

STAV

Stances

a brief beginners guide on how to perform the stances used in Stav



for Trel and Karl levels

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Cover Page

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Main Stav Stances Section 1 to 15 = 15 pages

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to provide an introduction to the stances used in Stav.

Stav is a traditional European mind, body and spirit training philosophy. It is based on the customs of the Hafskjold family, which have been preserved in a continuous line for over 44 generations.

The basic level for introduction to the stances is the Trel level. This achieves familiarity with the stances, the order in which they are performed and introduces the breathing techniques.

Once an understanding of the Trel level is achieved then the next level to attempt is that of the Karl. The Karl level stances refine the breathing and movements introduced at the Trel level and add a degree of refinement and meditation.

The stances can have many applications. They can be used for meditation and stress relief. They can have a benefit to health in that they are a gentle exercise. This aspect can be particularly useful when relieving injuries. The stances are also applied in the martial art aspect of Stav. This art is not a confrontational exercise but involves placing the body in the correct position and the correct place to either avoid or neutralise an attack. The martial art aspect does not rely on physical strength, fitness or suppleness and is therefore particularly useful for both men and women in everyday life. Practice of the stances and patient study of the runes also enables you to understand yourself and the world in which you live. When this is achieved then you will also understand how changes can be made.

This booklet will not teach all the answers about fitness and health that can be obtained from the stances. Nor will it reveal the psychological gains or the preparation for the martial arts aspects of Stav that the stances give. Only by performing them on a regular basis can the full extent of all the benefits that can be achieved with the stances be discovered.

This guide will hopefully help to form a useful stepping stone for continued studies and learning. By combining this guide on the stances and your own notes, an understanding of the runes and with other text on the Norse myths it will become a useful tool in the quest for knowledge and wisdom.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF STAV

Stav (sometimes spelt Stáv, and pronounced *star-ve*) has its roots in the philosophy, mythology and belief system of pre-Christian Northern Europe. Around the 8th century Christianity began to arrive in Scandinavia and soon gained considerable influence. In other parts of Europe the pagan traditions had been suppressed and the knowledge and wisdom contained there had been fragmented and would soon be lost. Thus the priests and philosophers (those of the Jarl class) were entrusted with passing on the wisdom and traditions that had been handed down to them. They devised a system for the preservation and transmission of their knowledge using a set of sixteen runes based on the Danish (or Younger) Futhark. This was considered to be the least number of runes that could provide a viable method of handing down the system. The name Futhark (or Futhork) is from the first 6 runes, Fe Ur Thór Ás Rei Kreft. By using the runes as a basis for a set of stances, with the body and the arms & legs moving to form the rune, the knowledge of them could be used by those who were passing the wisdom onto future generations.

This system has been taught to each generation of the Hafskjold family and represents a systematic body of knowledge preserved for over 44 generations.

The word Stav is a pun, meaning both staff and rune/stave. Stav involves use of both staff and runes in a system that trains both the mind and the body.

Stav is divided into 5 levels or classes as shown on page iv. This ordered structured system fits the requirements of most men. Women are more *'free spirits'* and can belong to any class: They each have their own or can take that of their husband/partner. Women are also seen as existing in their own community independent of level/class. Text relating to each level and the runes is given in the *Hávamál* (Sayings of the High One), part of the Poetic Edda.

This system of levels/classes is not a grading or examination system but is intended to fit your own nature and personality. The grading systems for Japanese martial arts were originally introduced to control the teachers. Thus they are a bureaucratic invention, a synthetic rather than a natural classification.

The objective of Stav is to achieve the best at your level. In the martial arts aspect of Stav a lack of technique is not penalised, as it is the principles which are important. Techniques can be adapted to meet your own requirements.

Finding your own class or level is through *'guided meditation'*. This guided meditation is outside the scope of this guide. For further information it is recommended you contact a recognised teacher in Stav. This guided meditation should be first performed in conjunction with a recognised instructor; only after this should you undertake your own meditation.

LEVELS IN STAV

TREL

Description: Serf - Dependent
 Attitude: Backs away from trouble and neutralises the attack
 Colour: Dark Blue / Black Element: Air
 Weapon(s): Stick or Club Runes: Rei, Krefl
Hávamál: None - but trel undertakes a commitment to find own level

KARL

Description: Churl - Landowner
 Attitude: Defends own property, drives away an intruder
 Colour: Green Element: Earth or Water
 Weapon(s): Battle Axe (Huscarl) Runes: Fe, Ar, Mann, Laug
Hávamál: Do you know how to carve them? Do you know how to read them?

HERSE

Description: Lord - Warrior *pronounced hashur*
 Attitude: Defends society. Breaks opponents balance and controls him
 Colour: Red Element: Fire
 Weapon(s): Sword Runes: Ur, Thór, Sol, Tyr
Hávamál: Do you know how to colour them? Do you know how to test them?

