



## Krav-Maga: Reality fighting on the ground

By Eyal Yanilov and Jon Hegan

The essence of Israel's Krav-Maga is purely tactical self-defence and surviving a real-life violent confrontation. This can be under any conditions in the street, the battle field or any other environment, regardless whether it is during a civil, law-enforcement, terrorist or military type scenario. Our purpose is not to compete with someone who wears tightly fitting lycra pants and fights in a ring or cage for a living. Generally, in most areas of the world, we do not regard or see these people as a principle threat or risk, as they are highly trained and disciplined athletes who rarely find themselves easily dragged into a common street brawl. Skilled fighters/ground fighters are exceptionally scarce and as a rule will evade such trouble if only to avoid injury. Whereas the common attacker and street hooligan has no such priorities, instead it wouldn't be classed as a good night out unless they had a trip to the local A&E after an altercation. For conflict in the street Krav-Maga has no rules of any sport origin, that means, no referees and includes biting, gouging the eyes, using incidental objects as weapons, breaking small joints and striking effectively with all available body weapons. This is reality and this is what Krav-Maga is all about.

**What can really happen in a fight that goes to the ground?**

A violent confrontation may eventually go to the ground at some point, whether you like it or not, especially if one person is actively trying to achieve just that. Once on the ground the assailant can continue to attack from in the position they have landed or trade for a superior one (naturally there will be weapons or other people getting themselves involved to consider). As previously mentioned, in the streets today there are few people who are knowledgeable with the complexities of ground fighting, but still an attacker may, as part of the natural behavior found in humans, start to wrestle you resulting in taking you to the floor (a headlock is still probably the most common non-skilled grappling throw/attack) or maybe because they learned some Judo as a child, or worse, a fan of the WWF.

Regarding the common attacker and their methods - we will always assume that they either have friends close by that will interfere and will try to hold or kick and punch you, or they may be able to produce a weapon concealed in their clothing or simply grab a close-by object and use it to hit you. With this in mind, one should never to go to the ground voluntarily (even if this is personal preference). If this was unavoidable, which can often be the case, you should try not to stay there any longer than the absolute minimum time required. In virtually all cases you will be more limited in action and vulnerable to attacks from other assailants that are even more difficult to defend. The solutions are naturally not to go to the ground, if at all possible, for that Krav-Maga has several responses depending on timing and the movement of the attacker. If you cannot avert this then do the best you can do, the strategy is to get back up as soon as possible, with minimum impairment to yourself and able to inflict as much damage as needed to the assailant/s.



Used to ground fighting, with sport restrictions? You may think that you possess the upper hand, but street criminals will invariably have a weapon concealed that they can "skewer" you with well before you think you can get them to, "tap out"!



### **Self-defence on the ground - first steps and preventive measures**

Krav-Maga self defence (we differ between basic self-defence and fighting situations) on the ground includes similar topics to those that we have already in our standing curriculum.

The first preventive measures the Krav-Maga practitioner learns are how to fall, roll and fall-break, subjects that are to be found in most martial arts and naturally we do it but with our vision

and techniques. It is a fact that many people get injured when meeting terra firma at high speed, whether it's because someone sent them there or because they; stumbled, slipped or fell while walking / running/riding etc. A roll is converting the fall into a round motion and the fall-break aims to reduce the shock and absorb the impact of the body with the ground.

The second set of measures are to try and prevent the attacker from taking you to the ground, techniques include distancing, blocking the attackers body from getting close to you and obviously counterattacking with maximum efficiency

The last phase of preventive measures is how to avert the assailant from reaching you if they are standing and you are on the ground. This is done by tactical moves on the ground, turning with the hips and legs towards the assailant, kicking from the ground, stopping the assailant reaching you and how to get up as fast as possible (to the most suitable direction or exit) whether charging the opponent, avoiding, or retreating from them.

