

Hello! I am Katie Munson, a Ballet and Pointe teacher at Seven Hills. Whether your dancer has been in pointe for a while or is preparing for their first pair, please read the info below regarding the importance of pointe.

Is your Dancer ready for Pointe? <https://www.dancemagazine.com/pointe-shoes-2622511309.html?rebelltitem=1#rebelltitem1>

Pointe is not just a matter of age, but rather a matter of technique, ability, physical and emotional maturity. Some students may be technically ready by age 9, but their bodies are not ready. There is a sweet spot for bone and ankle development. Dancers need to be young enough that bones are still maturing and able to build special flexibility required for pointe, but old enough that growth plates are not too soft. Pointe work done too early could stunt growth. Ryan and I will work together to determine when each dancer is ready for pointe based on physical tests and exercises done in class.

Fitting Pointe Shoes <https://bestpointe.com/en/blog/1274-wrong-pointe-shoes/>

- **Returning students** should be fit for new pointe shoes each fall. Your bodies and bones are maturing which can change what pointe shoes you need. Additionally, not wearing pointe shoes in the summer can cause feet to spread and widen, which changes foot shape and size.
- **New students** will be informed when it is time to be fitted. Please make an appointment to be fitted in person at Carolina Connection or your dance store of choice. There is a difference between the “pain” associated with exercising that builds muscles, and the wrong kind of pain! Contrary to what most believe, a properly fitted shoe should not hurt! Not all pointe shoes are the same. Fit is specific. Ill-fitting shoes can lead to injury and pain.

DO NOT sew anything until I have approved shoes on your feet! Do not use a dance store to sew shoes. It is important for dancers to learn to sew their own and I prefer a specific placement as seen in this video: <https://youtu.be/u4Gto5ML-JU>

How Many Pairs of Shoes to Expect <https://www.dancemagazine.com/dead-pointe-shoes-2645036232.html?rebelltitem=2#rebelltitem2>

Unfortunately, pointe shoes break down faster than any other dance shoes. The same qualities that allow us to roll up and down through the shoes make them less durable. Dancing on dead pointe shoes leads to injury. Check out the article above to see x-rays of ankle alignment difference in new and dead pointe shoes. I will be monitoring when students need a new pair. **Plan for 3-4 pairs of pointe shoes throughout the year depending on age, ability, foot strength, weight, and hours dancing.** If your student is still growing rapidly, it could be more. Pointe shoes are expensive, so my hope is that by having this information early, families can prepare for the expense.

Tips to Extend Life of Pointe Shoes

- **Avoid Temperature change:** Leave shoes in a temperature controlled environment. Excess heat and humidity makes them break down faster. Don't leave them in the car for a week and air them out. Take them out of your bag to dry.
- **Jet Glue:** a superglue product made specifically for pointe shoes. It can help extend the life of your shoes by one or two wears. If your student brings me the shoes and glue, I can teach where/how to glue shoes.

Spring Recital <https://thedancestore.ca/how-to-properly-break-in-pointe-shoes/>

I suggest a **new pair of Pointe shoes 4-8 weeks prior the recital.** Talk to your student about how long they need to properly break in a pair of shoes. Unfortunately, shoes that are not broken in can lead to injury. **I will not allow students to dance in the recital on brand new or dead pointe shoes.** If those are the only option, they will perform in ballet flats. Another aspect to performing in pointe shoes is sewing or taping ribbons for performance. This is a temporary stitch that keeps the ribbons from coming undone while dancing and I will go over this with them in class.

Foot Care <https://www.dancemagazine.com/foot-care-products-for-dancers-2487946272.html>

Specific foot problems can be addressed in class, and there are tricks and products to help, the two most important ways are to have properly fitting shoes and foot maintenance! Make sure toenails are trimmed and not too long, feet are aired out and washed after pointe work, proactive stretching is done, and any problems are noticed and dealt with proactively. The two things that will be most common are blisters and bruised toenails, these are very normal and can be danced through when treated properly. Moreover, I recommend that pedicures are not done often or at all. First, they remove calluses which are needed for pointe work (and all other dancing.) Second, toenails often become ingrown after a pedicure and are difficult to remedy.

Some of the best products I have found are listed below:

No need to purchase ahead of time, but they may be helpful later!

- Nexcare Absolute Waterproof First Aid Tape
- Spenco 2nd Skin Squares Soothing Protection
- Fabric First Aid Tape
- Orajel (the kind for mouth sores)
- Tiger balm
- Tennis Ball (for rolling feet out)