



Taekwondo Stances

Ready Stance (Joon Bi Stance) - You will use this Taekwondo stance to start your forms and many of your stretching/training routines.

The ready stance is performed by standing with your feet one shoulder length apart.

Your head & body should be facing forward.

Your arms should hang down and be slightly bent with your hands formed as fists.

Your fists should be down around belt level and they should be a fist-size away from your body.

Walking Stance - The Taekwondo walking stance is like taking a small step forward in a slow-paced walk.

You will place one foot forward as in a regular "walking" step. The rear foot stays in place.

The front foot points straight forward and the rear foot points slightly to the side.

The distance between the front and rear foot is roughly a foot's length apart. This is a short stance.

You will see this stance in many Taekwondo forms such as the beginning of Taekwondo Form 1 (Taeguk Il Jang).

Front Stance - This is an offensive Taekwondo stance.

You need to take a long step forward with your front foot.

The "length" between your two feet should be two shoulder widths apart.

The "width" between your two feet should be one to one & a half shoulder widths apart.

Your front leg should be bent sharply forward (like taking a large lunge forward). Most of your weight will be on your front leg. FYI - My Taekwondo Master explains that explains the need for this knee "bend" in order to generate power as you move forward and to avoid your front leg buckling if hit by an opponent (a forward bent knee is less vulnerable to bending backwards).

Your front foot will face forward.

Your rear leg should be straight.

Your rear foot will face to the side at a 45 degree angle.

Your body will face forward towards your opponent. Try to keep your body straight and upright.



Back Stance - This is generally a defensive Taekwondo stance.

Your feet should be in a L-shape (your front foot points forward and your back foot points 90 degrees to the side).

The "length" between your two feet is about two shoulder widths apart.

The "width" between your two feet is minimally as your legs should almost be in a single line facing towards your opponent.

You will place most of your weight on your back leg. Your rear knee will be partially bent.

Your body will be facing to the side and thus you are offering a smaller target to your opponent in the front.

Your head will face forward towards your opponent.

FYI - I always have trouble keeping my front foot pointing straight ahead when I am moving in this stance. Moreover, my Taekwondo Master occasionally sweeps my front leg to see if I am putting my weight on my back leg.

Horse-Riding Stance - This stance is used mainly in forms such as the ending portion of Taekwondo Form 7 (Taegeuk Chil Jang). This Taekwondo stance is not used frequently in sparring and/or fighting. It is used often for practicing punches and building endurance (as your legs will ache in this stance after a while).

Stand with your feet two shoulder lengths apart.

Your knees should be bent... almost to a 45 degree angle. You will look like you are riding a horse as you will be "bow legged".

Your feet should be facing forward towards the target.

Your body & head will face towards the target.

Keep your back straight.

Place your fists on your belt.

Cat or Tiger Stance - Not one of my favorite Taekwondo stances as it is a little unstable and hard to defend against non-frontal assaults.



This Taekwondo stance is used mainly for quick snap kicks and can be found in the beginning portion of Taekwondo Form 7 (Taegeuk Chil Jang).

It is similar to the back stance but your front foot is very close to your rear foot (versus the two feet being two shoulder widths apart) and only the toes/ball of your front foot are touching the ground (your rear foot is flat to the ground).

Twist Stance - Not used much in real life but it looks cool!

You will find this Taekwondo stance at the end of Taekwondo Form 5 (Taegeuk Oh Jang).

As you leap in the air, you will land with your rear foot behind your front foot (so your legs are crossed or "twisted").

This is supposed to be a transition stance before you move quickly into a more stable stance.

Be careful not to stumble in this stance.

Fighting Stance - This Taekwondo stance is used for sparring/fighting and not in forms.

This is a modified front stance with fists in a guarding position.

Your lead fist should be head high - ready to block or jab.

Your rear fist should be neck/chin high - ready to block or throw a powerful punch.

Your body should be faced to the side - so you present a smaller target to the opponent in the front.

Your head will face forward towards the opponent.

Your feet should be placed in a modified front stance. The distance of your stance will be roughly half way between a walking stance and a front stance.

Your weight should be equally divided between your two feet/legs (don't favor one leg). Balance on the balls of your feet - don't be on your heels as this slows you down.

Generally, your front foot will be at 30-50 degrees and the rear foot at 50-70 degrees. However, don't worry about degrees and angles. Pick a foot position that is comfortable/natural for you and that you can use to quickly react to or initiate an attack.

Many Taekwondo students/Masters "bounce" slightly when they are in this stance in order to move quickly and attack, defend or feint. This is not a rigid Taekwondo stance so stay loose & relaxed. It is for fighting and not stylistic forms.