JARL

Description: Earl - Priestly Class (sometimes spelt Yarl)
 Attitude: Avoids getting involved. Slips past attack or neutralises threat from a safe distance
 Colour: White Element: Ice
 Weapon(s): Staff, Long Bow Runes: Hagl, Is, Yr
Hávamál: Do you know how to offer them? Do you know how to pray?

KONGE

















Description: King/Wizard - Man of Knowledge *pronounced kon-yur*
 Attitude: Moves in and neutralises threat before it is even carried out
 Colour: Royal Blue / Purple Element: - Wind - focused air
 Weapon(s): Spear or any Runes: Ás
Hávamál: Do you know how to send them? Do you know how to destroy them?

WOMEN

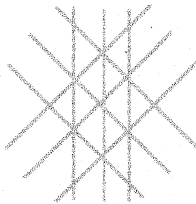
Description: Women belong to all classes; they also exist as their own community
 Attitude: Defends self or home
 Colour: Yellow + Element: Earth
 husband/partner
 Weapon(s): Stick or Battle Axe Female runes: Björk + Nöd

THE RUNES

Each rune has a meaning and an association with a God figure (or figures) from Norse mythology and a Stav level or class. The best way to find out about these mythological figures is to read the Edda in some of the numerous translations available (see the list of books on page 15). In addition each rune can have an associated folgie (an animal guide), tree and day. The runes and their names are shown below.

			
<i>Fe</i>	<i>Ur</i>	<i>Thór</i>	<i>Ás</i>
			
<i>Rei</i>	<i>Kreft</i>	<i>Hagl</i>	<i>Nod</i>
			
<i>Is</i>	<i>Ar</i>	<i>Sol</i>	<i>Tyr</i>
			
<i>Bjork</i>	<i>Mann</i>	<i>Laug</i>	<i>Yr</i>

The runes are placed in 3 setts of five. Sett 1 Fe to Rei, Sett 2 Hagl to Sol and Sett 3 Tyr to Yr. The rune Kreft is not in the setts as it is a wildcard. It represents the Norse god Loki, a joker, troublemaker and the wizard of lies. It is placed as the sixth rune in order to spell Futhork.



The runes were found by Ódin as described in the *Hávamál* (Sayings of the High One). They are derived from 'the web' that covers the universe and helps give *the lines* used in the martial and healing aspects of Stav. Laying nine sticks or stavs on the ground can depict the web. The shape of all the runes can be found in this pattern.

The runes can also be cast and read for divination (prediction or premonition). This involves reading the past, present and future for a given problem or circumstance. Regular practice in this is also a form of meditation. This divination is a particular talent of the Karl level or class and is a training system to develop intuition.

THE STANCES

The stances are at the core of Stav. They are the embodiment of the runes through which knowledge of the world around you is gained. Although the stances can be learnt in minutes they can take a lifetime to master.

Performing the stances has two direct benefits. The first is that it exercises the body gently and without pressure. Secondly it promotes complete breathing using the whole of the lungs.

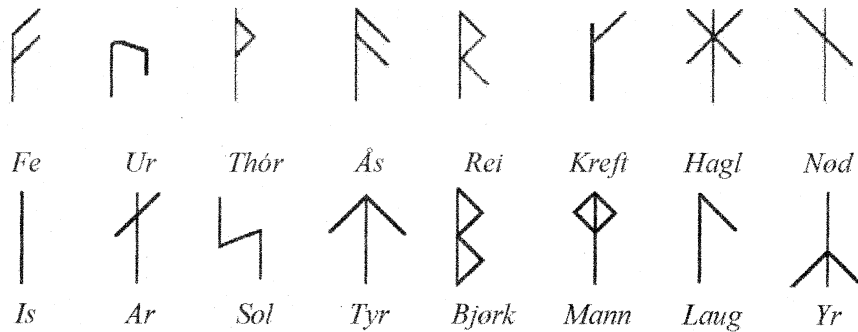
Another indirect benefit of the stances is that they are a ‘*moving meditation*’ and can be used for relaxation and in relieving stress and tension.

To perform the stances you need no special clothing or equipment. However, it is recommended that loose fitting clothes be worn and women may feel more comfortable wearing trousers. The stances are best performed in a calm, uninterrupted and unhurried fashion.

When you become familiar with the stances a *vlaad* may be worn when performing them. This is usually after you have discovered more about yourself through finding your level or class within Stav. A *vlaad* is simply is a green band tied around the head. Four coloured strips of material are hung from this band. The strips may be decorated with runes. These strips are placed two on either side of the headband to hang down just in front of the ears. The colour of these strips is that of your Stav level or class. Women add two other strips of yellow to the colour of their husband/partner. A Konge uses the colours of all the levels.

Your Stav level or class is found by *guided meditation*. This exercise is outside the scope of this guide. It is recommended to be performed for the first time in conjunction with a recognised instructor in Stav. Only after this should you perform your own meditation.

