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# Xtreme Stance Training

By Sifu John Roche

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## Warning

Before you attempt any new training routine – especially using the materials contained in this manual – **GET A PHYSICAL!!!**

**Don't think I'm joking either.**

The publisher, author and suppliers of this manual are not responsible for any accidents, or injuries that may occur from use, attempted use or even the thought of using the exercises, movements or information included in this manual.

## Navigation:

Open the "Bookmarks" tab to the left for quick and easy navigation.

## “Xtreme Stance Training Intro.”

### Why bother?

Over the years that I've studied and trained in martial arts I have found that in every style the people are always complaining about knee problems. After much observation of their training practices one area seems always to be missing. \*\*\*Stance training\*\*\*

Though most practice stance at the beginning rarely are they seriously trained after they are no longer are part of the testing requirements.

Unfortunately, about the time you stop testing on your stances you also start doing the most kicks and the most demanding forms.

Without continual and progressive stance work to strengthen your knees and your legs the dynamic and explosives legwork will begin to cause cumulative damage to the tendons and the cartilage of the knees.

Hence, knee pain.

### “A Few Minutes of Prevention”

The wonderful thing is that damage can be prevented with only a few minutes of serious training. Very few students ever get serious about practicing their stances. In spite of the fact that they are the root of all martial arts movements, whether you train in Wing Chun, Tae Kwan Do, Aikido or any of the Kung Fu styles, or Karate styles.

Yes, it can be boring to spend your time just standing there in horse stance. Fortunately that's only a beginner's form of training.

## “Tell me more”

As with martial arts training, true stance training is progressive and cumulative. Yes, you have to progress in a systematic manner. And as with the martial arts each level is built on the previous level. If you skip a level of training or two, soon you have a house of cards that will collapse at the first breeze. You'll never develop your full speed, power or technique without mastering your stances. In this book you will learn a very challenging and rewarding system of progressive training.

Boring?

Not a chance! You'll learn focus, determination, and what martial art training is all about **discipline!**

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## **“A Note About Stances”**

Every system and style of martial arts uses stances, not all stances are the same from style to style, or even for that matter, from school to school.

The stances that I use and refer to in this book are from Shao-lin. You should use the stances from your style. Your “horse stance”, “cat stance” etc. If your style does not use deep solid stances the need for extreme stance training is not really there, **unless** you were looking for more than your style offers.

Your style is what you are training to perfect and master, therefore, if possible you should use the stances from your style.

Another thing you will find as you train specifically on stances is that your flexibility will increase as you become more confident of your abilities. In fact during most of these routines I found no need to do extra stretching all. Yes, that may fly in the face of the “stretch all the time” teachers, OH WELL! You'll have to be your own judge on this matter, but you might notice that when doing your horse stance and your forward stance the legs are in an almost full split position from the hips. Now think about the stretch you get from a snake stance (from a horse stance shift your body over one leg and straighten the other leg out, now squat down over your supporting leg with that thigh just below parallel to the ground).

Again the point of this training is to assist you in mastering your style, not to convert you to mine or anyone else's.

If you haven't been training seriously already

**GET A PHYSICAL!!**

Don't kid yourself into thinking “its only stance training” and then have a coronary because of denial. If your training and you pull muscle, take a break until it heals. That will be much less of a setback than having an eight-week layoff from *all* training because of “tendon reinsertion” surgery. *Yes this **is** the voice of experience.*

## **“Dietary Concerns”**

Let's take just a minute and talk about diet and its effect on your training.

There are essentially four things you will achieve with your diet:

- Gain muscle and lose fat. (Preferable)
- Maintain
- Lose muscle
- Get fat (if it this is your goals please don't tell anyone you're using my training material.)

In order to gain muscle and lose fat you have to drop your caloric intake below your energy output and increase the protein intake.

The easiest way to achieve this is to slowly cut back on your food intake while eating more protein rich foods. This should be done in small increments. Say, by slightly reducing the size of your meals or by dropping the fatty foods you take in. Example... Changed to chicken from Hamburger, drop the Mayo and use seasoned mustard. Replace candy with fruit and ditch the fries for baked potato without butter.

Another thing to remember is that your body works best when it receives small amounts of food several times a day instead of three larger meals. It can only metabolize about 25 to 35 g of protein at a time. The excess will likely convert to fat.

A good and relatively easy diet balance is the 40/40/20 split.

