



No knife handy? Your stiletto can make a fine weapon of face destruction.

Kick-ass accessories

Zandy Mangold (2)

Women learn how their lipsticks and shoes can be offensive — in self-defense class

By **STEFANIE COHEN**

ON a recent summer evening at the Complete Body and Spa on East 57th Street, a tall blonde slashed a 5-inch-heel shoe through the air as if she were wielding a sword. Next to her, a brunette was swinging a leather purse around like a slingshot.

Women giggled as they grabbed shoes and bags from a pile on the floor and worked on their moves.

"My bag is so heavy, it could probably kill someone," said Sarah Dalidowitz, 25, a development executive.

While most New York women think of shoes and bags as accessories, these ladies are being trained to think of them as "weapons of opportunity" — items that not only spice up their outfits, but fend off attackers, as well.

It's all part of a type of martial arts called Krav Maga, an Israeli self-defense technique gaining popularity in the US since actresses like Jennifer Lopez and Jennifer Garner studied it to tone their bodies and perfect their fighting skills for roles in "Enough" and "Alias," respectively. Angelina Jolie also used the close-combat technique to prepare for her role in "Salt."

Instructor James Sherman, dedicated parts of his hour-long classes, offered at gyms throughout the city, to teaching women how to defend themselves with items they typically associate with, say, a shopping spree at Barneys. He started incorporating women's accessories into his sessions one year ago, to make self-defense "more relevant" to women — and, as a result, he says he has a growing female clientele.

"The women of New York City think about bags and shoes, and I wanted to come up with a way to help them defend themselves using these

fashion icons," he says.

Jimmy Choos can slash at throats, Hermes belts might whip at arms and legs, and Chanel lipsticks — or any other kind, for that matter — go right in the eye.

"These are things a woman always has on her and can identify with — I want her to know she never has to be defenseless," says Sherman, 42, who learned Krav Maga by training with the Israeli Defense Forces. Now he's teaching fashionable ladies how to make the most of what they wear — even everyday items they may have never considered. "The fact that you are going to move aggressively to defend yourself by swinging your BlackBerry may be enough to stop [attackers]," he tells the class.

Sherman drills his students on the body's vulnerable spots: knees, inner thighs, outer thighs, ears, eyes, throat.

Aileen Postlethwaite, a 21-year-old NYU student, said she would have no problem fending off an attacker now. "I wear heels to work every day. I could easily slip them off," she said. "I



Katy Gall is armed with a designer bag — and dangerous.

might break them, but who cares?"

Astar Franco, a 26-year old office manager, is also a fan of the stiletto as weapon.

"It's not like I'm gonna have a knife on me," she said.

READY-TO-WEAR WEAPONS — AND HOW TO USE THEM

- **Mascara tube:** Grip in the dominant hand, strike at attacker's groin, throat, eyes; if those areas are being covered by attacker, then go for the ear or the temple.
- **Belt:** Whip overhand toward the attacker's arm and then the attacker's face.
- **Shoe:** Kick at the groin; take it off and strike for the neck or the eyes.
- **Purse:** Initially whip it at attacker's arm and then at groin, and then throat and face.
- **Keys:** Slash or strike toward eyes, throat, arms or hands.