The runes on which the stances are based



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THE CORRECT MENTAL APPROACH

The stances should be performed with the correct *'mindset'*. That is to say they cannot be approached too casually, they require your undivided and uninterrupted attention.

An example of the correct mindset is that whilst the Trel level stances can be performed in about 5 minutes per side they shouldn't be rushed. If you're dashing to work or just want to fit them but are worried about the time then do not do the stances. It will be better, as well as more beneficial, to do the stances when you can be more relaxed and give them your complete attention.

The stances, although deceptively simple and quick to learn, can take a lifetime to master. This should be borne in mind whilst performing the stances. Each mistake you make or action were movement and the breathing is not co-ordinated should be analysed and thought through to improve it the next time.

A common mistake is to *'forget'* one or more of the stances in the order. What this signifies is that your mind was on a different subject, not on the stance being performed. Because of the association with the runes the stance(s) missed usually gives an indication as to what your mind was concentrating on. This is a hint to the problem(s) which need to be resolved to clear and ease the mind.

WHEN PERFORMED

The stances may be done in two stages (right side first then the left side) in the morning/evening, before/after exercise, etc. Alternatively both the right and left sides can be completed in one session.

START POSITION

Face North for right side stances and East for left hand side stances. To start the feet are placed a comfortable distance apart with the knees slightly bent. Push the pelvis forward and upwards slightly (tensing the buttocks achieves the same effect). Place the arms at the side.

THE BOW

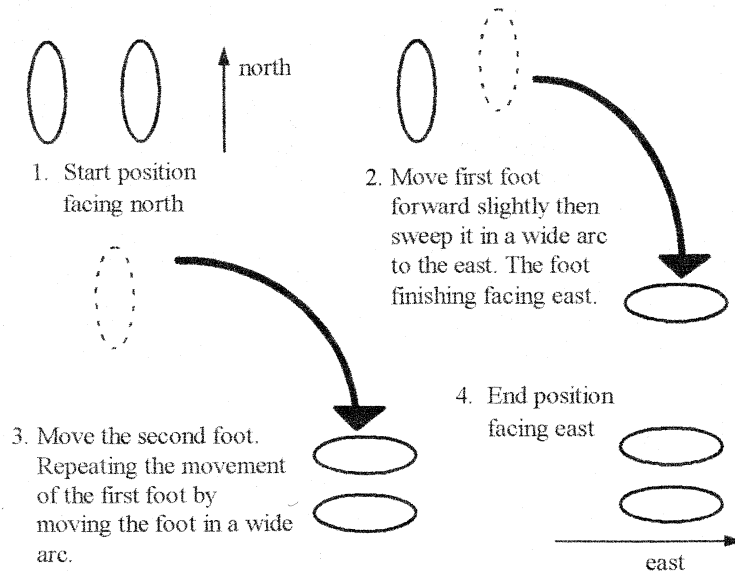
The start and finish of the stances is with a formal bow. This is in the European tradition where the hands are kept at the sides and the bow is from the waist. The spine and neck are kept in a straight line. The head is not dropped (as in a nod) nor is it raised as the upper body is lowered, keeping your posterior in.

BREATHING

When breathing in do so through the nose whilst relaxing the stomach muscles. This fills the lungs completely. When breathing out through the mouth start to tense the stomach muscles to compress the lower lung to force all the air from the lungs. See page 7 for how Karl level uses the out breath to perform a chant.

TURNING

When turning the foot for the direction of the turn (right or left) foot is raised at the heel and moved slightly forward. It is then swept in a wide arc so the foot ends facing the direction required. The heel is then lowered. The process is repeated with the other foot, finishing facing 90° to the original position.



The diagram above shows a turn to the east. It is reversed for a turn to the north; the left foot moving first to face north followed by the right.

NOTES:

1. Turns are only to the east or north, which in practice means you will be turning to the right & left for the right side stances and left then right for the left hand stances.
2. Turns are to the east or north because of their symbolic association. The Norse gods live in the north and the Fates are situated in the east. The right side stances show the shape of the runes to the Fates while the left side stances show the runes to the gods.
3. When moving into the Yr stance the turn is exaggerated without the second foot moving position. This places the legs in a wide V stance. This correctly positions the body to be able to move down into the Yr stance.

For the turn into the Yr stance it is important the turn side foot down is stamped down hard and with some force. The action is like stamping on an insect or to extinguish a small fire.

