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GOYA-RA-RU MARTIAL ARTS

JUNIOR HANDOUT #1

BASIC STANCES

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Introduction

Stances in Martial Arts are extremely important. They allow us to move quickly from position to position without losing balance and can root us to the ground when stationary. They give more power to techniques when executing them with movement and they also help strengthen the leg muscles.

In real self-defence situations, longer stances may need to be modified (e.g. shortened) but can still prove useful. You should strive to practice and improve these classical stances to the best of your ability when training in class. A strong stance indicates the correct state of mind.

1. Ready Stance



- Feet shoulder-width apart with the toes pointing slightly inwards.
- Knees slightly bent with more weight on the front of the feet.
- The back should be straight.
- Arms out in front with fists closed.
- The body should be relaxed but the mind should be focused, alert and ready to go.
- When in ready stance, you should remain in this position until instructed to perform a technique or relax.

2. Horse Stance



FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW

- The feet should be double shoulder-width apart with the toes pointing forwards.
- The knees should be bent and pushed outwards, NOT collapsed inwards.
- The back should be straight and the hips pushed forwards to make the stance upright (do not lean backwards or forwards).
- The hands are in “chambered” position, held in a closed-fist at chest level (thumbs on top).
- Horse Stance is mainly used for practicing upper-body techniques such as punching or blocking.
- It is named Horse Stance as the legs are in a similar position when riding a horse.

3. Front Stance



FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW

- The feet should be shoulder-width apart (see the FRONT VIEW above) and approximately double that in length (see the SIDE VIEW above).
- Both feet should be facing forwards.
- The back leg should be straight and the front leg should be bent with the knee directly over the ankle.
- The upper body should be leaning *very slightly* forwards and the hands kept in a guarding position.
- Front stance is a particularly strong stance and roots you to the ground. It is used for stepping and turning and can be used for linking techniques together with movement (a good example of this is 1st Kata).

4. Freestyle Fighting Stance



FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW

As this is a “freestyle” stance, there are no strict rules as to how the hands and feet should be. However, there are some general guidelines that help improve this stance for both defence and attack during sparring;

- The feet should be fairly close together and the legs slightly bent, making it easier to move or turn quickly. This also helps facilitate faster kicks.
- The hands should be held in a position that provides a good guard (protecting the body). They can either be in a closed-fist position or open-handed.
- The body should be turned “side-on” – whichever foot is forward, the shoulder of the same side should be in front of the other, turning the chest to the side. This reduces the area of your own body exposed to your opponent.