



Krav Maga gun defence tactics and techniques

By Eyal Yanilov and Jon Hegan

Many of us have been unfortunate enough to be threatened with violence at some time in our lives, but imagine being threatened by having a gun shoved in your face. What would you do?



'Whatever they tell me'! Is a reasonable answer. Arguably throughout the world, the gun is the single most fear-provoking symbol of power of modern times. It has come to personify the ultimate in authority and intimidation; there are also no age limits on its users (without permission) or victims. It is seen as an indispensable fashion accessory for those in the gang culture and certainly no self-respecting terrorist would be seen dead giving a speech to

worlds press without the familiar sight of a Kalashnikov rifle somewhere in view.

But what is the relevance to us here in the 'civilized countries'? Surely weapons like this only feature in far away news footage and Hollywood movies. Not exactly, remember the Hungerford and Dunblane massacres? Two quiet, sleepy villages whose very names now only conjure up images of horrific violence aimed at innocent men, women and children going about their normal everyday lives. Almost every hour of the day an armed police response unit will be on its way to a suspected gun incident somewhere in the UK. Britain has the toughest gun laws anywhere in the world but this does not stop the wrong people

from getting their hands on these weapons. In Europe, the USA, Australia and other countries, criminals are producing firearms far more regularly than ever before, domestic disputes that turned violent and out of control have seen firearms involved. So it's not only terrorists in far away hot countries that use firearms, it could happen, here, today or the day after to each and every one of us.

So we know guns are dangerous and that they are available to anyone who wants one bad enough, no matter what they want it for. So what then could you realistically do to defend yourself against one? Firstly, sticking your finger down the barrel won't help. Bear in mind the persons' primary aim is probably not to kill you. They might be after money, property, or information, however anyone who has motivation enough to get themselves a firearm may want more than just your loose change and in the worst case, the threat may be just the start of your problems. Hostage taking and kidnappings will often start with a gun threat because you can control a large group of people with just the sight or even the mere suggestion of a gun, these are admittedly extreme scenarios but they do happen more often than what we'd like to think. There were 50 kidnappings reported in London in 2001 alone and about 10-50 times more in America and Europe. In most parts of the world violence has escalated significantly during the last 2-3 decades, criminals have stepped up their violent actions, needlessly inflicting suffering and in some cases even killing their victims after they had willingly complied and co-operated with their demands. Thus one should seriously consider the option of using active and effective resistance and techniques to overcome the threat and the assailant.

Any situation that involves a gun pointed in your direction is obviously very serious, but as long as you can quickly take charge of your predicament (and emotions), there is always hope of a safe conclusion. If your attacker wants money, **then you should seriously consider the option of letting them have it.** But for example, if you're told to get into a vehicle then action may have to be taken sooner rather than later. One method of dealing with such situations is, if you see an opportunity, run away, very quickly. As obvious as this may seem it is good advice. Most soldiers are taught to try and escape capture at the earliest and not the latest opportunity. The trickiest part of any abduction or hijack is the preliminary act of the crime, because unless experienced and/or highly trained they don't know exactly what to expect. Will their victim/s panic; will they be seen and the authorities be alerted, will something happen that they have not accounted for? This is an uncertain time for all involved and will undoubtedly cause them, as much anxiety as it will you. But the longer you allow yourself to be under their control, they'll quickly gain in confidence and you'll rapidly

lose yours. If they are organised then it is likely that you'd be moved to a secure location to be safely held. This will make your escape bid even harder. One could logically argue that if you run you'll be shot. True, however a handgun is notoriously inaccurate on anything more than 15 feet away and less on a moving target (running in a zigzag is a method that has proven effective). Even in highly skilled hands you would be very unlucky to get hit. If your abductors want you alive they maybe reluctant to shoot in the first place. You may think that this all sounds a little risky but given the alternative of possible captivity, rape, torture, death or all four! You cannot afford to dismiss it.

Any action you take has risks and could potentially lead to severe injuries to you, your colleagues and your assailant so careful consideration and thought is needed before acting. This would be an extraordinary decision to make but then again; this may be an extraordinary day.

It is highly likely that you'll need to take some immediate physical action first to enable you to escape. Here are a few examples from Krav Maga's gun defence syllabus.