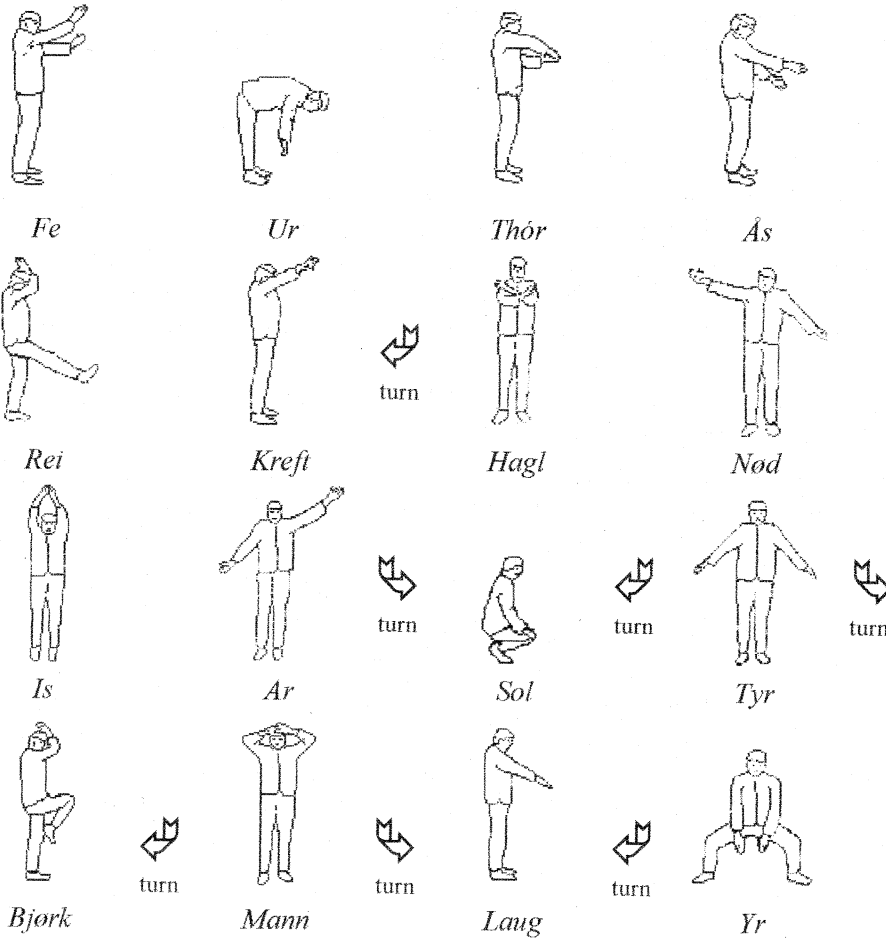
POSITIONING THE BODY

Given below are diagrams for all sixteen stances and when to turn in the sequence. Each stance is described in detail on the following pages. The order below is that for Trel and Karl level stances (read from left to right, top to bottom). The start for both the right and left hand side stances is Fe and the finish is Yr.

Right hand side stances are always performed first and start by facing north. The left hand side stances start by facing east.

The order for both right and left hand stances is *Fe, Ur, Thór, Ás, Rei, Kreft* ⊕ *Hagl, Nod, Is, Ar, ⊗ Sol* ⊕ *Tyr* ⊗ *Bjork* ⊕ *Mann* ⊗ *Laug* ⊕ *Yr*.

where for the right hand side stances ⊕ indicates a turn east and ⊗ a turn north and for the left hand side stances ⊕ indicates a turn north and ⊗ a turn east



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GENERAL GUIDELINES

Given below are some general guidelines for the stances, regardless of whether performed at the Trel or Karl levels (see pages 6 and 7 for specific guidelines). Each stance is described in detail in its own section in this guide.

1. When performing the stances the body is moved into the shape of the rune; both for the right and left side (right & left hand/foot lead respectively). For the right side the shape should be visible to someone standing to the east and for the left side a person standing to the north. This gives the correct indication of when to turn. Turns are only to the east and north.
2. Stances should be performed *with resistance* as though against water and movements should be natural and not forced. Do not tense the muscles but apply gentle continuous pressure. Try to move the arms (and legs) into the stances in an arc or with a rotational movement. This will help to keep the shoulders down and keep the movements fluid.
3. The movements should be smooth and flowing. Try and move the arms and legs in arcs or semi-circles, rather than straight lines.
4. Try to keep the upward motion of the shoulders to a minimum. The shoulder should not be raised unless the arm and hand are moved above shoulder height.
5. Stav is not a system where a lack of technique is penalised, it is the principle which is important. The stances can be adapted to cater for any injury or other problems that might exist. For example, when squatting into Sol it may be painful to those with damaged ankles or knees. However, the martial art aspect of Stav uses the Sol stance by placing one knee on the ground. Adapting and performing the Sol stance in this way is acceptable.
6. Start moving into Is by placing the hands together as in prayer then move up. Extend the hands and arms directly over the head and up onto the toes.
7. The stance for Sol and Yr involve going down with a straight back, resisting the urge to lean forward. When moving up from Sol move higher onto the toes (as in the stance for Is) before returning to the start position; this is to help reduce pressure on the knees.
8. Perform Ur by bowing forward. Don't try and touch your toes.
9. When moving from Kreft and Is back to the start position sweep the arms to the start position in a wide arc to the side (& slightly backwards).
10. Remember that the stances for Ar & Nod are effectively transposed when performed for the left hand stances.
11. When turning for the last stance Yr remember to stamp the turn side foot down hard and with some force. The action is like stamping on an insect or to extinguish a small fire.

