

Is your Dancer ready for Pointe?

Pointe is not just a matter of age, but rather a matter of technique, strength, postural control, flexibility, and the physical and emotional maturity to handle corrections. 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. Teachers will determine if and when a dancer is ready for pointe based on class work and exercises.

Fitting Pointe Shoes for Returning Students

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.

Fitting Pointe Shoes for New students

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. **This may take about an hour. Please wear dance clothes and tights.** There is a difference between the “pain” associated with exercising that builds muscles, and the wrong kind of pain! 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 your teacher has approved shoes on your feet!

We recommend dancers learn to sew their own. Use dental floss instead of regular thread for stronger hold. We will provide a video tutorial. See information under **Pointe** on our Classes page at sevenhillsdance.com.

How Many Pairs of Shoes to Expect

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. Teachers will monitor when students need a new pair. **Plan for 2-3 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 and supplies are expensive – ranging from \$75 - \$120 per pair. Our hope is that by having this information early, families may prepare.

Caring for 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.

Spring Recital

We do not recommend purchasing new pointe shoes right before recital as they need a proper amount of time to break them in to avoid injury. Each student breaks them in at a different rate. **We will not allow students to dance in the recital on brand new or dead pointe shoes.** They will perform their pointe dance in ballet shoes for safety if needed.

Foot Care

Specific foot problems will be addressed in class, and there are tricks and products to help, but 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 may be danced through when treated properly. We recommend that pedicures are not done often or at all. They remove calluses needed for pointe work (and other dancing.) Toenails also often become ingrown after pedicures and are difficult to fix.

Some helpful products:

No need to purchase now, but perhaps down the line depending on your dancer's experience!

- Nexcare Absolute Waterproof First Aid Tape (for wrapping toes)
- Spenco 2nd Skin Squares Soothing Protection (to protect blisters or sore areas)
- Orajel (the kind for mouth sores)
- Tiger balm (an ointment similar to a biofreeze or icy hot)
- Tennis Ball (for rolling feet out to help with cramps and soreness)