

How Are Krav Maga techniques developed?

Developing new techniques in Krav Maga is a creative yet systematic and highly complex process. It is rooted in the principles of the system, ever changing real world scenarios, a deep understanding of human movement and combat psychology, and most importantly, years of hands on experience by the technique's developer.

Unlike traditional martial arts that rely on forms like katas or poomsae, Krav Maga constantly seeks to adapt itself to modern threats and real life situations.

So how is a new technique created ?

What are the key considerations and stages of development? Moreover, is it legitimate to draw inspiration from other systems?

Stage 1: Identifying a Tactical or Practical Need

Every effective drill begins with a clear question:

What problem are we trying to solve?

- Is this a new and common threat? (train assault, attempted kidnapping)
- Is the existing technique too complex for beginners?
- Is there a need for a faster or more tactical response?

A good Master must keep their eyes open to what's happening on the ground and listen carefully to student feedback.

Stage 2: Anchoring in the Core Principles of Krav Maga

Once the need identified, the proposed solution must align with Krav Maga's core values:

- Short, instinctive responses
- Immediate neutralization of the threat
- Defense followed by aggressive counterattack
- Continuation to control or escape

A technique that does not meet these standards, even if it "works", may not truly represent Krav Maga.

Stage 3: Drawing Inspiration from Other Systems – Legitimate

Krav Maga is a dynamic and open system. Its founders, including Imi Lichtenfeld ז"ל and Eli Avikzar ז"ל, drew inspiration from boxing, judo, savate, aikido, and more adapting techniques to real life needs.

Even today, many masters incorporate insights from MMA, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and even military or police counter-terror methods worldwide.

But how is a technique evaluated?

- Can the technique be simplified?
- Will it work under pressure?
- Is it suited to the average student's physiology?

Stage 4: Trial, Error, and Refinement

A technique is not tested against a schedule or lab conditions, it is tested against reality:

- Does it succeed consistently against a resisting opponent?
- Can it be taught effectively in a group settings?
- Is it intuitive to perform?

This stage is about collecting feedback, observing performance, and adjusting. A solid drill only stabilizes after it has been "field tested" across a range of students.

Stage 5: Creating Context and Building Progression

Every drill must be part of a logical training structure:

- A basic drill will focus on a single movement detection and defense
- An intermediate drill will include environmental elements (wall, table, obstacles)
- An advanced drill will introduce unpredictable attacker reactions

A skilled master creates layered progression one technique can serve three different levels by adjusting complexity and context.

Developing Krav Maga techniques is a skill in its own right not just an art, but a responsibility.

A qualified master knows not only how to teach a technique, but also how to create, test, and refine it, ultimately producing stronger, more capable students.

In a world that constantly changes, training must evolve, but the principles must remain solid.

“In a real confrontation, no one asks what color your belt is. They ask if you made it home safely”.

Article by Grandmaster Dr. Matan Bochner – Chief Instructor and Founder of Elite Krav Maga