



BALLET ETUDES

SINCE 1986



BALLET ETUDES ACADEMY

Pointe Shoe

HANDBOOK



CONGRATULATIONS!



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Founding Director

Congratulations on being approved for pointe shoes!

This is a very exciting and meaningful milestone in your ballet training, and one that represents not only your physical strength and technical progress, but also your focus, discipline, and dedication to the art form. Beginning pointe work is a big step forward in your dance journey, and we are so proud of everything you've accomplished to get here.

As you begin this next phase, remember that dancing en pointe is a gradual process that requires patience, care, and consistent effort. You'll continue to build strength, refine your technique, and grow as an artist in new and exciting ways. The materials in this packet have been carefully put together to help guide and support you—from shoe fittings to proper care, expectations in class, and injury prevention. Please take the time to read through it thoroughly and refer back to it often as you get started.

We are thrilled to see where this journey takes you and look forward to supporting you every step of the way. Congratulations again on reaching this special moment!



YOUR NEXT STEP



You've been approved by your teacher to get pointe shoes, but what are you supposed to do next?!

Step 1 is to contact Ballet Etudes Academy instructor Susan Sharkey at (480) 967-5417 to schedule a pointe shoe fitting. Susan will go with you to your first fitting at Dee's Dancewear in Chandler to ensure you get the perfect shoe that's just right for you!



ORDERING YOUR SHOES



After you purchase your first pair of pointe shoes (most likely from Dee's Dancewear after your first pointe shoe fitting,) you might continue to purchase from Dee's, or you might also be able to purchase your following pairs online at Discount Dance Supply.

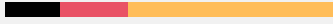
However, after wearing your pointe shoes in class, you and your teacher may eventually determine that you require a different brand or model of pointe shoe. If that's the case, please contact Susan to schedule another fitting.

Did you know that there are dozens of pointe shoe makers who make countless styles? There are hundreds of different types of pointe shoes out there, and it can potentially take some time for you to find the brand and style that is just right for your feet!

Let's learn about the different parts of the pointe shoes on the next page!



PARTS OF THE POINTE SHOE



Each part of the pointe shoe may be different from brand to brand or style to style, so that's why it's important for you to try different types to see which fits your foot best!

For example, dancers with different foot shapes (e.g., Egyptian, Greek, Roman) will require different box shapes (tapered, slightly tapered, or square). Your arch type, heel shape, and many other factors also influence your shoe needs!



POINTE SHOE ACCESSORIES



Pointe shoes come with accessories! Some help alleviate pain, some help your shoe fit better to your foot, etc! This isn't a full list, and there are many different kinds of each of these, so it's helpful to ask your peers or older dancers what they are using.



Required: Ribbons, Elastic, Sewing Kit: Ribbons and elastics will be sewn onto your shoes to help keep your shoe from slipping off your feet. There are different kinds of ribbons and elastics out there for you to try!



Toe pads: These are worn to reduce friction of your toes on the insides of the shoes. These can be made out of wool, silicone, gel, and more! it can be helpful to try out different kinds to see which work best for you!



Jet glue: Not recommended for beginners - Jet glue is used on pointe shoes to reinforce and harden specific areas, primarily the box (toe area) and shank (the part that supports the arch), to extend the shoe's lifespan and provide extra support.



Dancer dots: These dots help reduce irritation, help protect against blisters, and relieve pressure on sensitive areas of the foot.



Toe spacers: Toe spacers in pointe shoes are used to maintain proper toe alignment, which can improve comfort, reduce pain, and prevent injuries like bunions or overlapping toes.



Toe tape: Protects and cushions the toes for total protection and movement. Elastic cushioned micro-foam tape can be wrapped around toes to guard from injury and chafing.

Again, this is not a full list, and not every dancer will or should use all of these items. You will learn along the way what works for you and what doesn't!

SEWING YOUR POINTE SHOES



You'll need::

Pointe Shoes
Needle
Thread
Satin Ribbons
Elastic
Scissors

Pointe shoes need to fit snug on the foot and are required to be properly sewn in order to keep the foot supported in the shoe. If the shoes are too loose the shoes can cause injury to the dancer, and the risk of not sewing one's shoe properly can result in injury.

The below is a common way to sew your shoes, but there are many different ways so we encourage you to watch videos online to see which way works best for you!