TREL LEVEL GUIDELINES

This is the basic level for the stances and form a good introduction. These stances only take approximately 5 minutes per side and so can easily be fitted into a busy schedule.

Starting

- ◆ For the right side stances face north in the start position (page 2) and bow. For the left side stances face east in the start position (page 2) and bow.
- ◆ Breathe in and out three times. On the third breath clap twice whilst breathing out. If starting the left side stances straight after the right then these claps are not performed.

Doing the stances

- ◆ Starting at Fe complete the stance for this rune, breathing in when moving into the stance and out when moving back into the start position.
- ◆ After Fe move into the stances for the other runes in the order Ur, Thór, Ás, Rei, Kreft, Hagl, Nod, Is, Ar, Sol, Tyr, Bjork, Mann, Laug, Yr. Remember to turn when required.

For the right side the rune shape should be visible to an observer in the east, thus turn to the east and north when the rune shape dictates.

For the left side the rune shape should be visible to an observer in the north, thus turn to the north and east when the rune shape dictates.

- ◆ Co-ordinate your movements to finish moving into the stance with the lungs filled. Relaxing the stomach muscles helps to fill the lungs completely. Hold the stance for a beat and then move back into the start position. Breathe out as you move back, tensing the stomach muscles as you move to empty the lungs ready to start the next stance.
- ◆ When finishing a stance where you need to turn keep a little air in the lungs. Then perform the turn, breathing out completely as the turn is completed.

Finishing

- ◆ End right side stances with a bow; then perform the left side stances later.

Alternatively go straight into the left hand side stances starting at Fe and continuing through to Yr. Then end as for the left side stances as below.

- ◆ To end the left side stances
 - Breathe in and out three times. On the third breath clap twice whilst breathing out.
 - Breathe in and bow whilst breathing out.

KARL LEVEL GUIDELINES

You will need an instructor or audio tape to fully learn this level stances. These level stances take approximately 15 to 20 minutes per side. This level is more beneficial than the Trel level from a health and fitness aspect.

Starting

- ◆ For the right side stances face north in the start position (page 2) and bow. For the left side stances face east in the start position (page 2) and bow.
- ◆ Breathe in and out 9 times; then breathe in and clap twice whilst breathing out. The 9 breaths help to concentrate the mind for the exercise. If starting the left side stances straight after the right then the 9 breaths and claps are not performed.

Doing the stances

- ◆ Breathe in, relaxing the stomach muscles to increase the lung size.
- ◆ Start at Fe and while breathing out move into the stance. Whilst doing so chant the name of the rune. Time the movement of the arms (and legs) into the stance to finish the chant and movement as the last bit of air is expelled from the lungs. By tensing the stomach muscles all the air can be expelled.
- ◆ Breathe in again and reverse the process back to the start position. Remember to chant the name of the rune as you breath out and move.

After Fe repeat the breathing and chanting the rune name as you move into the stances for the other runes in the order Ur, Thór, Ás, Rei, Krefi, Hagl, Nöd, Is, Ar, Sol, Tyr, Björk, Mann, Laug, Yr. Remember to turn when required. For the right side the rune shape should be visible to an observer in the east, thus turn to the east and north when the rune shape dictates.

For the left side the rune shape should be visible to an observer in the north, thus turn to the north and east when the rune shape dictates.

- ◆ Co-ordinate your movements to finish moving into and out of the stance with the lungs empty and ready to breathe in to commence the next stance.
- ◆ When turning, breathe in during the turn to fill the lungs. You are then ready to start chanting and moving into the stance once the turn is completed.

Finishing

- ◆ End right-side stances with a bow; then perform the left side stances later. Alternatively go straight into the left hand side stances starting at Fe and continuing through to Yr. Then end as for the left side stances as below.
- ◆ To end the left side stances
 - Breath in and clap twice whilst breathing out.
 - Breathe in and out nine times and then bow.

FE



For both left and right sides:

The arms should move upwards and into the centre line of the body. The arms should be moved outwards and upwards in an arc. They should not be jerked straight up into the stance. The arms are kept slightly bent, maintaining the natural bend as they were when at the side of the body. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Both arms should finish moving at the same time. Move back to the start position by reversing the moves in

the same controlled manner.

For the right hand side:

Move the arms upwards, the right being moved slightly quicker than the left to be the higher.

For the left hand side:

Move the arms upwards, the left being moved slightly quicker than the right to be the higher.

UR

For both left and right sides:

This stance is identical for the right and left sides.



Put very simply this stance can be seen as an exaggeration of the bow, as described on page 2.

