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## Stance

The ready position or stance gets all of your body parts in place in preparation to make a save. A good stance allows you to move or react to a shot no matter where it goes. Combined with good positioning, your stance will help you make saves look easy.

The following list should help you evaluate your stance and act as a list of key reminders:

1. Rest your weight on the balls of your feet. Your heels should be slightly elevated off the ground and your toes should point a little outwards.
2. Make sure your feet are even, with neither foot in front of the other. Your feet should be approximately shoulder width apart.
3. Bend your knees slightly so that you'll be ready to move in any direction.
4. To keep your body weight forward your waist should also be flexed. Check to make sure that your shoulders are in front of your feet.
5. Bend your arms and position your elbows equal to, or just in front of your chest.
6. Extend your hands with the palms raised. Your wrists should not be hyperextended. Your hands and fingers should be relaxed and positioned slightly above the height of your elbows.
7. Like the rest of your body keep your head and neck relaxed. The head is still and slightly forward. Do not tilt your head. Move your body so that you are facing the play with your eyes focused on the ball.

To reiterate, it is important that when setting in the ready position, the overall position is relaxed, not tense, and that it facilitates movement. Essentially, the stance should promote dynamic mobility to overcome the effects of inertia. Movement is created by a "transfer of momentum" originating in the hands and arms (the smaller levers of the body) and then moving to the legs and back (the larger levers of the body).

Executing each of the seven points listed above is not difficult in a stationary mode. Almost every goalkeeper can perform the task upon request. It becomes much more difficult under live circumstances. Imagine you have just parried a shot. The ball rebounds out about 10 yards from you. A forward gets to the ball first. You get up on your feet and prepare for the shot. NOW do you have the right stance? In reality this is where it breaks down for most goalkeepers.

Common mistakes with the stance are:

1. Rigid, tense muscles.
2. Palms facing out (either above or below the waist).
3. Arms allowed to hang down too low.
4. Feet staggered, not balanced or square and/or too far apart.
5. Weight is backwards.
6. Poor head position.

The point is that this is the true test of your stance. When you have been forced out of position, you recover and then you must get set for the shot. An easy way to train this is to have a player serve balls to you at the near post. Make that save and then shuffle across the goal to make a save from player #2 who is striking a ball at you from the penalty spot. The object here is not to make flying saves. Ask the servers to play balls at you. Upon saving the ball, freeze, Take a look at your stance and make any corrections that you need to do.

You should constantly reevaluate your stance. Videotape your practice sessions where you are seeing a lot of action. It may also help to stand in front of a full-length mirror and look at each of the seven points mentioned.