



Ballet Together

Train together. Be together.

Ballet Basic

BALLET BASICS

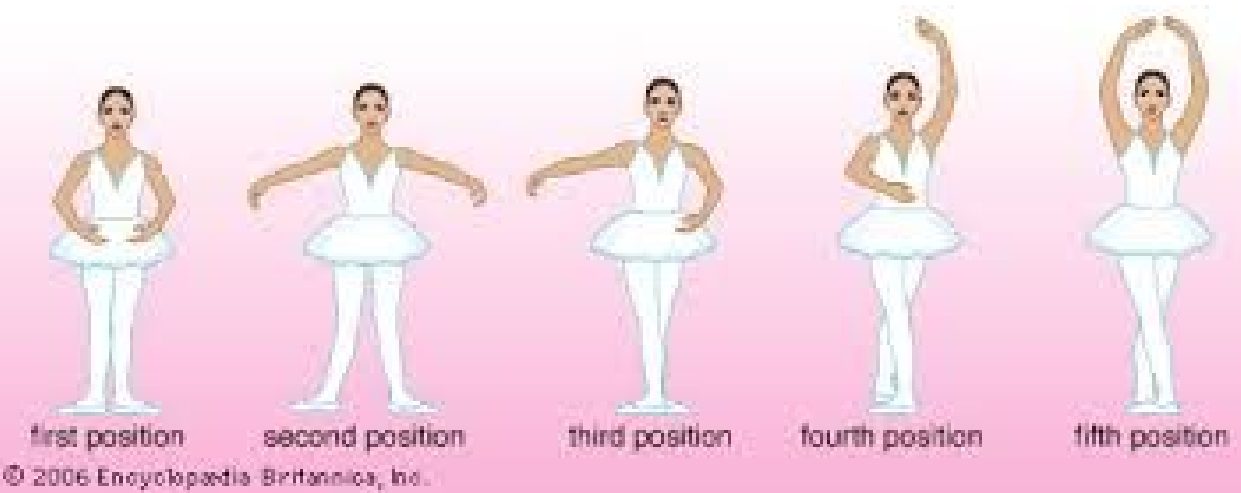
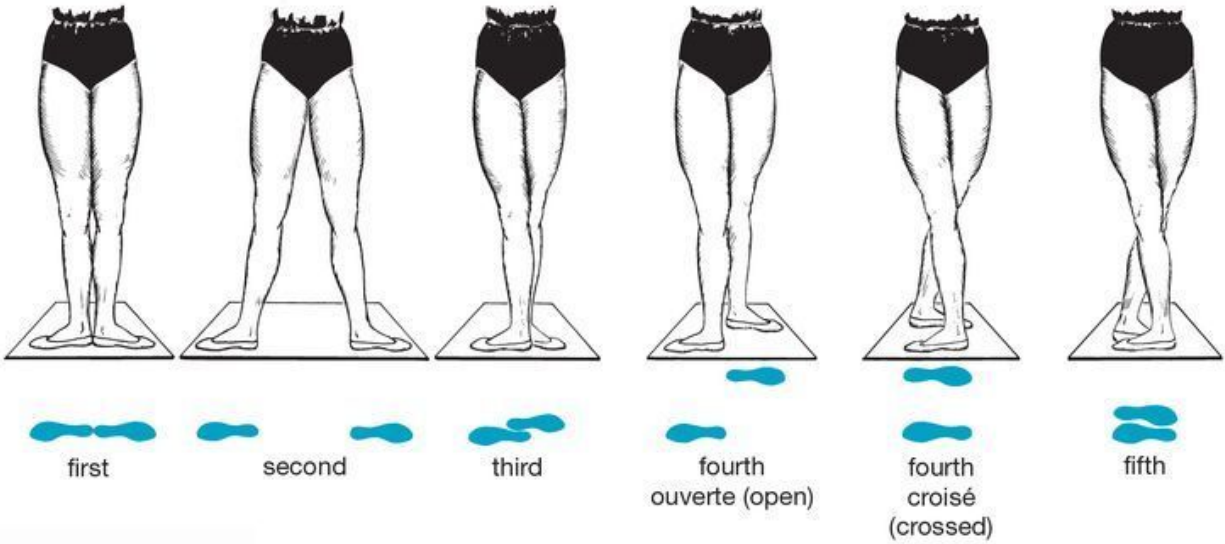
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BALLET POSITIONS

IMAGES



BALLET POSITIONS

DESCRIPTIONS

PREPARATORY "*PORTE DE BRAS*"

(TRANSLATIONS: CARRIAGE OF THE ARMS)

This arm position is used at the start of every combination in ballet.



"PORTE DE BRAS" ARMS:

- Both arms are down and rounded in front of your hips.
- Fingers are almost touching.
- Create an oval shape with both arms.
- Palms of hands should face the sky.
- Shoulders should be kept down and relaxed. There should be no tension.

BALLET POSITIONS

DESCRIPTIONS

(1) FIRST POSITION



FEET:

- Heels are touching.
- Toes of each foot pointing outwards towards the side.
- Both knees are straight.