### **Defending a standing opponent - that kicks, punches, or uses a weapon**

As a confrontation can start while you are in any position, the Krav-Maga instructors and curriculum direct the student to constantly operate from a disadvantageous position. As a defender, the moment that you observe the danger, you may find yourself standing, walking, sitting on a chair, in a car, sitting on the ground or laying down. During a scuffle people often fall to the ground or the assailant causes them to fall whilst they are still standing. It is highly likely that the assailant will attack you while they are still standing and you are laying down, this is a very vulnerable and dangerous position to be in. Although in the UK we have a saying "Never kick a man when he's down", the street criminal will normally reply, "Well, can you think of a better time to do it"?

We include defending kicks directed to the head or body, defending punches and naturally defending attacks with weapons such as sticks (and other blunt objects) and edged weapons.



**Example** - you are on the ground and the assailant managed to get close to you and deliver a kick towards your head. You respond with a forearm defence, simultaneously, move the body away and then direct the counterattacks with your leg to groin or knee area. Then get up as soon as possible.



1. The attack - a football type kick at your head
2. Block and defend your head, move around and prepare to counter
3. Strike out with a stomping kick and then get up

Basic defenses and releases when both of you have ended up on the floor

In the basic self-defence section - The student learns to deal with an opponent who is on the ground, positioned near or on top of them. Krav-Maga basic techniques include dealing with an assailant who may be: choking with the palms (when either sitting on you, or kneeling by your side, or is between your legs); puts you in different types of head locks; Grabs your wrists and pins you down; or is punching to the head or body; (When concerned with self-defence for women on the ground, the main emphasis is on defending grabs and chokes, when the assailant is either sitting on the defender or is between the legs.)

Krav-Maga's range of solutions against those attacks on the ground are based on techniques and principles of defences and releases that we have already have in the standing positions, as well as on the basics of how to move and change positions on the ground. Naturally there are unique techniques for specific problems when one is on the ground and the attacker executes an attack from the one of the options that were mentioned before.

**Example:** In the basic technique to release from a choke from the front (standing), the trainee will pluck (remove) the assailant's hands from the throat and simultaneously attacks with a knee to the groin, then the defender will finish the "situation" with more countering strikes and/or retreating. When the choke is on the ground - our example is an attacker choking from between the legs of the defender - the same principle and technique apply, using the same plucking motion while moving to send the knee against the assailant's chest (to push them away) and then kick them strongly in the face.

- 1. Being choked on the ground with the assailants palms and thumbs**
- 2. Release the pressure on the throat with an eye gouge and push the assailant away**
- 3. Insert and push your knee on the assailants chest, still controlling their wrist**
- 4. Counterattack decisively with a strong kick to the face**







1. You are caught in a headlock
2. Move your body inwards to relieve the pressure on your chest and gouge the eyes
3. Pull and turn
4. Finish the roll
5. Counterattack
6. Finish the "situation"



## **Whilst on the ground - Defending an opponent that uses a weapon**

If you end up on the ground, the assailant may also try to use a weapon. Our training includes a variety of exercises, based on principles and techniques from our Krav-Maga standing and basic ground self defense, so the trainee will be able to deal with attacks such as stabs/threats with edged weapons; attacks with blunt instruments and more.



For members of the military, specialist agencies, police units and also for our higher-level expert instructors, we also have solutions if an assailant threatens with a firearm.

The aim of the system is to solve many types of problems with the same solution, the result of which is a reaction and a decision making process that is non-convoluted, fast to learn and easy to retain, these are important factors in a time of need when a Krav-Maga trainee is placed under traumatic conditions.

**Example:** Defending a knife threat while standing. There may

be various threats from different directions, distances and at several heights (and parts of the body). As an example we take a right-handed assailant who grabs the defender with his left hand and places the knife to the left side of their throat. The basic Krav-Maga technique (sometimes with some small adjustments) naturally manages to deal with many variants of the situation, positions of the knife and of the attacker. In addition, an almost identical technique deals with threats of a pistol and other barreled weapons.

In the solution for a standing threat, the defender starts with a hand movement to remove the weapon from their throat and a body movement to distance them away from the knife further. Subsequently the defender advances diagonally forwards and launches a counter attack. To close the situation, deliver more counterattacks and then disarm or move away.

