



Stances

Up to this time, unless you were a gymnast or a dancer, it is possible you never paid any attention to the broad variety of things that contribute to balance. You do not have to think about how to stand or walk as you go through an ordinary day. It is programmed deep into your muscle memory. You learned how to walk as a toddler and haven't thought about how to do it since then. You don't have to think about each movement involved in riding a bicycle – you just do it. These are things that are fixed in your muscle memory.

We learn through repeated effort until the action or knowledge is automatic. In fact, it feels slow and awkward if you try to consciously think about each step involved in something automatic like opening a door or brushing your teeth. This automation, this muscle memory, is what you will strive to achieve through your Tae Kwon Do practice. Slow repetition will lead to improved technique until you finally perform the movement without thought. You may feel uncomfortable or clumsy at first, but this is normal when learning any new activity.

A good stance gives you a strong, balanced base from which to launch a technique. Each stance involves different foot position, body alignment, and weight distribution. You need to practice the basic stances to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and when and how they should be used. These basic stances are the foundation of all your techniques.

Rest - Shee-uh

Your feet are one shoulder width apart with your feet pointing straight forward; your weight is evenly distributed. The back of your left hand is centered just below the small of your back with the back of your right hand in the palm of your left hand.

Ready - Joohn-Bee

Your feet are one shoulder width apart with your feet pointing straight forward. Your weight is evenly distributed. Your hands are in lightly closed fists with the palms facing in and your arms slightly bent in front of your body. Your fists should be at about groin level approximately 12" away from the body. Your legs are straight but knees are not locked. Move into Ready Stance with power and a *Kia*.

Attention - Cha-Rhyut

Your feet are together with the heels and toes touching each other. Your arms extend downward with hands centered on your sides. Your hands should be open, fingers together and extended, but relaxed. When you move from *Rest* to *Attention* the left foot moves to the right foot. When moving from *Attention* to any other stance the left foot always moves first unless otherwise instructed.



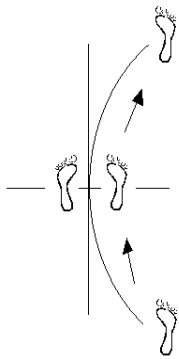
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A **Bow** (Kiung-Yae) is done from *Attention* stance. Bend forward approximately 15 degrees. Keep your head up and eyes forward.

Front

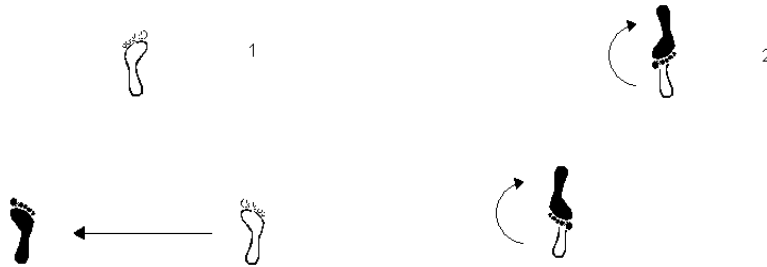
Your feet are pointing straight forward. They are one shoulder width apart side to side and one and a half shoulder widths deep front to back. Your front leg is bent so that your shin is vertical. Your back leg is straight but not locked. Your weight is about 60% on the front foot with that weight centered on the ball of the foot. Both heels are flat on the floor.



Moving Forward in Front Stance:

Bring your back foot forward and in towards your front foot in an arc. Keep your knees slightly bent so that your head stays at the same height. Keep your back foot moving forward and out in an arc until it is in the front foot position.

Turning in Front Stance: 1) Look over your shoulder on the side of your back foot; move your back foot straight across past your front foot. 2) Pivot on the balls of your feet. Your back foot has become your front foot.



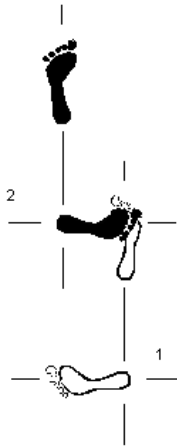
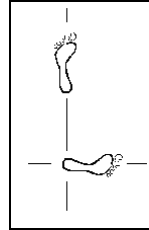


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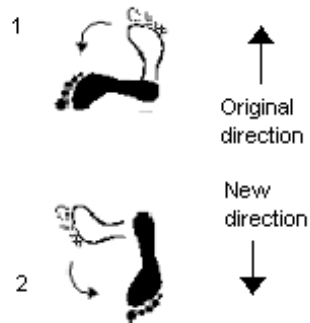
Back

Your feet are perpendicular to each other, one shoulder width apart. The centers of your heels are on the same line. Your front foot points straight forward while your back foot points 90° to the side. All of your weight is on your back foot.



Moving Forward in Back Stance: Shift your weight to your front foot, move your back foot to the new front foot position, and pivot the new back foot into the right position. Keep your head level as you move, do not rise up.

Turning in Back Stance: 1) Look over your shoulder on the side of your back foot; rotate 90° on the heel of your front foot. 2) Shift your weight to that foot and then rotate 90° on the heel of the other foot.

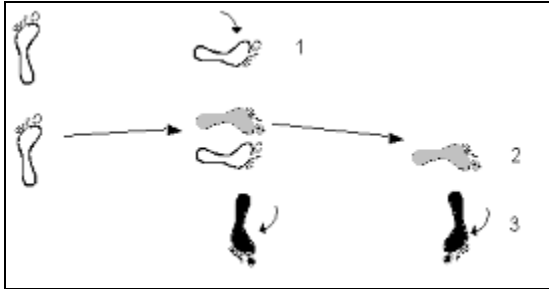




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Place your feet parallel to each other at a distance of two shoulder widths apart. Your knees should be bent and slightly over your toes. Your weight is evenly distributed on the ball of each foot. Your upper body is vertical with your buttocks tucked.



Moving Forward in Straddle Stance: 1) Pivot your front foot 90°. 2) Move your back foot up to your front foot and then out to the new front foot position – both are pointing forward. Keep your knees slightly bent so your head stays level. 3) Pivot on the balls of your feet into the straddle stance position.

Turning in Straddle Stance: Turning in straddle stance does not involve moving your feet – just twist your upper body around to bring your guard around and look over the opposite shoulder.

Cat

Cat stance is similar to Back stance. Starting from Back stance, pull your front foot in slightly and raise your heel off of the ground so that you are balanced on the ball of your foot. All of your weight is on your back foot.





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Fighting

Fighting Stance is similar to back stance but is slightly modified. Your weight is evenly distributed between your feet. Your heels are lightly on the ground with most of your weight on the balls of your feet. You are ready to kick with either foot with only a slight weight shift. Fists are up in front of your body like a boxer.