"PORTE DE BRAS" ARMS:

- Arms are brought up so that the tips of the fingers are in line with the navel or lower ribs.
- Both arms maintain a curved shape. Imagine you are holding a large ball or a tree trunk.
- Palms of hands should face your chest.
- Shoulders should be kept down and relaxed. There should be no tension.

BALLET POSITIONS

DESCRIPTIONS

(2) SECOND POSITION



FEET:

- Heels are hip-width apart with the toes turned outwards, similar to first position.
- Both knees are straight.

"PORTE DE BRAS" ARMS:

- Both arms open to the side, with rounded elbows.
- Wrists are slightly lower than elbows and elbows are slightly lower than shoulders.
- Palms of hands should face forward.
- Shoulders should be kept down and relaxed. There should be no tension.

BALLET POSITIONS

DESCRIPTIONS

(3) THIRD POSITION



FEET:

- Begin in first position, and slide the right heel so it lines up with the middle of the left foot, keeping both feet pointing in opposite directions.
- The same position can be done on the left side with the left foot in front.
- Both knees are straight.

“PORTE DE BRAS” ARMS:

- When the right foot is in front in third position with the legs, the left arm is in first position and left arm is in second position.
- When the left foot is in the front in third position with the legs, the right arm is in first position and right arm is in second position.
- Shoulders should be kept down and relaxed. There should be no tension.

BALLET POSITIONS

DESCRIPTIONS

(4) FOURTH POSITION



FEET:

- Right foot (the front foot) should be crossed in front of the left foot (the back foot) with the right heel in line with the left toes.
- Both feet pointing out in opposite directions.
- The two feet should have a foot-length distance space between them.
- The same position can be done on the left side with the left as the front foot.
- Both knees are straight.

“PORTE DE BRAS” ARMS:

- When the right foot is in front in fourth position with the legs, the left arm is in first position and left arm is in fifth position. (Look below for fifth position arms.)
- When the left foot is in the front in fourth position with the legs, the right arm is in first position and right arm is in fifth position.
- Shoulders should be kept down and relaxed. There should be no tension.

BALLET POSITIONS

DESCRIPTIONS

(5) FIFTH POSITION



FEET:

- Right foot (the front foot) should be crossed in front of the left foot (the back foot) with the right heel touching the left toes.
- Both feet pointing out in opposite directions.
- The same position can be done on the left side with the left as the front foot.
- Both knees are straight.

“PORTE DE BRAS” ARMS:

- Arms are brought up above your head, pointing slightly frontward.
- You should be able to see the tips of your fingers from your peripheral vision.
- Both arms maintain a curved shape.
- Palms of hands should face down towards the earth.
- Shoulders should be kept down and relaxed. There should be no tension.

BALLET POSITIONS

DESCRIPTIONS

ARABESQUE "PORTE DE BRAS"

(TRANSLATIONS: CARRIAGE OF THE ARMS)

This arm position is used typically when the leg is to the back combination.



ARMS:

- One arm is extended directly in front of your nose, while the other is directly to the side.
- For the arm extended to the front, the wrist is slightly higher than elbow and elbows are slightly higher than shoulder.
- Palms of hands should face the ground.
- Elbows are straight, but not stiff.
- Shoulders should be kept down and relaxed. There should be no tension.

HIP ROTATION

In ballet, it is common to refer to hip rotation as turn-in, parallel, or turn-out.



TURN-OUT

Turn-out is the rotation of the leg at the hips which causes the feet (and knees) to turn outward, away from the center of the body. For example, in first position, the heels are touching and toes are apart - the legs are "turned out."

This rotation allows for greater extension of the leg, especially when raising it to the side and rear.

Turn-out is an essential part of classical ballet technique.



PARALLEL

Parallel is the natural position for the lower body. Legs are side-by-side with knees and toes pointing forward.

In ballet, parallel is used most commonly as a warm-up position.



TURN-IN

Turn-in is the rotation of the leg at the hip which causes the feet (and knees) to turn inward. For example, the toes are touching and heels are apart - the legs are "turned in."

In ballet, this is rarely used. It is used often in contemporary or modern dance.

PROPER BALLET HAND

Here is how to achieve the proper hand position for ballet:

- Shake the tension from your hands.
- Now that your hand is relaxed, extend and elongate your index finger slightly, then do the same with your little “pinky” finger.
- Pull in your thumb so that it is directly underneath your index finger.
- Your fingers should not touch each other, nor be too far apart.
- Your hands and wrists should be extensions of your arms.

There are many variations of hand shapes that ballet dancers use, but this is the most common.



Common mistakes:

- Stiff hands can disrupt the flowing lines of the arms. Keep your fingers engaged and active, but not tense.
- Avoid pinching your fingers together. Allow your hands to ‘breathe’ through movements.
- Avoid lifting your index finger or little “pinky” finger too much. The line of the fingers should be relaxed.
- Avoid breaking your wrists downward or upward. Keep your lower arms and hands in the same line. Imagine your fingertips reaching to make your arm longer.