The upper body is bent forward from the waist. The spine, neck and head being kept in a straight line. The arms are moved forward as the body is lowered. The arms are not loose but moved with control in the same manner as the body. The body weight is transferred smoothly onto the balls of the feet and toes. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. The arms are not trying to touch the toes but finish hung straight down from the shoulders. The extent of the bow forward should be just to the point before losing balance. Keep your posterior tucked in (legs maintaining their slight bend at the knees and do not lean backwards). With practice the degree of movement forward will increase naturally.

Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

THÓR



For the left hand side:

The left hand is moved to the centre line of the body at between stomach and groin level. The right hand is then moved to the centre line of the body and twisted so the thumb is downwards. It is then placed into the left hand so that the knuckles are put in the palm of the left hand. The left hand clasps and holds onto the right. The arms maintain their natural bend at the elbows, as they had when at the side of the body. The left arm is then rotated downwards and the right arm moves upwards, both in an arc. At the same time the clasped hands are moved upwards and outwards also in an arc. Avoid the temptation to *twist* or *bend* the spine to the side, it should be kept straight. The finish position is as shown above, the hands about chest height and the elbows as close to the vertical as possible. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Both arms should finish moving at the same time. Move back to the start position by reversing the movement of the arms. When releasing the right hand it should *twist* and *flick* out of its own accord, as though releasing a spring.

For the right hand side:

This is as described for the right hand side except the right and left hand and arms are changed. i.e. twist the left hand knuckles into the right hand palm etc.

ÅS



For both left and right sides:

The arms should move up and into the centre line of the body. The arms should be moved outwards and upwards in an arc or quarter-circle. They should not be jerked straight up into the stance. The arms are kept slightly bent, maintaining the natural bend as they were when at the side of the body. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Both arms should finish moving at the same time. Move back to the start position by reversing the moves in the same controlled manner. As the movement is quite small it must be performed slowly in order to co-ordinate the breathing while moving into and out of the stance.

For the right hand side:

The right arm is moved slightly quicker than the left to be the higher.

For the left hand side:

The left arm is moved slightly quicker than the left to be the higher.

NOTE: For the Karl level chant Ås is pronounced Óss.

REI



For right hand side:

The right arm is moved up with an open hand into the centre line of the body. The arm continues moving upwards and outwards in an arc. The arm finishes moving when the elbow is about eye level and the hand is over the head with the thumb pointing down the back. Remember to keep the elbow *tucked in* to keep the arm in line with the centre of the body. At the same time as moving the arm the right leg is raised. This is done by moving the leg forward, also in an arc.

The foot is moved towards the centre line of the body. The leg is not locked straight at the knee but keeps the slight bend from the start position. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Balance is maintained by ensuring the arm and leg move to the body's centre line. Balance is also helped by remembering to keep the left leg slightly bent and shifting body weight accordingly. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

For the left hand side:

As described for the right except that the left arm and leg are used to move into the stance.

KREFT



For both left and right sides:

This stance is identical for the right and left sides.

Both arms are moved to the centre line of the body. As they move they are twisted to place the back of each hand together at about groin level. The arms are then moved upwards and outwards in this position. Movement is in an arc, finishing at an angle of about 60° to the body. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by circling the arms apart in the direction the palms are facing. They are also moved slightly backwards to exercise the back and shoulder muscles. Sweep the arms in this wide arc back to the side of the body, maintaining control and *with resistance*.

After this stance turn; east (right) for the right side, north (left) for the left side.

HAGL



For right hand side:

The arms are moved into the centre of the body to cross at the wrists at about stomach level. The left arm/wrist is placed over the right, both palms down and the fists are clenched. The arms are then moved upwards and outwards in an arc. As this happens the arms are rotated to twist the palms (still clenched) towards the body. The hands finish about shoulder height and in front of the body (not resting against the chest). See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

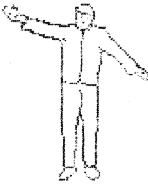
For the left hand side:

The left hand side of this stance is as described for the right with the exception that the right and left arm/wrist are transposed. The right arm/wrist is placed over the left to start the stance.

For this stance it may be useful to remember that the arm for the side which you are performing (right or left) is the one furthest away from the body.

NOTE: For the Karl level chant the rune Hagl is pronounced *Har-gaal*.

NØD



For right hand side:

The right arm is moved away from the body in an arc and at the same time the left arm is moved out in an arc away from the body. As the arms are moved the palms are twisted to face outwards. The arms are also moved slightly backwards to exercise the back and shoulder muscles. This also gently stretches the chest muscles. The right arm is moved slightly faster than the left to ensure the end position (as shown on the left) is reached whilst co-ordinated with the breathing. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

For the left hand side:

The left hand side of this stance is as described for Ar (see page 11). For the left hand side stances the position of Nød and Ar are effectively transposed.

