

Pointe class will be on Fridays 5:30 - 6:15 and Mondays 6:00 - 6:45. Most of you already take those classes, but if you do not we will put you on the schedule and adjust your tuition accordingly. *Note: currently we are using the Monday pointe class as a rehearsal for Sleeping Beauty. We hope to be back to pointe class when the choreography is finished. However we *will try to put our pointe shoes on for at least 15-20 minutes each Monday as well as rehearse for the show.*

To get your pointe shoes: You will want to make an appointment at Lines For the Body in Williston for your pointe shoe fitting. Pointe shoe fittings for first timers can take quite a while. So plan on spending some time at June's store. Before you sew your ribbons and elastic onto the shoes, I need to double check them for fit. Parents plan on about \$100 first time for shoes and toe pads. My favorite toe pads are the gel ones. (I will call June and see if there is a time that we could all go together. But if not, bring your camera and send me a photo!).

Pointe work can hurt for first timers. It takes a while to build up the strength to dance en pointe. And there will be blisters! You will want to also have in your dance bag -Band-Aids or Johnson and Johnson tape, a sewing kit and scissors.

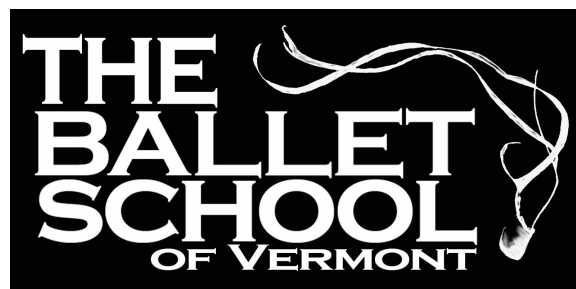
Please read in the policies about dancing en pointe and the expectations that comes with it below.

Training in the summer is very important, now that they are at a higher level.

Please note that if your dancer does not train in the summer she may not automatically be put on pointe in the fall; it is dependent on strength.

Congratulations -you have worked hard to get to this point!

Maryellen



POINTE SHOE READINESS

Proper placement and lifted engaged muscles = POWER.

Power creates beauty, grace, and ease of movement.

These are the main things a ballet teacher should look for when evaluating a student for pointe shoes:

Age – adequate age assuring that bones and joints are strong enough.

Emotional Age Readiness – A teacher must know if they are ready for the hard work and "ouch factor" that pointe work can be. Many students fulfill their dream of getting their shoes only to quit shortly after because it is harder than it looks and they become frustrated at the work. If a student complains or says "I can't do that!" in technique class (slippers), that attitude is a signal that she is not ready for pointe shoes. A student must be mature enough to handle the challenging work.

Pelvic Placement – *lengthened hip flexors; strong lifted core; long spine*. This is a major one – if the pelvis is tilted downward or the bottom is hanging out it will shorten the lower spine, weaken the core and hip flexors, resulting in loss of center line of balance and power. *Placement is #2 after Posture in ABT's Ten Principles of Dancing. A dancer will not receive her shoes if she does not have her pelvic placement when dancing.*

Foot Readiness – Strong flexible ankles; proper foot alignment; highest demi-pointe the student can achieve. No sickled feet. No rolling inward toward the arch – collapsed arch. Knee and shin bone aligned with the second toe.

Defined Leg Muscles – *that are fully engaged and lifted during movement.* Straight knees; lengthened legs; pulled up leg muscles. All leg muscles fully engaged and lifted.

Relaxed Rib Cage and Shoulders. Relaxed Breathing – Relaxing the ribcage and shoulders helps to breathe with ease. Students who lift the rib cage and shoulders will do so even more when trying to get onto their toes in the shoes. The strength and power needed to rise onto pointe needs to come from the core and legs.

Lift when moving – Lift or lightness when moving will happen naturally when there is proper pelvic placement, relaxed ribs and shoulders, and muscles are engaged lengthening upward even when in plie or landing a jump. Relax don't collapse.

Taking class three times a weeks and summer study – Taking class three times a week assures that the student is gaining strength through muscle memory. (Once a girl is en pointe taking three months off in the summer is too long of a break, and will result in working her way back to her pointe shoes).

First four of the “Ten Principles of Dancing” in place – Posture, Placement, Turnout, Center Line of Balance.

Receiving Technique Corrections – The student must work on the corrections she is given in class.

While there is no set age for pointe shoes, if all is technically sound and the above is in place; the norm is age 11. At that age normally the joints and bones are developed enough for the rigors of pointe work. If starting after the age of eleven there should be

three years of taking class from a proficient ballet teacher. It is unusual for the whole class to receive their pointe shoes at the same time. Age differences and technique differences usually vary in a class. Even though this is a huge milestone in a dancers life, students and parents need to understand that the child's body health is more important than receiving their shoes.

...And it is always a wonderful thing to have a goal that one is working toward.

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