## **“What the heck is he talking about the Edith?”**

Well lets pretty simple:

- 40% of your daily intake comes from protein. Example- meat, Dairy, eggs, and even easier “protein supplements”.
- 40 percent from carbs such as veggies, rice, and fresh fruits etc..
- 20 percent from fat. Yes fats, your body has to have fats to breakdown and transport certain vitamins and minerals as well as prevent muscles from breaking

down. Even champion body builders allow fats in their diets and they get more ripped than anyone not making their living flexing on stage will ever need.

If you want to maintain you'll probably still want at all little more food to your day just because of the energy required to train under these method.

If you want to lose muscle-stop training altogether and go watch TV. You can join that guy that wants to get fat, only let him eat the potato chips.

## Water

Your body is about 70 percent water. As you exercise your use water to cool your body down, you use water to clean out the toxins from exercise and from the food you eat. Under intense exercise you can easily drain off 5 lbs. a fluid.

You need to replenish frequently and consistently throughout the day. Eight to 12 glasses a day is a good range usually. If you pay attention, when you use the bathroom, colored urine is an indication of dehydration. **Drink water.** I used to be a diet Coke addict, believe me there is a difference in your results,. There is no substitute for water

# “Static hold training”

Yes this is the dreaded “*stand there until I say stop level*”. The good news is that it only last for a short while and it's done with reasons! In all honesty the ability to hold a horse stance for 30 minutes is really of little use other than for training of your mind to focus elsewhere and to learn to tolerate massive lactic acid induced pain.

We're going to work up from a simple 30 seconds to a full five minutes.

Even if you're already able hold your stances for five minutes, I'd recommend starting here just to get familiar with the methods and to get your body acclimated to the consistent daily work. Did I say daily?

Yes I did.

Static hold is relatively easy to recover from and therefore you can handle doing it every day You'll be working up over a short four-week period in increments. The cycles will include both time held and time resting.

Between each holding you will be taking a 30 seconds rest to shake out your legs. That is until “week 3: Day 3” then your life will change forever!

Here's how the next four weeks will pan out

Week one: *Day 1*: 30 seconds X two times.

*Day 2*: 30 seconds X two times

*Day 3*: 40 seconds X two times

*Day 4*: 40 seconds X three times

*Day 5*: 50 seconds X two times

*Day 6*: 50 seconds X four times

*Day 7*: rest

---

Week two: *Day 1*: 50 seconds X 2 times

*Day 2*: 50 seconds X four times

*Day 3*: one minute X two times

*Day 4:* one minute X three times

*Day 5:* one minute X three times

*Day 6:* one minute 20 seconds X four times (Gut it Out, it only burns until stops!) by the way this takes you past the five minute mark, in case you didn't notice!!!!

*Day 7:* rest-what do you mean-"you planned it on at"?!

---

Week three: *Day 1:* 1 minute X four times

*Day 2:* 1 minute X five reps that five minutes---Well with breaks. We'll fix that right now!

*Day 3:* 1 minute X 5 rep. Drop your rest intervals by 10 seconds( 20 seconds rest between each set)

*Day 4:* 1 minute, 20 seconds X five reps. ----20 seconds rest in between each!

*Day 5:* 1 minute, 20 seconds X five reps.----20 seconds rest.

*Day 6:* 2 minutes---rest 30 seconds.

One minute X 3 sets----20 seconds rest.

*Day 7:* rest (thank you, JESUS!)

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Week four: O. K! this is it, so GUT it out the end is in sight!!

*Day 1:* 2 minutes X 2 sets---30 seconds rest One minute

*Day 2:* 2 minutes 30 seconds X2 reps---30 seconds rest. You can do this!!!!

*Day 3:* 2 minutes 30 seconds X 2 repetition---20 seconds rest

*Day 4:* 2 minutes 30 seconds X 2 repetition---10 seconds rest

*Day 5:* 2 minutes 40 seconds X 2 repetition---10 seconds rest

*Day 6:* 5 minutes ( don't be a wimp-you been doing five minutes for 11 days already!!)

**Great job---go have a pizza you earn it!**

If by some chance you were unable to reach five minutes don't despair. Just stick with it from where your body called it quits and move up by one day every second workout until all you do make it.

Believe me the benefits are worth the effort.

If you make it and you want to really kick your stances in their rear try using this routine for cat stance and empty stance training.

