movement of mass to add power to their strikes.



When you stand directly in front of an assailant, you are facing all of their "weapons" (hands, feet, knees, etc.) in a position where they are able to deliver strikes with full power. You should always avoid facing an assailant's hips (the source of power in striking).



By moving off at an angle, you are getting "offline," while at the same time forcing your attacker to turn towards you before making an attack. At the moment they turn, they are vulnerable to any attack you may make. You are also forcing them to take an extra step before they can assault you, slowing down their attack.



Maintain your control of range as you turn, so that your assailant is unable to reach you without moving...



...This forces them to move, as well as having to turn, slowing down their attack and giving you a lot of time to respond, either blocking their attack, or making your own while they do this.



You should always try to force your assailant to do several things before they can attack you:

1. Shift weight before they can turn their body;
2. Physically turn towards you;
3. Take a step towards you.

If at the same time you only have to do one thing, i.e., attack them, while they complete all of these actions, you should always be faster than your assailant.

If you move offline, you are no longer directly in front of your aggressor. This means that in order to attack you, they must shift and readjust their weight and then turn so that they are facing you again. Relative Body Positioning combined with range control means that an assailant must do three things before they can assault you:

1. Shift their body weight before re-aligning their body.
2. Realign their body before moving.
3. Move towards you before being able to attack.

Whoever controls the movement of the fight, controls the fight. You should move in such a way that it is difficult for your attacker to synchronize their movement to yours. If you keep moving to your left, for example, your attacker will eventually realize that the next time you move, it will be to your left, and attack you as you move there. Move in an unpredictable fashion.

Violence is dynamic, and you should always be moving, whether it is before the fight or during it—you should never be a fixed, static target. If you're not moving, you're not fighting. Your movement should always accomplish at least one of the following three things. If it isn't doing so, you are moving without purpose:

1. Your movement should be away from danger.
2. Your movement should be part of an attack/assault.
3. Your movement should create an attacking opportunity.

Ideally, every time you move you should be creating attacking opportunities, or be attacking. If you move defensively it should be to a position from which you can attack. Every movement in Krav Maga should either be an attack, or one that facilitates an attack. Being defensively minded is no way to deal with an attacker.

Relative Body Positioning with Multiple Assailants

Always assume your assailant is armed (even if you can't see a weapon, or have disarmed them), always assume they are as good as you, and always assume that they have third parties nearby who can come to their assistance.



It would be wrong for us to assume a fight simply involves one attacker. A fight is about controlling everything in the environment including entrance/exit routes, objects that can be used as weapons, objects that can be used as barriers and obstacles, along with any other individuals with us, and/or individuals who may assist our primary aggressor.



If you are dealing with an aggressor, either verbally or physically, you should assume that any movement coming towards you is aggressive in nature. Don't assume it is somebody about to intervene on your behalf, e.g., a friend, a security person, etc. Your job is to "line them up," so you are only facing one person at a time.



If the third party/secondary assailant tries to move round the person in front of you, you should move so that you keep the secondary assailant directly behind the primary aggressor.



Once your assailants are lined up, you should do everything you can to maintain this structure. In a physical confrontation, your goal should be to take the person who is directly in front of you out of the fight as quickly as possible, then face the next attacker and do the same, until all assailants are dealt with.