Ribbons:

1. Cut the ribbons into four equal parts. Each shoe should have two ribbons.



2. Thread a needle.* To do this take the thread and cut a long strand. Put the thread through the eye of the needle and knot the ends of the thread to prevent the needle from sliding off. The knot will also help stop the thread from going all the way through the shoe.

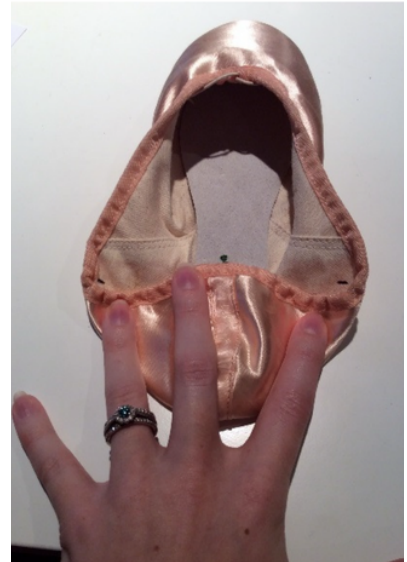


**Please note that this example is using colored thread for demonstration purposes only. Please use thread that matches your shoe.*

SEWING YOUR POINTE SHOES

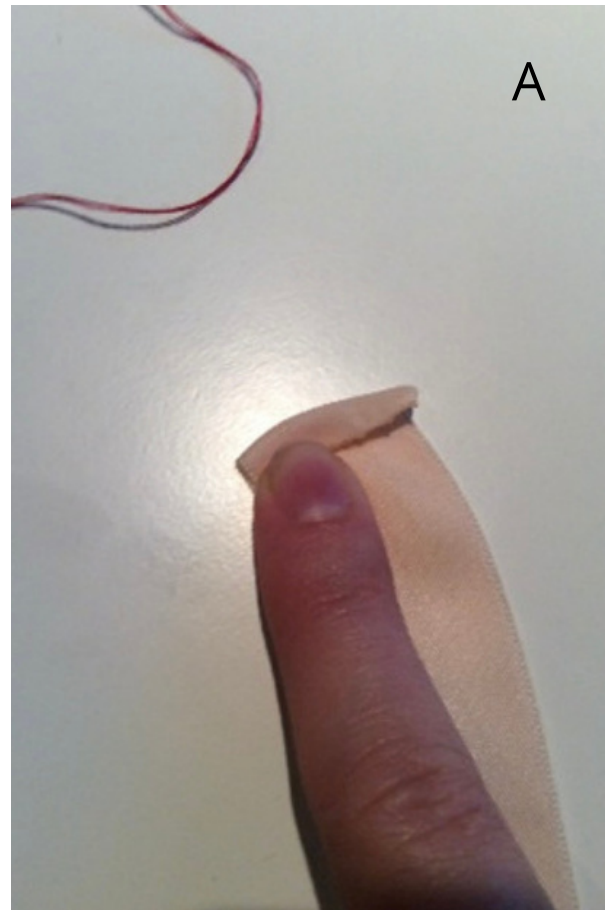


3. Fold the pre-pointe/pointe shoe's heel over to find a good placement for the ribbons. Mark the placement with a pencil. Make sure to do this on the inside of the shoe.