Otherwise lets move on to some **High Rep Training!**

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# ‘High Rep Training’

*"Static Hold Training" and "High Rep" training are two very important methods in that they strengthened the tendons. The reason so many martial artists have knee pain is that their tendons have not been sufficiently strengthened to handle the twisting, turning and snapping in their joints from kicking and dropping into low stances. Your tendons are the connective tissue from bone to muscle. Many people have incredibly strong muscles, but unless their tendons are also strong from High Rep Training, they will eventually give out!*

At this level of training you get 2 for 1 training:

You'll alternate days between "Static Hold" and "High Rep training". Plus you'll get to take the weekends off. Yea!!!!

High Rep is just what it sounds like. High reps.

Stepped in to a good stance and then raise up to straight legs and lower back down work slowly to account of three-going up, and 3-seconds going back down, pause in the down position before rising.

I recommend a goal of 25 rap's for two sets--AIN'T NO BIG THANG.---unless, of course, you're doing cat stances and empty stances.

Let's get Rock'n.

## Week 1:

Day 1: Today we set a starting point. Warm-up and then rep 1 rep of static hold for about and minute. Now drop into your stance again and grind out as many controlled (3 second up and a three second down) reps as you can. If he can get 25 rep's, then this section won't be nearly as difficult as it could be, but I still recommend you go through this routine for your joint sake. If you couldn't make 25 reps, your life is about to get exciting.

Day2 and day 4: Do 3 "static hold" reps for one minute each.

Day 3 and day 5: two 3 sets of half as many reps as you did on day one. *Max. X .5*  
= 1/2

### Week 2:

*Days 1, 3 and 5: Do one set with half of your maximum reps. (established week one). Then after a short rest do two sets of 75 percent of your maximum*

*That is max reps  $X .75 = \text{total } 25 X .75 = 18.75$  round up to an even 19 reps. =2 x 19 reps.*

Again go slow and controlled, on the up and down. You're in charge of the stances don't let it take charge of you.

Days 2 and 4: Do 1 static hold in perfect form until your legs want to quit then rise up a few inches and continue until you want to scream. That's it for days two and four.

### Week 3:

Days 1, 3, 5: do 1 set with 75 percent of your max reps as already established. Then to one set at your former Max. (You'll find it's no longer your true maximum. )

Days 2 and 4: static hold 1 Rep for as long as you can. When you can't do it any longer raise up, don't stop, go back to your stances for one more static hold as long as possible.

### Week 4:

*Day 1: Lets reestablished your maximum now. Do one set of half of your previous Max, rest. Then pumped out your new maximum. On average you will find this to be a 15% to 20% increase. Not a bad return for a five to 10 minutes a day. You're not done yet. Yes you too can have more reps for almost no extra expense. See day two for details.*

Days 2, 3 and 4: "Combined High Rep-Static Hold Training" is now in session. The next three days we will move into a boredom breaker. Take your stance and pumping out one set of your original Max, now just a faded memory, when you complete your last rep, rest in this your stance for a Static Hold of however long you can gut it out. Now pump out another set of High Reps and finished with a maximum duration Static Hold.

That's High Rep, Static Hold, High Rep and Static Hold.

Shakeout the cramps and burn and go have some fun.

Day 5: This is your final day for reaching your level of success at this stage of training.

Warm up with one set of the percent of your original maximum reps. then grind out a new and unexpected Max. Celebrate your achievement by settling into your stance and do 1- maximum duration static hold rep. This you will most likely find to also be in new achievement. Now you can take off for the weekend and recuperate.

If you decide that you want to repeat the routine, you should start by taking a week off and then starting up again. This time use the same percentages but up your maximum rep target to 50. Or just change to a different stance.

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## “Just for Fun”

Have you been noticing your stances are easier? While you're training partner is winding and shaking, you don't even break a sweat! Don't you love it?

Before we get into the next level of training I want to give you a few of fun ways to continue training your “static hold”. I've used them as “*breakthrough*” methods for my personal training and with students.

Method 1 is pretty simple: When you're watching your favorite TV show and a commercial break starts, jump up and take a stance and see how many ads you can handle in your stance. When the average commercial break last for five minutes and there are four to five an hour, you could train every stance you know during one movie. And on top of that when you're asked what you did last night you can say "Oh, I just watched the tube."

Method 2 works well for students and computer nuts: Get rid of your chair and use your stances instead. Horse, Bow, Bent Bow, and cat all fit under, around or up to a desk. As your legs give out move from one stance to another. Or use horse as your resting stance and the others as your training stances.

All right on with the “*resistance training*”.

## “Hop to it”

Now we have a good foundation to start with let's start looking at a progressive and productive training system.

