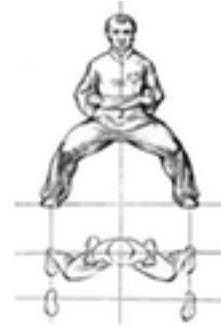


# A PRIMER ON T'AI CHI CH'UAN STANCES

## 1. **Classic Horse Stance**

THIS IS THE BASIC WIDE DOUBLE-WEIGHTED STANCE USED BY ALL MARTIAL ARTS.

- a. Place the feet parallel to one another, double shoulder width (i.e., twice the width of your shoulders) apart.
- b. Ensure that your posture is aligned,
  - i. the back of the head gently lifted, as if pulled up from above;
  - ii. the sacrum area lightly tucked forward, so that the base of the spine is in line with the top of the spine.
- c. Relax the upper body (this is a common area of tension).
- d. Use a low **Universal Post** posture for this exercise: Extend the arms, as if hugging a tree, then, with the fingertips of each hand several inches from one another, breathe into this space.



## 2. **Bow (or Bow and Arrow) Stance**

THIS IS THE BASIC FORWARD-WEIGHTED STANCE USED BY ALL MARTIAL ARTS, AND THE CLASSIC **BRUSH KNEE** POSTURE OF THE YANG FORM.

- a. 70% of the weight should be on the forward leg, with 30% on the rear.
- b. Typically, the forward *qua* will be partially or completely closed.
- c. Do not completely straighten the rear leg.
- d. Concentrate on the **Bubbling Well** root of the **REAR** leg.
- e. Make the stance elongated and low.
- f. Bring the front thigh as close to parallel to the ground as you are able.
- g. Use the Yang form's **Ward-Off** or **Brush Knee** postures in this exercise.



## 3. **T-Stance (Side- or Open-Bow Stance)**

THIS IS ANOTHER FORWARD-WEIGHTED BOW STANCE BUT DIFFERS BY OPENING THE REAR FOOT TO 80 OR 90 DEGREES. IT IS DEPICTED IN THE CLASSIC **SINGLE WHIP** POSTURE OF THE YANG FORM.

- a. Put 70% of the weight on the forward leg, 30% on the rear.
- b. Typically, the forward and rear *qua* are both partially closed.
- c. Do not completely straighten the rear leg.
- d. Concentrate on the **Bubbling Well** root of the **REAR** leg.
- e. Make the stance elongated and low. This is a VERY OPEN stance.
- f. Bring the front thigh as close to parallel to the ground as you are able.
- g. Use the Yang form's **Single Whip** or **Fan Thru Back** postures in this exercise.



4. **Cat Stance (commonly with empty “Feather” Step)**

THIS IS A ONE-LEGGED, REAR-WEIGHTED STANCE USED IN THE **WHITE CRANE** POSTURE OF THE YANG FORM.

- a. Put full weight on the rear leg, lightly touch the forward.
- b. Typically, the rear qua will be partially or completely closed.
- c. Do not completely straighten the forward leg.
- d. Concentrate on the *Bubbling Well* root of the **FORWARD** leg.
- e. Use the **Universal Post** posture for this exercise.



5. **Heel Stance**

THIS IS A ONE-LEGGED STANCE USED IN THE **PLAY LUTE** AND **LIFTING HANDS** POSTURES OF THE YANG FORM.

- a. Put full weight on the rear leg, lightly touch the forward heel, lifting the toes.
- b. Place the rear-most foot at a 45-degree angle with the forward foot
- c. Pull your forward hip back until your hips are aligned forward.



6. **Crane Stance**

THIS IS A ONE-LEGGED STANCE USED IN THE **GOLDEN COCK** POSTURE OF THE YANG FORM.

- a. Put all of your weight on one foot.
- b. Come out of this posture remaining in balance.



7. **Dragon Stance or Rear T-Stance**

THIS IS THE BASIC REAR-WEIGHTED STANCE USED BY ALL MARTIAL ARTS, AND THE CLASSIC **REPULSE MONKEY** POSTURE OF THE YANG FORM.

- a. Place the front foot at a slant, and the rear at 90 degrees to the front (making a “T” shape).



8. **T'ai Chi Horse Stance**

THIS IS A DOUBLE-WEIGHTED STANCE USED IN THE **T'AI CHI OPENING** OF THE YANG FORM.

- a. Make this narrower, and lower than standing straight up.
- b. Ensure that your toes point forward, with weight evenly placed on each *Bubbling Well* point behind ball of foot.



HOLD THESE STANCES IN STILLNESS AND QUIET FOR ONE TO FIVE MINUTES. AFTER PRACTICING EACH OF THE POSTURES, RETURN TO **WU CHI** WITH **HANDS DOWN** (COVERING THE *TAN TIEN*) OR **CROSSED HANDS** (CLOSED POSITION).