Krav-Maga principles of the defending threats of firearms (pistols)





The assailant - When we consider the natural behaviour of an assailant threatening you with a pistol, we assume that they may come from different directions, point the gun at different targets and be situated at various distances away. They might hold you or your clothing or push or drag you to another place. Naturally we understand that the attacker could pull the trigger at any time to shoot you, or retract the pistol out of your reach if you present any movement to resist or take control. So you must be quick, decisive, act with aggression and determination and avoid telegraphing your intentions.

At the earliest opportunity- Try to act as soon as possible, even if you merely suspect that a person in front of you might produce a weapon concealed under their clothing. In KM we teach how to identify how an assailant reaches for a weapon and how to intercept this action.

When the assailant is distracted - A very good moment to start executing a KM technique, is when your assailant is giving you an order such as telling you to move, to raise your hands or to hand over your money and car-keys. At this moment the assailant is fully expecting you to move and co-operate, in this instant you have the advantage. If you act as you appear to be co-operating, performing the technique will be even easier.

Hand defence - For the explanation below we will use the example of an assailant that has approached from the front, holding a gun about half a meter away, although even if the pistol is pushed against your body the technique will still be the same. You should start with a hand motion that will deflect and grab the gun. Generally it is better to grab the barrel as close as possible to the trigger guard. A simple grab will prevent most pistols from firing a second round. If one shot was discharged, the line of fire was already diverted, as the hand defence deflected the weapon and was no longer in-front of you.

Body defence You should add a body defence as soon as possible. Basically, even before your hand reaches the pistol, you must turn your body away from the line of fire. You should not return to this line of trajectory. The body defence is composed of: a body turn; a shift of weight to the opposite side to which the gun is sent to (by the hand defence); and a fast advance (diagonally forward) towards the assailant.

Control - You control the weapon with the grab you have over it, with pressure on the weapon bring it down close to the assailant, shift your weight upon it, thus strongly limiting the assailant's ability to move the gun and limiting their option of redirecting the line of fire towards you.

Counterattack - As soon as possible, usually while still in the process of the hand and body defences and while still advancing towards the assailant, you counterattack. Hit the assailant strongly and decisively. This move should not leave the opponent any chance for fast recuperation.

Disarm - Disarming the weapon is a final technical stage in which you get the gun. A disarming process should be strong and swift, not leaving the stunned assailant a chance to prevent it. The disarming process should never cause the line of fire to be redirected towards any part of your body. The disarming process includes moving some distance away from the assailant

Tactically Finishing the Event - One must not neglect the end and the finish of the event. Gaining a considerable distance away is essential, but if you show and aim the gun towards the assailant, bystanders may think that you are in fact a dangerous aggressor. Imagine what an armed policeman may think if they just see you waving a gun! Or think what a judge will do if the case comes to court, and the witnesses did not see the initial threat. Another thing to consider is your knowledge and ability to operate the weapon you acquired.

So depending on the situation, your knowledge and abilities, you should consider the following: Running away; shouting that the person in-front of you (the assailant) is a criminal, a terrorist, a crazy person or something alike; you may also consider hiding the weapon and not exhibiting it. In some cases you may need to use the weapon you apprehended, for example - if your life is still under danger. Note - A policeman, a soldier or a member of a special unit may need to operate in a different manner (not to be described here)

The above principles are **GENERAL** ones - If the assailant approached you from another direction, such as from behind and put the gun to your

head or back, the above principles still hold. Naturally the techniques will differ and in many cases they will not even look like those that we use in KM against the assailant who approaches from the front, but these principles still hold.

About the authors

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For over 15 years, Eyal was the closest assistant to Imi Sde-Or (Lichtenfeld), Krav Maga founder, and co-wrote the official Krav Maga books together with him. He has been training KM for about 30 years and is the head instructor and chairman of the International Krav-Maga Federation (www.krav-maga.com) Additionally he is the only person who holds both the highest KM level ever awarded and the "Founder Diploma of Excellence". Eyal has been educating instructors, all types of students, members of police SWAT teams, military and VIP protection units all over Europe, the USA, Israel, South America and Australia.

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