

So what is your stance on... well stances?

How would you stand in a fight?

What does your stance say about you?

What information does your stance convey to your opponent?

OK stances are not nearly as interesting as locks or as glorious as throws but they are perhaps one of the most important parts of self-defence. If you have a bad or weak stance then your fight could be over before it starts; while a strong stance or the “right” stance may stop the fight before it starts.

Find a mirror and take a fighting stance. Have a look.

What do you see?

Do you look strong/weak, capable/laughable, mobile/immobile, confident/scared, ready to kick ass/ready to run?

Where are your hands, are they provide proper protection for your head or are they below your shoulders?

Can you see properly past your hands or are they blocking your vision?

Are your elbows sticking out like chicken wings or are they in tight to your body?

Are your hands too far out or too close to your head or body?

Could your attacker strike a vital target (head, neck, floating ribs or groin)? To answer this one assume that your attacker is much quicker than you, would you have time to defend against a lightning fast strike?

Be honest would you fight you?

Now I want you to think about how you feel in your fighting stance.

Self-defence is about confidence, do you feel confident and ready to take on anything from any direction?

A fighting stance is a very personal thing and everybody's is different any stance that makes you feel weak, immobile and/or awkward is wrong for you.

Here is a little exercise for you to try. Take each one of the stances listed below. Throw a couple of punches and kicks. Look at yourself in the mirror. What are your answers to all the questions above?

Full front stance

Standing with your feet side by side about shoulder width apart. This stance offers up the most target for your attacker.

¾ of boxing stance

Standing with one foot forward, typical left side if you're right handed. Your weight should be 70% on your back leg with your knees slightly bent. This stance offers up many targets for your attacker.

Side on stance

Stand with either your left or right leg forward. Your other leg should be shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent and 60% of your weight on your back leg. Your feet / legs should be in line with each other and your attacker. This stance offers fewer targets to your attacker than any other stance.

Which of the above stances feels the best to you?

There are many other stances, some good, some not so good, they each stance you know out and be honest with yourself. Do not stick to one stance because it was what you were taught, that's a poor excuse for doing something that does not work for you.

Once you think you have your stance figured out, play with it in class (or after class). Do some techniques or light sparing. Does your new stance work as well as you thought it would? If not have a look at what don't feel right and see if your can adjust it until it does work for you.

Stances are personal things. Many look similar but no two are the same. We all have different body types and sizes and as such our stances will be different as well, find yours.

If you're interested in jiu-jitsu video instruction take a look at our [jiu-jitsu distance education program](#).

Cheers,

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