NOTE: For the Karl level chant the rune Nød is pronounced *Nood*

IS



For both left and right sides:

This stance is identical for the right and left sides. The arms are moved together to the centre of the body at about stomach level. The palms are placed together as in prayer, fingers pointing upwards. The arms are then moved up the body's centre line to above the head. The body is stretched and moved up onto the toes to gain maximum height. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by moving the arms apart and sweeping them in a wide circle back to the sides (as in the Kreft stance). They are also moved slightly backwards to exercise the back and shoulder muscles. As the arms are swept back, maintaining control and *with resistance*, the body is lowered and the heels placed back onto the ground.

AR



For right hand side:

The left arm is moved away from the body in an arc and at the same time the right arm is moved out in an arc away from the body. As the arms are moved the palms are twisted to face outwards. The arms are also moved slightly backwards to exercise the back and shoulder muscles. This also gently stretches the chest muscles. The left arm is moved slightly faster than the right to ensure the end position (as shown on the left) is reached whilst co-ordinated

with the breathing. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

For the left hand side:

The left hand side of this stance is as described for Nød (see page 10). For the left hand side stances the position of Ar and Nød are effectively transposed.

After this stance turn; north (left) for the right side, east (right) for the left side.

SOL



For both left and right sides:

This stance is identical for the right and left sides.

Begin this stance by moving the toes outwards. This is done by moving the feet to point the toes out, but keeping the heels in the same position on the ground. This small movement forms a V shape with the feet. Move into the stance by crouching down, raising the heels as you do so. The direction the legs and knees move is that pointed too by the toes. The body weight is transferred smoothly onto the balls of the feet and toes.

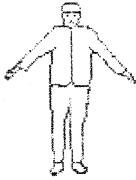
As you move down slide the hands along the thighs to the knees. The back should be kept straight as you move down; keeping the buttocks directly over the ankles helps to achieve this. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner. You may find you need greater control moving up from the Sol stance than it takes moving down into it. As you move up from the Sol stance raise yourself onto your toes before lowering the heels and moving the feet back from their V position to the start position. This movement onto the toes is similar to that for the IS stance (see page 10) and is intended to reduce stress and strain on the knees.

After this stance turn; east (right) for the right side, north (left) for the left side.



an illustration of an alternative stance for Sol for those unable to perform the stance as described. This may be due to physical injury to the ankles, knees or spine. In Stav the technique is not penalised as long as the principles are maintained. The stance is achieved by kneeling with the knee of the side being performed against the heel of the other leg. The example shown is in fact how Sol may be performed when used in the martial arts aspects of Stav.

NOTE: The position of the arms as in the drawing above is not required for the stances. The arms would remain by the side of the body. The drawing shows the position of the arms only to demonstrate how the stance is used with a staff in the martial arts aspect of Stav.

TYR**For both left and right sides:**

This stance is identical for the right and left sides.

The arms are moved in an arc to the side of the body to about 60°. This is not by moving them straight out from body's side; it is not like flapping wings. Instead the hands are moved together forwards in front of the body towards the body's centre line, at about stomach level. At this point the palms are downwards. The arms are then swept backwards in a semi-circle to the sides. The palms are twisted to face the front (alternatively the palms may be kept downwards to emphasise the 'arrowhead' appearance of the stance). The arms may be moved slightly backwards to exercise the back and shoulder muscles. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

After this stance turn; north (left) for the right side, east (right) for the left side.

BJØRK**For right hand side:**

This stance is similar to Rei. The right arm is moved up with an open hand into the centre line of the body. The arm continues moving upwards and outwards in an arc. The arm finished moving when the elbow is about eye level and the hand is over the head with the thumb pointing down the back. Remember to keep the elbow *tucked in* to keep the arm in line with the centre of the body. At the same time as moving the arm the right leg is raised. This is done by moving the right heel up the left leg.

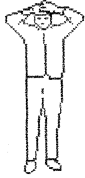
The right knee is also turned slightly towards the centre line of the body. As it is raised the leg is bent and the right heel is placed onto the left leg, just above the left knee. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Remember to maintain balance by shifting body weight accordingly. Move the arm back into the start position by reversing the arm movements. The leg is returned by moving the foot forward in a semi-circle, as if stepping forward. This arc is such that the foot is returned back to the start position.

For the left hand side:

As described for the right except that the left arm and leg are used to move into the stance; the left leg being rested against the right knee, etc.

After this stance turn; east (right) for the right side, north (left) for the left side.

MANN



For right hand side:

The hands are crossed in the centre of the body at about stomach level. The right hand is placed over the back of the left, thumb to thumb, little finger to little finger. The hands and arms are then pushed upwards and outwards from the body in a wide semi-circle. As they are moved up the arms are bent so that the back of the right hand is placed against the forehead, elbows out to the side. Co-ordinate the movement and breathing to finish as the hands reach the forehead. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

For the left hand side:

As described for the right except that the left hand is placed over the back of the right and it is the back of the left hand which finishes against the forehead.

