

# Self-Defense Meets Fitness In Modern Martial Art



*Health, fitness, self-defense and making new friends all collide at Krav Maga NB*

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by Joe  
Silvia

Being able to keep oneself and family safe in the face of violence is something we all want. Staying fit to prolong longevity, stave off illnesses, and prevent everyday injuries is something we all want and *need*. In an era where there is barely enough time between work, family, and friends to partake in any activity, we simply don't have the time to go to the gym *and* go to karate classes. That's 2 hours of time that most of us don't have!

Many of us remember growing up in Karate or Tae Kwon Do class. We dressed up in Japanese kimonos, screamed out repetitions of kicks in Chinese or Japanese and memorized forms (katas) with exotic names like Screaming Tiger or Five Swords. It was great discipline and usually decent exercise. The world has expanded its view and broadened its scope. It's a bigger place. We've progressed from swinging clubbells and weights at the gym to Zumba and Crossfit. We now have martial arts from scores of cultures around the world: Malaysian Silat, Filipino Kali, French Savate, African Dambe, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Israeli Krav Maga, etc.

One martial art in particular combines self-defense with all the benefits of an exercise regimen, Krav Maga. Don't be intimidated by foreign terminology. The bottom line is that it's an efficient, effective modern, form of self-defense that involves a lot of exercising. You improve the odds of you or your family coming out of a violent encounter while simultaneously getting in athletic shape. You will lose weight, gain strength and muscle tone, and just as important *feel great*.



*Hitting padded shields during an intense Krav Maga class*

I've organized the rest of the article in such a way, that you can skip to the parts that interest you.

**What is Krav Maga?**

If you've taking a karate, kickboxing, or judo class, you'll be familiar with the techniques found in Krav Maga or what is call colloquially "Krav." It was devised by Hungarian born Jew Imi Lichtenfeld in the 1930s. Imi was an accomplished competitive boxer and wrestler and used these skills to defend himself in the Jewish quarters in the 1930s.

In subsequent years while living among anti-Semitism in Czechoslovakia, he began to realize his sport skills only served him so much and that he needed to modify them. He then served in the British led Free Czech Legion, which had campaigns in North Africa and gave him a more realistic view of combat. Fleeing Nazi occupation, he headed to Palestine in the 1940s where his sport and military experience was recognized by Israeli special military forces who he began to train. Today Krav has civilian, police and military applications.

### **So, what does this mean for YOU?**

You don't need to learn a martial art on faith. *"Trust me, this works. Don't you see my black belt? Oops, sorry. My pot belly is in the way."* Here is a martial art that is founded on the combat sports of Boxing and Wrestling. It takes the physical attributes like timing, speed, power, and explosiveness and their competition effectiveness. It then pairs that with genuine experiences in real world attacks in the street. It then ices that cake with actual military experience. Everything is covered. There is a credibility here that can't be found in many other martial arts. You can feel safe knowing that it has been tried, trued, and tested.

If this was the end of the story, we'd have a complete martial art and fitness system. Most would be sold and this would enjoy the immense benefits. However, the genius of Krav is that it is all presented in a way that accessible by *anyone* and *everyone*. It was formulated so that men, women, and children can participate and excel. It was important to Lichtenfeld that Krav be available to the common [wo]man and

the athlete alike. If you are someone who is not in peak physical shape or overweight you can transform yourself with Krav. Size, shape, strength are irrelevant! If you are already in shape, you can find plenty of challenges in Krav. It really is for everyone.

### **Who is authorized to teach Krav Maga locally?**

Now it is accessible to those right here in New Bedford, under two world class instructors David Eaton and Dennis Amato. Krav Maga New Bedford is an extension of Krav Maga Boston which was the first school in New England to teach Krav Maga when it opened in Dennis, MA in 2000. Krav Maga New Bedford offers adult and kids (ages 5-12) classes.



*Krav Maga instructor  
David Eaton in action*

### **What are the benefits?**

We've mentioned getting back into shape if you are out of it, and setting up new challenges if you are already athletic. Krav, like most martial arts helps one develop discipline, focus, attention, and self-confidence. You will feel empowered knowing that you have the tools and skills to defend yourself from armed and unarmed attackers. You will feel confident, because you will look better than you ever have and be in the best shape of your life.

### **What is a typical class like?**

Each class begins with a different warm-up with 20 students or less. Often it includes calisthenics, some light shadowboxing

or a combination of both.

From here you may review and refine basic combative techniques, including punching, kicking and elbowing and/or a number of drills. Instruction is provided to the students and the instructors will go around and work individually with any student who needs additional help or explanation. All the while, a class tempo and rhythm is maintained to make sure one's heart rate is up and calories are being BURNED. Examples of drills are multiple attacker drills, drills in which the student has their eyes closed and must quickly react, drills in which the student alternates between being offensive and defensive, striking focus mitts or shields.

A self-defense technique is taught and the class finishes with additional drills that include this specific technique so that it has a context. You will leave sore and sweaty with the knowledge that not only are you learning a skill, but you are that much stronger, faster, and fitter.

### **What makes Krav Maga, Krav Maga? How is it similar or different than other martial arts?**

Besides the fitness element, Krav is first about AVOIDING situations. The group shares anecdotes, and the instructor shares his experiences and knowledge handed down. Learning to recognize a situation before, or as it develops, is crucial and taught. When an altercation is inevitable, Krav teaches you to end it as fast as possible, attacking vital areas using the speed, strength, and explosiveness developed within class. Having an athletic platform to launch tested, real world techniques is the crux of Krav Maga.

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### **Owner/ Instructor Bios:**

Dennis Amato was a personal trainer for 15 years, educating his clients in physical fitness and nutrition. In 1999, he began training in Krav Maga and earned his Instructor status

in June of 2000, and soon after opened the first Krav Maga school in New England.



*World Renknown  
Krav Maga right  
here in New  
Bedford!*

Since then, Dennis has taught hundreds of federal, state and local law enforcement personnel throughout New England and received an honorable certificate of appreciation from the ATF in Boston for his dedication to training their officers. Along with training civilians and law enforcement personnel, Dennis has also trained several military units prior to their deployment to active duty.

Dennis is now the owner of Krav Maga Boston Inc. and is on the board of directors for Alpha Krav Maga International, where he conducts instructor certification courses all around the country.

David was born and raised in East Bridgewater, MA. In 1994, he enlisted in the US Navy. David served on board the USS Merrimack as a Gunners Mate from 1994-1997. David received Veteran status for medals earned during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Southern Watch while deployed in 1996.

David began training with Krav Maga Boston in 2006, participating in the Instructor Apprenticeship Program, and began teaching in April of 2010.

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