One of the quickest and most productive methods for both explosive strength and stability I've found has got to be running the stairs. Though most people do this in one form or another few ever do it for stance training. Here's how works:

Stand at the bottom of a long flight of stairs or bleachers. Face the stairs and a proper horse stance. (Fist chambered)

*Without dropping your butt*, explode up and forward to the next step. Land in your horse stance, get your balance and then explode to the next. Repeat this until you reached the top or reached exhaustion.

A good progression seems to be:

- 10 steps day one and two
- 12 steps day 3 and 4
- 1 set of as many steps as possible on day five.

Rest for the weekend

- 12 steps day 1 and 2
- 14 steps days 3 and 4
- 1 set of as many steps as possible on day five.

Work up to 25 steps for 2 set.

Any time you saw get stuck repeat that week's schedule until you break through. Then move on to the next schedule. Set your goal and discipline yourself to return it.

When you reach 25 steps for two sets you can up your training intensity in a few different ways. (up in the intensity will boost the overall compensation response of your body. In turns your strength will jump)

1. Shoot for a single set of 50 steps.

- One set of as many steps as possible
- Pause for 30 seconds
- Finish the steps you missed to make 50 total.

- Continue pulling the five-day a week schedule as above until you can do 50 steps without a pause.
  - Do 50 for at least one week.
2. At a weight belt or wheat best and go through the basic version of step training.
- Progress as described in the above phases.
3. Skip a step when you jump. That is jump over one step and land on the next. *The Coliseum by practice at had a wooden seats removed and that created a perfect skipped step.* Go through the same five day a week progression as in the beginning working up at two, in this case 25 steps.

Also, listen to your body and what it's telling, "give me a rest", "give me more training", and "feed me pizza".

You get the idea.

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## **“Power Hold Training”**

**This is an advanced version of the “static hold training” we were doing in the beginning. However now we are adding some “meat” to the exercise.**

I usually recommend a 30 second holding period for this exercise. As for the number of times a week, start off with ***three non-consecutive days***. If your legs recover well, use the other days to do the same routine with a different set of stances. Example . . . Snake stance or Cat stance.

Start off by holding a 20 lb. plate against your chest and then lower into the stance you want to train and settle there for 30 seconds. Rest for 30 seconds and repeat. On your next workout day, up the weight by 10 lbs. or so.

Keep adding a little weight at each workout until 30 seconds is impossible.

***Always to your stance correctly!***

The next time you worked out back the weight off by 30% (if you made it to 100lbs. Only use 70lbs.), then start working up to the point is that you can't hold the stance for 30 seconds again.

You can repeat the cycle, backing off by 30% and working back up again to the new maximum weight for 30 seconds, as many times as you wish.

Once your accustom to this routine feel free to start using different stances at each workout. Just remember to add them in slowly (not all at the same time) and always use the built in the cycle. (Add weight until you can't hold for 30sec. Then start over with 30% less weight.)

If or when holding plates is no longer practical, for example 3-45 lb. plates, try using an Olympic weight bar across your shoulders. *For safety sake you should use “squat racks” or a “power rack”.* You'll have to adjust your balance a little, but that's good training in itself.

**I have found that, most of the time, you can add this exercise to any routine of training with out really overstressing your system. As far as a "rock solid" and stances go this is probably the most beneficial exercise.**

I started using this when one of my students with particularly stable stances was catching my time limit. Give it a shot I have a feeling it will become your favorite as well.

# “Heavy Rep Training”

**When training with weights, you need to allow extra time for recuperation. So I'd recommend only training your stances with weights two days a week. That's too not consecutive days. Such as Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday. You can still do static hold or heavy rep training whenever you wish.**

Method one:

*This is an unbelievably intense routine, you might consider starting with Method 2.*

- using any of your stances preferably one who trained through the previous stages.
- Pick up a steel plate "Olympic or standard weights" say 10 lbs.
- then slowly rise up and then settle back into your stance. *Pay close attention to your body position. Don't start obtaining forward or sticking your butt out. **Use proper form start with the weight that allows you to make 20 good reps.***

On the next day he worked out and add more weight and gut out as many reps as you can.

When you fail to get 20 reps stand up and take a 30 second break. Then gut out however many reps you have left.

Continue using the same weight until you get three sets to get all 20 reps.

Up the amount of weight in your next workout. Start adding reps until once again you can do 20 reps in one set.

Then start adding weights again.

**This is by far my favorite method!**

***Don't use any more than two stances at a time with this training.***

***You will over train!***

Method 2:

This is not as intense of a training method but I've found that the yield good a consistent results.