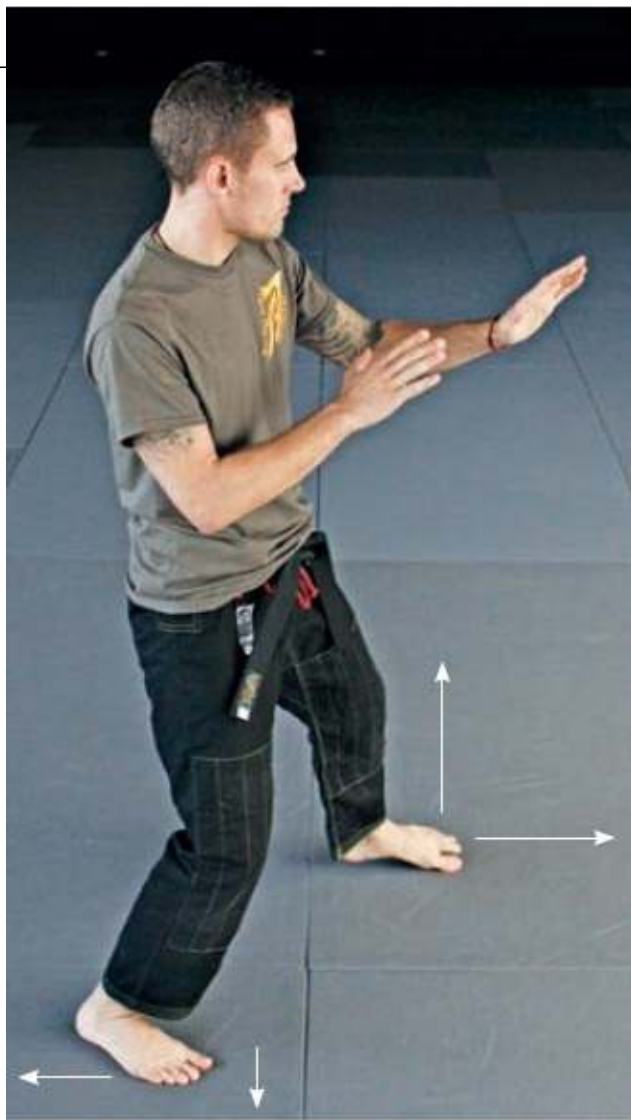


Focusing and dealing with one person at a time, when possible, is a much more effective strategy than moving between multiple attackers with your assaults. Concentrate force on each one in turn, taking them out of the fight one by one.

When you move you should scan and look around, to get an understanding of your environment. Are there objects you can use as weapons? Objects you can use as barriers, such as cars or tables? Are there people moving towards you? Uninvolved people usually move away from confrontations, not towards them, so someone moving towards you and your assailant should be seen as another potential threat—don't assume it is someone coming to help you.

If you are dealing with multiple assailants, or can see people coming towards you, you do not want to be caught in the middle of them—rather, you should line them up so you are only facing one person at a time. This person will act as the pivot point of the group—as the others try to reach you, you will keep them in line by moving in the same direction, around the central person you've selected to deal with first. If you are in a situation where you have a choice of who that person is, you should choose to face the most aggressive first, as they will definitely want to be involved in the fight. Choosing to deal with a less aggressive person, who may have been content to stay out of the fight, will mean that you will have to deal with both of them, when it could have been just the primary aggressor.

How to Move



To move backwards, move the rear foot first, followed by the front foot.

To move left, move the left foot first, followed by right foot.

To move forward, move the forward foot first, followed by the rear foot.

To move right, move the right foot first, followed by the left foot.

Your feet should always slide and feel a connection with the floor, rather than stepping. This will prevent you from putting your foot down on something unstable or slippery. If you slide and transfer your weight in a controlled fashion, you will be able to feel whether or not what is beneath your feet is solid and can be trusted to bear your weight. Stepping actions also demonstrate to your assailant a transfer of weight—if they are trained, they will be able to exploit this by easily sweeping your feet.

When you want to move forward, simply move the forward foot, sliding it about a foot's length, plant it, and bring the rear foot up so you are in the same stance as you were before. It should be the rear foot pushing the body which initiates the body and forward foot to move. As you move forward, be careful to keep your weight over your hips, rather than overly transferring it to the front foot. This transference could make you vulnerable to being swept before you place the foot down, it could also make your front leg a solid target for a kick, as it will be too rooted and unable to ride the movement of any strike to it.

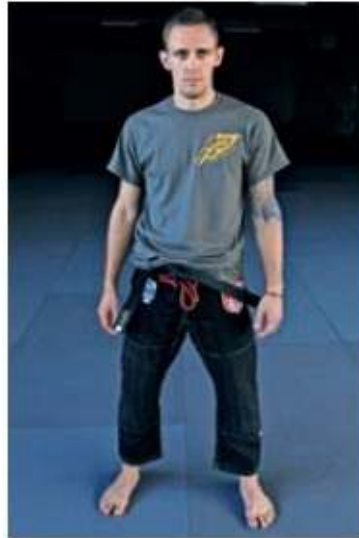
If you want to move backwards, repeat this process in reverse, pushing off with the front foot and sliding the rear foot, again keeping the weight centered. Every time you move, you should first

yourself back in your original stance (feet on opposite corners of a rectangle, weight distributed 50/50, both legs active).

When you move either to the left or right, the same rules apply. When you move to the left, you should push off with the right foot, slide the left foot to the left, and resume your stance. Moving to the right will involve force being applied by the left foot to allow the right to slide first.

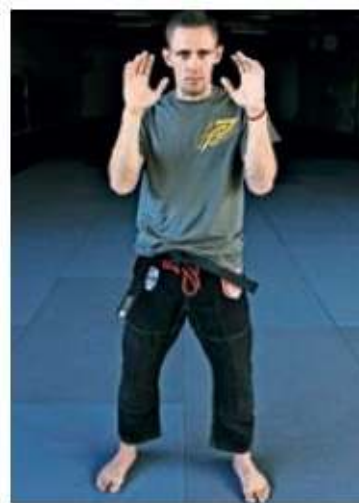
Other Stances

If you are attacked without warning (most assaults are preceded by a verbal exchange), your hands may be down (we call this “Unprepared Stance”), halfway up (“Semi-Prepared Stance”) or in some other position; equally, your footing may be unbalanced and your body alignment off. It is important to train from these unprepared and semi-prepared positions, and to practice taking the first opportunity in these situations to get into a stable stance from which you can strike.



