



# International Goalkeepers Academy

## Technical Tip

### STANCE

The stance or starting position enables goalkeepers to place themselves in the best position to react to any threat on their goal. Sprinting out to a through ball, moving off the line to intercept a cross, closing down an angle or positioning for a shot are all situations where the keeper would utilise the stance.

A good stance requires the keeper to be well balanced and able to survey all parts of the field at a glance while organising the defense. The stance must be maintained, as keepers should change their position in relationship to the location of the ball whether it is in possession of their defense or opposition.

The keeper should stand with feet shoulder width and leaning slightly forward, knees should be bent and shoulders positioned over the top of the knees with hand at waist height in a handcuff position. It is important that the head and body weight are forward enabling the keeper to move out of the stance quickly in any direction while focusing on the ball at all times.

The keeper must practice moving in all directions quickly with short steps in the stance position then sprinting forward and settling into the stance as if facing a shot.

While this may seem boring to practice it is important to note that many keeper errors are a direct result of poor stance i.e. keepers often bounce on their toes and are caught with their body weight moving upwards when the shot is struck and their weight must come down before they can push off to dive or change position to catch the ball.

Similarly if the knees are locked the legs must be flexed before moving to the ball again wasting valuable time, if the head is not forward the keeper dives backwards and chases the ball instead of cutting it off at a forward angle.

Many keepers actually jump off the ground as the ball is struck and land with their legs too far apart to dive with any power. A firm foothold from a good stance with the body weight over the center of the balls of your feet allows the keeper to react immediately. This could mean the difference of making a crucial save or allowing the ball to pass by for a goal because you were not correctly balanced.

Keepers must look to save time on all techniques, good eye and hand coordination coupled with good stance and foot speed will enable keepers to contact the ball a fraction of a second earlier.

Our primary aim is to prevent goals and we must strive to improve all areas of our game to decrease the number of goals scored against us. By practicing these simple things we can increase our performance and help us achieve this goal.

The best players of any sport always make the difficult things look easy and seem to have time under pressure to react to any situation. This may be due to some natural ability but constant repetition in training while gradually increasing the pressure will give better results on the park.

Take some time to study goalkeepers on the television and note how many mistakes you can pick up from poor stance and how many goals could have been saved by good technique.

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