For both left and right sides:

With this stance a useful reminder is that the hand for the side which is being performed (right or left) is the one which is placed against the forehead.

After this stance turn; north (left) for the right side, east (right) for the left side.

LAUG



For both left and right sides:

This stance is identical for the right and left sides.

The arms are moved in an arc upwards and outwards to the body to about 60°. The arms maintain the slight natural bend from the start position and the palms are downwards. This stance has been likened to being about to dive into water. Like the As stance the movement is relatively small. Therefore it must be performed slowly to co-ordinate the breathing with the start and finish of the stance. See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner.

After this stance turn; east (right) for the right side, north (left) for the left side.

YR**For both left and right sides:**

This stance is identical for the right and left sides.

The turn into this stance from Laug is a variation of the normal turn. The sweeping arc of the turn side foot (right or left) is exaggerated. It finished pointing S.E. for the right hand side and N.W. for the left. As the other foot doesn't move the legs finish bent and in the form of a wide V stance.

An important note is that the turn side foot is stamped down hard. The action is like stamping on an insect or to extinguish a small fire.

The hands are placed together in the centre of the body. Then crouch down, lifting the heels. Remember to keep the back straight as you move down. As with the Sol stance keeping the buttocks directly over the heels helps maintain the correct posture. Go down as far as you can. Maintain control of the movement with the arms and hands pushing down towards the ground (it may help to pretend to push something into the ground). See notes 2 & 3 of the General Guidelines (page 5) on moving smoothly *with resistance*. Move back into the start position by reversing the movements in the same controlled manner. As with Sol moving up from this stance may require more control than moving down into it.

After this stance the sequence is finished.

For the right hand side you can choose to end here after Yr and perform the left-hand side stances later. Alternatively you can move straight onto the left-hand side stances.

For the right hand side finish

- ◆ For either Trel or Karl levels to end the right side stances just bow. Complete the programme with the left-hand side stances later.
- ◆ For either Trel or Karl levels to immediately begin the left-hand side stances start by moving into Fe and continue through to Yr. After this end as for the left hand side stances of the level which you are performing.

For the left hand side finish

- ◆ For the Trel level to end the left side stances breath in and out three times. On the third breath clap twice whilst breathing out. Then bow.
- ◆ For the Karl level to end the left side stances breathe in and clap twice whilst breathing out. Then breathe in & out nine times and then bow.

FURTHER READING

The books listed below are drawn from the author's own library and are suggestions for further reading into the myths and poetry of the Viking era from which Stav has its roots.

<i>Penguin Book of Norse Myths</i> - Kevin Crossley-Holland.....	<i>Penguin</i>	ISBN: 0-14-017993-3
<i>An Introduction to Viking Mythology</i> - John Grant	<i>Grange Books</i>	ISBN: 1-85627-830-1
<i>The Norsemen</i> - H. A. Guerber	<i>Senate</i>	ISBN: 1-85958-014-9
<i>Edda</i> - Snorri Sturleson (translated by Anthony Faulkes)	<i>Everyman</i>	ISBN: 0-460-87616-3
<i>Norse Poems</i> - W. H. Auden / J.P. Taylor	<i>Athlone Press</i>	ISBN: 0-485-11226-4
<i>Poems of the Edda Edda</i> - Patricia Terry	<i>University of Pennsylvania Press</i>	ISBN: 0-8122-8220-5
previously published as <i>Elder Edda of the Vikings</i>	<i>Bobbs-Merrill</i>	ISBN: 0-672-60332-2
<i>Hammer of the North</i> - Magnus Magnusson.....		ISBN: 0-85613-301-9
<i>Rune Magic</i> - Nigel Pennick.....	<i>Aquarian</i>	ISBN: 1-85538-105-2
<i>The Runes</i> - Bernard King.....	<i>Element</i>	ISBN: 1-85230-420-0

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Pidd was born in 1962 in a small town in Lincolnshire, England. His regular job is a Systems Engineer for a major social alarm company. Please forgive the unflattering id photograph on the right.



He has been studying Stav since the middle of 1995, attended regular training sessions and summer courses to further his understanding and knowledge of Stav. His tutors include Graham Butcher and Mark Siddall. These tutors have a direct line to Ivar Hafskjold, from whose family tradition Stav originates.

Alex has been able to incorporate Stav principles when gaining NCFE qualifications in counselling skills. Other certificates include basic teaching techniques (for adult education).

His other interests include riding his motorcycle (despite it being old and slow), going to the movies and the occasional glass of good Scotch whisky. It is also rumoured he like cats.

Alex has been producing documents and booklets on Stav based on his own notes and studies since starting this practice. Making them available via the Internet is his way of distributing the information on Stav to a wider audience. I hope you will support his endeavours.



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Based on the teachings of Ivar Hafskjold and other original research.
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