

Tai Chi Stances

This page describes two basic Tai Chi stances, the tee stances and bow stances. The main differences are the angle of the feet and the position of the leg bearing the weight.

Tee stances are known as lifting hands and play guitar.

Lifting Hands: Turn the left foot out at a 90° angle from the right foot. Slide the right foot forward about 12" and then slide it left, so that right heel lines up with the left heel. The weight is 100% on the left leg with the hips facing the same direction as the forward leg. The arms come up waist high pointing away from the body at two diagonal angles that would meet out in front of the body if the arms were ten feet long. Here the left hand is only as far forward as the right arm elbow. This holds the left upper arm vertical and close to the body.

Play Guitar: This position is the inverse of Lifting Hands with the right foot turned to 90° from the left and the right arm is only as far forward as the left elbow

The Bow stances are called Ward Off Left and Ward Off Right.

Ward Off Left: From the box shape foot position, turn the right foot out 45° and step straight forward with the left foot about the length of your foot plus two inches. Weight should be 70% over the left foot with hips turned to the left. The left arm is held up in a half circle with the left hand in front of and facing the heart, elbow comfortable high. The right hand is held low outside the right thigh at a 45° to the ground.

Ward Off Right: From the box position, the left foot is turned out to a 45° with the left foot a short step forward. Weight is forward at 70% over the right leg and hips to the right. The right arm comes up to a relaxed half circle with the right hand in front of and facing the heart. The left is behind the right hand as if holding a grapefruit sized ball. The left fingers are pointing up and the left elbow is close to the body.

(See references to Tai Chi Fundamentals and Tai Chi Positions)