

By OK! health editor Yasmine Griffiths

A BIG HIT!

GET TOUGH AND SHAPE UP WITH KRAV MAGA

What do Leonardo DiCaprio, Daniel Craig and Hilary Swank have in common? They're all fans of the Israeli martial art Krav Maga. The self-defence system, specially developed by the Israeli special forces, has become increasingly popular with the A-list over the last few years.

Krav Maga, which means 'contact combat' in Hebrew, is a combination of boxing and different styles of martial art, which promises to keep celebrities in shape, as well as teaching them a new skill. This explains why many stars like Angelina Jolie, Jennifer Lopez and Matt Damon have seized the opportunity to learn the martial art for roles in action films and thrillers.

Krav Maga superstar Ricky Manetta, a head co-ordinator of the Ultimate Fighting Championship and founder of the MMA Krav Maga Federation, trains a number of celebrities. Ricky isn't allowed to name names, but he does reveal the celebrities that he trains are eager to learn and come in ready to work hard. Actors take to Krav Maga for many reasons, as Ricky explains: 'They learn something new from every class. Krav Maga



Above: Jennifer Lopez is just one star who jumped at the chance to learn Krav Maga for her flick *Enough*. Below left: Ricky Manetta trains fans of the martial art

is designed so that it can be learnt very easily and it can be used by anyone whatever size they are – it's the technique that works so well, which means they don't have to rely on strength.'

Interestingly, Krav Maga also encompasses mental strength. Classes teach you self-defence, but also ways to deal with aggressive people. Ricky says: 'In my classes, you'll learn about the importance of body language, ways to improve your mental game and how to let go of anger.'

BAR REFAELI

The 27-year-old Israeli model is a Krav Maga devotee. She says: 'I don't feel the need to be super-skinny, but being in shape is important. My trainer taught me all kinds of kicks and they work everywhere – your abs, your butt.'



LEONARDO DICAPRIO

Krav Maga Worldwide founder Darren Levine says: 'We trained Leonardo DiCaprio for *Blood Diamond*. He was out of shape when he first came to us, and he left rock-solid.' Levine's trainers also prepared Daniel Craig for the role of James Bond and Tom Cruise for *Mission: Impossible*. Darren says: 'It's the in thing for actors – their shoulders are ripped, their cores is defined and their legs get really muscular.'



HILARY SWANK

Hilary (left) says she stays so slim because she has a high metabolism, but also because she loves exercising. Along with resistance training, hiking and Pilates, the 38-year-old actress also practises Krav Maga. She shares: 'You punch your kick, you also learn how to get out of a choke hold. I love, love it!'



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3 FORMULA 40 SHORTS, £40 Made in stretch, super-soft fabric, which also resists bacterial build-up, these shorts are ideal for full-on classes. Visit hpe-shop.com.

4 USA PRO UNDERWIRED SPORTS BRA, £10.99 A sports bra is an essential piece of kit and this underwired version offers good support. See www.usapro.co.uk.

5 LONSDALE PRO STRAIGHT HOOK AND JAB PAD, £16.99 Use these pads with your training buddy. As superstar trainer Ricky Manetta says: 'Practice will make you a master.' Visit www.lonsdale.com.