On the ground when the knife is at the throat, in the same manner, and the assailant is sitting on the defender, the solution starts the same way. Then the defender enhances the control over the knife while (grabbing with two hands the wrist area of the hand holding the knife) throwing the attacker with a simple bridge, rolling on him and countering. The end is for the defender to move away with or without disarming, as required by the situation.



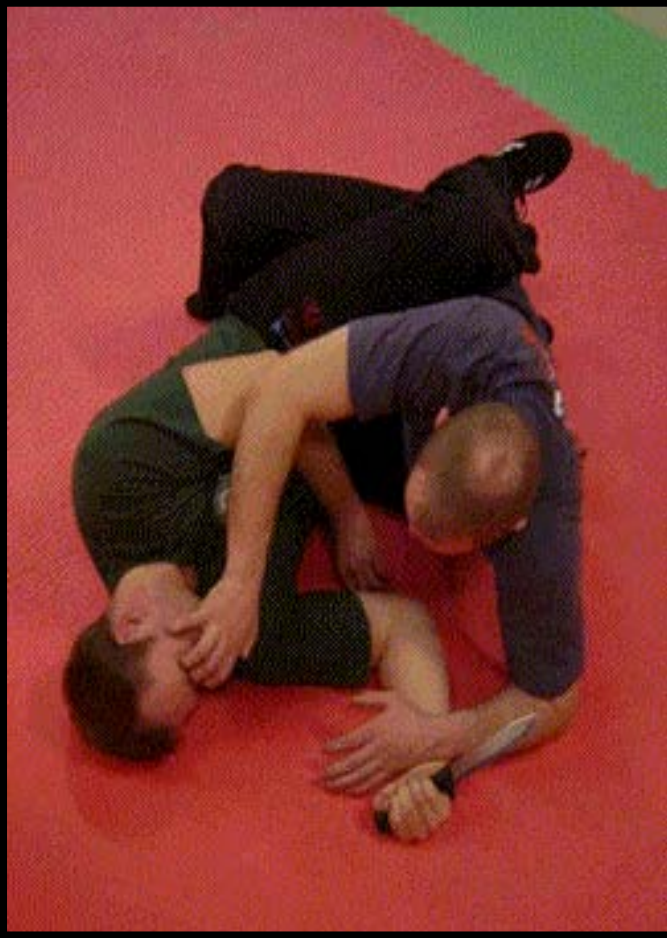
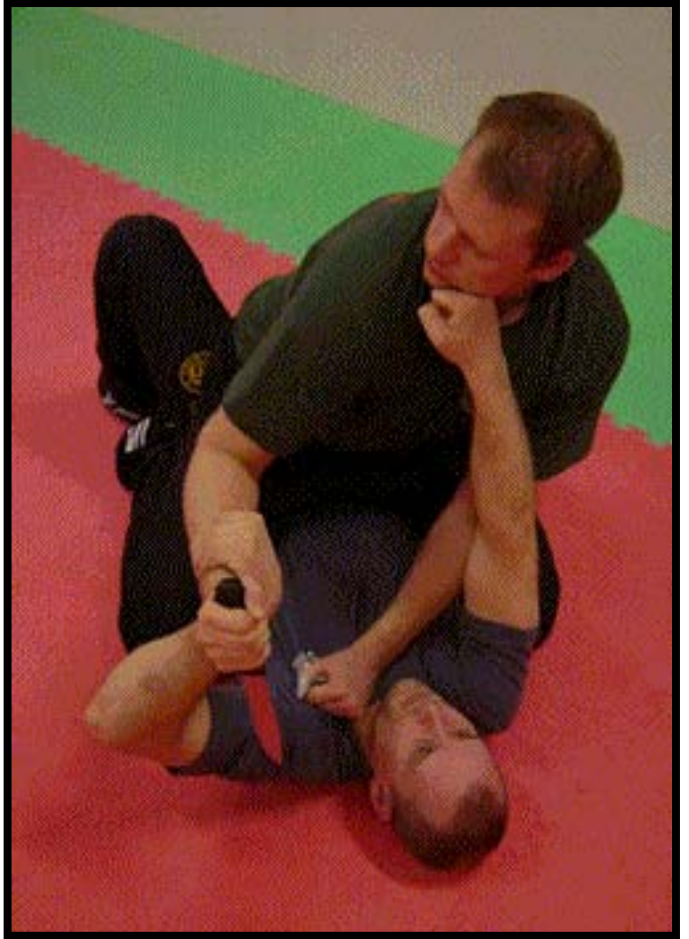