1. Take any stance you wish hold the weight but allows you to raise and lower in to your stance for 12 reps, either with a bar across your shoulders or holding a plate to your chest.
2. Do 3 sets of between 8 and 12 reps in good form.
3. Add weight each time you workout until you can't get at least eight reps on all 3 sets. Stick with that weight until you can do it 8 to 12 reps in all three sets. Then up the weight by 10 percent on your next work out.

After six to eight weeks on either of these routines you should change retains or reduce your workload by half for a week or two. This will facilitate the recuperation for both muscle and tendons. It also will help you regain your enthusiasm.

So take a break whether you want to or not--- **THAT'S AN ORDER!!!!**

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# **“Power Take-off Training”**

***Warning: This is particularly intense and stressful training. I'd recommend that you work through all of the previous exercise routines before attempting this one. Seriously!!!***

***In order to do this type of training you will need to have a solid bench or step or box. It will have to stand up your weight plus the added resistance plus the impact force of both landing on it! I did say **solid** didn't I? The top will need to be about the height of your knee, as well as being wide enough for a proper horse stance.***

Twice a week is more than sufficient for this method, and you must pay close attention to how your body is feeling during your recovery time. On the off days you can still train with “static hold” or “high reps”. Though you will have to be the judge.

## **Method one: for horse stance work:**

1. Stand *in your stance* parallel to the bench. Hold a weight to your chest.
2. Without dropping your butt, explode onto the bench landing again in your stance. (Don't land a standing and then lower into a stance.) Make a point of pulling your knees up as you go airborne!!!
3. After you are set in your stance hop back down to the ground landing in your stance. Repeat for the desired number of reps. Usually nine to 12, for 2 sets.

Always EXPLODE up and then you can just hop down. Don't “park” at any time during this exercise.

*These next to methods you won't need the bench.*

**Method 2:** for Bow stance, Bent Bow stance and the like: (Zenku dachi, forward stance, or half kneeling stance)

1. Stand in your stance while holding a weight to your chest.
2. Explode straight up and switch legs in the air.
3. Land in the same stance with the opposite leg in front.
4. Repeat for the desired number of repetitions. Again 9 to 12 per side. 2 sets is enough.

This is particularly good training if you want an awesome jump front kick. Just be sure to chamber your knees as high as possible during the switch.

**Method 3:** for cat stance and empty stance. (any low back stances)

1. Take your stance with a weight held to your chest.
2. Explode straight up, chamber your needs.
3. Land in the same stance on the same leg, repeat for the desired number of repetitions. 9-12. Switch legs and repeat. Again 2 sets should do you.

I would start this particular exercise with bodyweight only, it's a real bugger!

If you're looking to train more than one of your stances with this type of training, I would recommend alternating between them with each workout.

Try this: Monday. Method 1:2 sets of 12 repetitions for horse stance.

Thursday. Method 2:2 sets of 12 repetitions for Bent Bow.

Monday. Method 1: up the weight. 2 sets of 12 repetitions, horse stance.

Thursday. Method 3:2 sets of 12 for cat stance.

Monday. Method 1: repeat adding weight, for 2 sets of 9-12 reps in horse stance.

Thursday. Method 2: repeat with the added weight, using a Forward stance.

You get the idea. When you can't get nine repetitions stop adding weight and work back up 12 repetitions then start adding weights again.

For about 10 years I taught Pai Te Lung Kung Fu which is part of the family art from Grandmaster Daniel Kane Pai. After the birth of my first son, (I now have two sons) I stopped teaching and resumed personal study. It eventually came to the point where I was practicing far to many kuen to do full justice to them. At which time I started to remove the redundant sets and the non-challenging sets. This led to a system containing fighting sets from about 8 styles. Pai Lum, Northern Shao-lin, Northern 5-animals, Ba Chi Chuan are the main core.

The system is not is not a "new style". Like most Chinese systems, it's rooted in one style and has others grafted in, to create a complete system. I've coined the name "**Tong Yi Ch'uan-fa**" the "**The Unified Fist School**" (method). The Martial Arts eBooks I have written are from 20 years of study and application. I have used what I write about as well as taught these materials with GREAT success!

A few years ago I followed a burden that had been place on my heart and became an Ordained Minister. I have as of this time not been called to a full time ministry. My relationship with Jesus (that's what He called us all to- not to become religious but relational people) has brought more joy into my life that I had imagined possible when I was drinking, dancing and partying. If you want to know about that joy, and how a relationship with the Sovereign Lord and Creator of the entire universe is even possible, contact me and we'll chat.

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May the Lord bless you and your household.

John Roche

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