

What makes krav maga different? essay



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We can all appreciate the virtuous philosophies underlying the Far Eastern martial arts. The creators of fighting styles like Kung Fu and Jujutsu were admirable in their advocacy of martial arts as a means of neutralizing attackers rather than as a tool for aggression. And where such fighting styles are still taught today, it's good that participants are taught to use what they learn only as a last resort. This ensures that participants gain the confidence of knowing that they can defend themselves in sticky situations, but it also prevents them from escalating situations by being too quick on the draw with their skills. All of this is great, and no one would ever say that the Eastern martial arts philosophy is wrong, but there are good reasons why Krav Maga dispenses with the non-aggressive side of martial arts. The Eastern martial arts came about during times and places where there were standards to warfare.

War could be brutal, but warriors lived and fought according to a code, and enemies had mutual respect for one another. The same can't be said for the conditions in which Krav Maga came about. When Imi Lichtenfeld developed the fighting style in late-1930s Bratislava, the Jews were facing annihilation at the hands of the Nazis. The Nazis didn't fight by a code, and they certainly had no respect for their enemies and victims. This wasn't a situation in which the Jews would benefit from the Eastern martial arts' philosophies of non-aggression and compassion for one's enemies.

This was a different kind of war, and the stakes were higher. In light of this, Krav Maga was created to be used. Rather than being a weapon of last resort, it's a mode of being aggressive, making preemptive strikes, and neutralizing opponents quickly and thoroughly. That's why Krav Maga

attacks tend to target vulnerable parts of opponents bodies, such as the eyes, throats, and groins.

In a serious attack situation, a Krav Maga fighter is not afraid to do serious harm to an opponent and, if necessary, to kill. No one can blame Lichtenfeld and his Jewish compatriots for taking this approach to fighting the Nazis. The fighting style came about during a dire time, and desperate measures were needed. Krav Maga served as a way for the Jewish people to say, “ Enough!” and to show their enemies that they were a force to be reckoned with. This is the spirit that lives on in today’s Krava Maga trainees.