1. The threat (assume they will cut your your throat)
2. Using a hand and body defence control the weapon
3. Bridge/throw the opponent off you
4. Immediatly launch a counterattack
5. Deliver repeated hand and head strikes to incapacitate the assailant, then disarm.

### Defending a knife stab

We demonstrate here how to defend counter, control the attacking hand, counterattack and throw the assailant off you.





- 1. The threat, which will often be a frenzied attack**
- 2. Defend and control the knife whilst countering to the throat or face**
- 3. Throwing the opponent and turning on him with a frenzied attack of your own!**

### **Training for the ground**

The ground fighting that we teach in Krav-Maga is divided to two parts. One - playing and "having fun" in training, done with relaxed sparring including a variety of pins, sweeps, chokes, arm and leg locks. Two - a very aggressive and brutal approach, to eliminate any danger and stand up in the fastest way possible. This includes all type of strikes, with the hands, feet, elbows, knees and the head, (biting, and even shouting to ear are included) impacting to all sensitive areas, grabbing and pulling at vulnerable zones such as the groin, eyes and the neck. In this section though we only need to have a limited range of fundamental choking and joint manipulations.





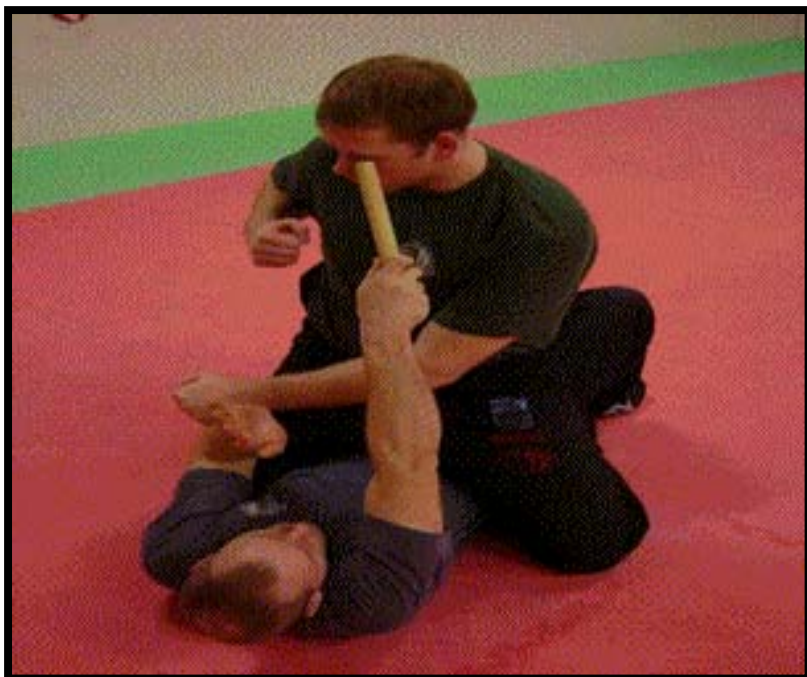


## **Attacking and defending without sporting restrictions**

Making use of common objects effectively.







**Whenever possible grab a near by object and use it the appropriate manner.**

The objective is to get up quickly before the gang is coming and before the opponent manages to inflict any serious injury. Training also includes specific techniques and drills to deal with more than one opponent. From a defensive perspective the approach to Krav-Maga ground fighting includes techniques for defending all manner of punches and strikes, securing a dominant position while executing effective attacks.

### **About the writers**

Eyal Yanilov is the Head Instructor of the International Krav-Maga Federation. He was the closest instructor to Imi Sde-Or, founder of Krav-Maga, and carries Krav-Maga's highest grade.

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