PROPER POINTED FEET

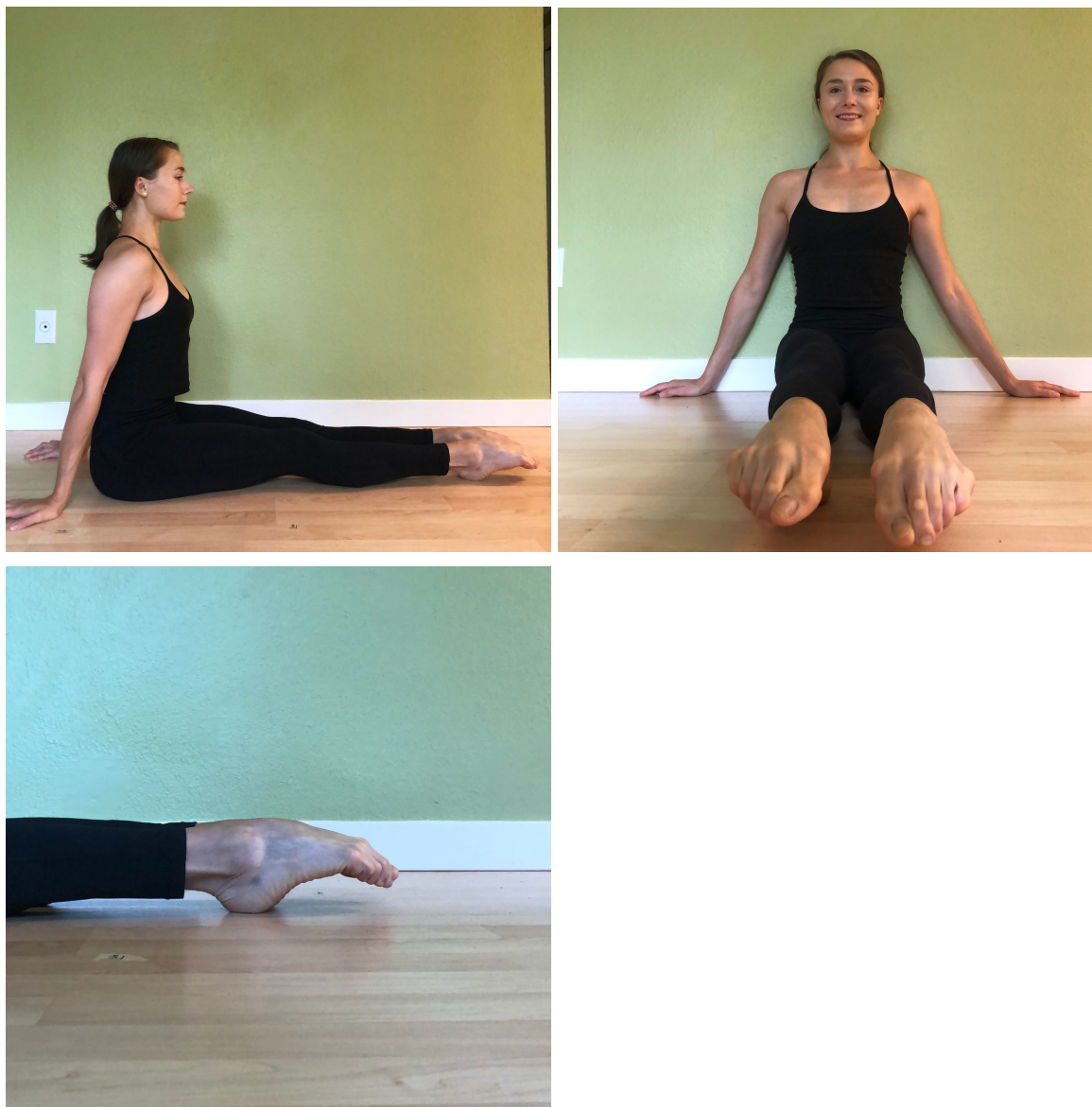
Here is how to achieve the proper pointed feet for ballet:



Step 1: Sit on the floor with your legs out in front of you and your knees straight. (If your hamstrings feel tight, lean back further, supporting your back with your elbows.) Flex your feet by pulling your toes toward your body. Try to point your toes up to the sky. Don't worry if your heels rise up off the floor.



Step 2: Bend your ankles down toward the floor. Allow your heels to rest on the floor while pulling your toes back toward you. Bend your ankles as far as you can, making sure your feet don't curve inward or outward. (See images on Page 16 for more detail.)



Step 3: Now, stretch your toes down toward the floor. Try not to crunch your toes together. Instead, strive to make them an extension of the curves of your feet. Stretch them as far as you can, making the longest lines possible.

If you start to feel any cramping, relax your feet.



The image above shows the proper ankle placement. Make sure that when you point your toes, they continue the line of your leg.



These two images show the incorrect placement of the ankles. The image on the left is a sickle foot and the image on the right in a winged foot. Try to avoid these positions as they can lead to injury.