Unprepared Stance—This is a training stance that is used to replicate our body/hand position when we are attacked without surprise. In Krav Maga, we don't assume we'll always be in a state of readiness when assaulted, and so train from positions of unreadiness, where our hands are down and our feet are not in the most stable position, etc.

We also train from positions where we are seated, walking, and even lying down.



Semi-Prepared Stance—There are times when we naturally react to movements (threatening and non-threatening) by bringing our hands up. It should also become a first response for us to start to bring our hands up as soon as we recognize that we are being assaulted.

The Semi-Prepared Stance is a training stance that acknowledges this natural reaction, from which we train the first moments



Fighting Stance—This is a stance that demonstrates principles, such as keeping the hands up high when they are not being used to strike or block with. If you have the space and time to adopt a fighting stance in a real-life confrontation, you have either missed an opportunity to attack your assailant, or failed to disengage from them—otherwise you should be adopting an Interview Stance, with the goal of de-escalating the situation. Just as with the Interview Stance, your least dominant hand (and leg) should be forward. You should never find yourself in a static stance, as you should always be moving in a fight, either attacking, preparing to attack.

Striking, Punching, Kicking, and Throwing

If you believe that violence is inevitable you should strike preemptively, rather than wait to be attacked. If you have adopted the Interview Stance and in talking to your assailant find them so aggressive and emotional that they don't respond, or you understand that their motive is one that will inevitably lead to physical violence (they have a pre-planned goal they wish to accomplish, such as an abduction or mugging), you should take control of the situation and attack first.

If disengagement is an option, and you can move behind a protective barrier such as a car and/or exit the situation, you should. If there is something in the environment you can use as a weapon then it would be advisable to arm yourself, for you should always assume that your assailant is armed, and you don't want to have to deal with them in this capacity without a weapon of your own.

Preemptive Striking Combination

Following is detailed a preemptive striking combination that all Krav Maga Yashir students learn. In reality, it can be dissected and any part of the combination can be used during any stage of a physical assault, not just at the beginning, or in the order shown here.

The combination leads with a preemptive strike. All the other techniques (the kick, the punches, the knee, etc.) flow out from there in an unbroken fashion, with each strike setting up the next. The body has three naturally weak targets that no amount of gym work and training can strengthen. These are the eyes, the throat, and the groin. A little force applied to each one of these targets will result in a great deal of pain and discomfort, which makes them excellent “first choice” targets.

*The Krav Maga Yashir system works along a continuum, referred to as **Disrupt, Damage, Destroy, and Disengage**. The first strike that is thrown should look to disrupt the assailant from either making an assault, or from continuing with their assault. To do this, you should attack the soft targets listed, with fast strikes that don't require any power to be effective. If you are assaulted when unprepared and surprised, it will take you a relatively long time to get into a position from which you can deliver*

powerful strikes. You will be able to create this time by disrupting your assailant with an eye, throat or groin strike and follow these with power strikes, which you will use to finish the fight.

Lead Eye Strike



A poor eye strike is much more effective than a poor punch, and so makes a very good initial strike. It also doesn't rely on "bo power" to be effective, and can therefore be thrown from almost all body positions. Even if it doesn't land, it will normally cause the person receiving it to pull their head back, restricting their ability to make an attack (in that moment).

From the Interview Stance, turn on the toes of the front foot and extend your front hand, aiming your fingers at your assailant's eyes. The hand should flick out towards them, with the pivoting motion of the toes bringing the hip forward and turning the body, to give you a better reach. If your assailant is too far away for you to reach this way, you will need to take a small, sliding step forward to close the distance.

If your strike connects, it will cause your aggressor's eyes to water, disrupting them from making their own attack, and preventing them from defending themselves against your next, more damaging attack. Even if you don't make contact, this fast movement aimed at their eyes will cause them to blink or pull their head back, giving you an opening to move in with a hard strike.

Groin Kick

Depending on the position of your aggressor's stance, you may need to move before making the groin kick, as their leg position may prevent you from reaching your target.



Although extremely simple and effective, groin kicks can be relatively difficult to pull off in real life situations. This isn't because the kick is performed badly, but because people have a natural tendency to pull the hips back, and drop their hands to protect themselves when there is movement towards the groin. The groin is a relatively small and well-protected target.

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