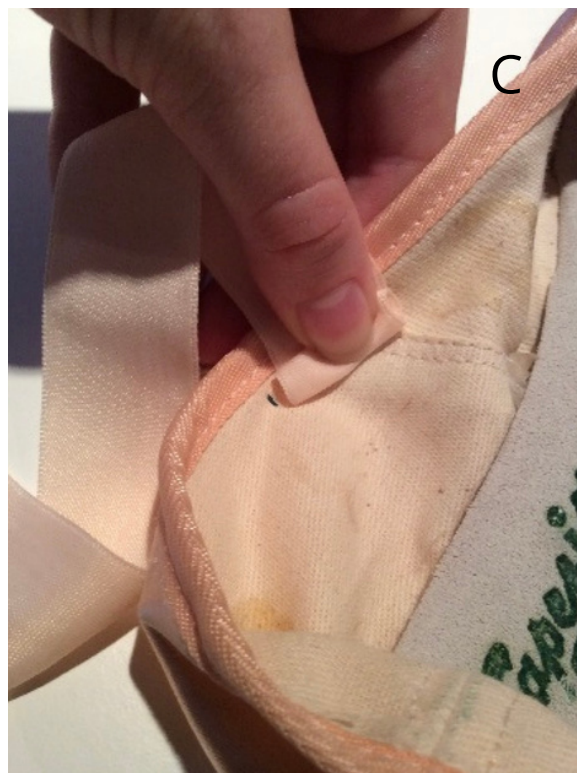


4. Sew ribbons, one on each side of the shoe.

You will want to fold the ribbon's end over twice to create a 'little box' and to prevent the ribbon from fraying and falling off. Find the pencil mark on the shoe. Place the ribbon near the pencil mark and then start sewing in a corner. Poke the needle through the ribbon and the shoe and pull the thread all the way through until the knot catches, then poke the needle back through the outside of the shoe and again through the ribbon. Try to keep the second hole close to the first, so that you don't see too much of the thread on the outside of the shoe. Repeat this process until you have sewn completely around the little box'. Once you have finished, knot and cut the thread.



SEWING YOUR POINTE SHOES



SEWING YOUR POINTE SHOES



5. Repeat steps 1-4 with the other ribbons
6. Repeat steps 1-5 on the other shoe.

Elastics:

There are two ways to sew one's elastics: A) looped elastics or B) crisscross elastics

A) Looped Elastics

1. Cut the elastic in two sections.
2. Sew one elastic on the back side of the shoe close to the heel. It is best to do this on the outside of the shoe to prevent blisters, on the back of the heel.
3. When sewing the second side of the elastic be sure that the elastic will fit snugly on your foot.
4. You don't want to make the elastic too loose, the shoe will fall off the foot. You don't want the elastic to be too tight, that will cut off your circulation in your foot.
5. Trim off any excess elastic that you do not need.
6. Repeat steps 1-4 on the other shoe.



SEWING YOUR POINTE SHOES



B) Crisscrossed Elastics

1. Cut elastic in four parts. There will be two elastics per shoe.
2. Using your ribbon as a guide, sew one end of elastic on top of one of the ribbons.
3. Sew the left elastic to the right side of the back heel. It should be about a centimeter, or a fingernail's length from the heel seam at the back of the shoe. It is best to sew the elastic on the outside of the shoe, when sewing close to the heel.
4. Repeat with the second elastic, making sure that the elastics will crisscross.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 with the other shoe.



HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR POINTE SHOES & MORE

- Toe pads, toe spacers, etc. should be cleaned regularly.
- Toe nails should be trimmed regularly, but avoid cutting right before class.
- Humidity and dampness are a pointe shoe's worst enemies so a dancer should always remove any protection or padding from inside their pointe shoes immediately after wear.
- Once the padding is removed, store your shoes and toe pads in a mesh pointe shoe bag to allow them to properly dry out. Do not stuff the shoes inside one another, this will not allow the shoes to dry out properly and can misshapen the box.
- Once home, remove the shoes and padding from the bag and lay flat on a dresser or other similar surface to dry. Avoid bathrooms and basements as dampness and humidity will prevent the drying process. Taking these steps will prevent moisture remaining in the box of the shoe which can lead to the premature softening of the paste and the shoe drying out in a distorted manner.



YOUR FIRST POINTE CLASSES



Your first pointe class is a very exciting moment in your dance education! It can also be a little painful, but your teacher will ensure you are training safely and slowly, because dancer safety is our priority! You will spend A LONG time working slowly at the barre learning how to work in your new pointe shoes and the correct technique that comes with it.

Due to the fact that pointe work can be dangerous if the student is not fully prepared, students may not take pointe class without taking the preceding ballet technique class. This is to ensure that the dancer is fully warmed up and mentally prepared for pointe.

If you develop blisters: lance it with a sterile needle (only if the fluid inside is clear), and allow it to air out overnight. Use toe tape and other items to protect it in your next classes.

Per Pointe Magazine: "Blisters are caused by a combination of friction, pressure and moisture. When the skin is subjected to repeated force, it creates tears in the second and third layers of the skin, while the uppermost layer remains intact. A serum-like fluid flows in to fill the space. The culprit can be too-big or too-small shoes that create unnecessary friction and aggravate "hot spots," such as bunions and hammertoes, says Diana Werner, also a podiatrist and assistant clinical professor at UCSF. Proper fit is essential. Keep in mind that feet evolve over time, sometimes growing in size or developing new pressure points. "Chronic blisters are a sign that your feet have changed," says Werner. If blisters suddenly become a problem, consider getting refitted."

