



It is tradition in classical ballet for ballet dancers to wear pink tights. At PDT we encourage dancers of color to wear flesh tone or pink tights for class, depending upon personal preference. Although we give this option for all classes, it is not open to personal preference in performances. Costuming for performances is solely at the discretion of the costumer, artistic director, choreographer, and what artistic values the performance requires.

PDT gives the option of wearing flesh tone tights and shoes for all ballet classes. For dancers on pointe, this may prove to be problematic for class if your child is going through a lot of pointe shoes, as pancaking is then required and can be time consuming. In the past, we have had dancers of color stick to pink shoes and tights for class because they prefer the look or because they do not want to be bothered with pancaking so many shoes. Ballet slippers or pointe shoes must always match the tight, or else the line is broken and diminishes the overall effect. At PDT we take a lot of pride in our dancers, and we want them to look and feel their best.

There are some companies that make flesh tone pointe shoes and slippers. See the links below. There is some controversy here from historians, and it's important to understand that pink tights and shoes are the tradition, but that was the tradition of what was available in that time period when tights and pointe shoes were first introduced. Pink was chosen for the introduction of pointe shoes in 1832, because skirts were long and legs were not shown in that time period. Lifting the skirt to see the shoes and tights was considered risqué. Pink was close to white, which was the traditional color of undergarments providing some modesty. As time has marched on, the question of tight color has earnestly presented itself because tutus have gotten much shorter revealing the line of the leg.

A performance such as the Nutcracker requires dancers to be in costume. Our Nutcracker is set in the Victorian time period, which calls for pink and white tights. Our older dancers do a lot of contemporary repertory and all of the dancers are required to match their pointe shoes or hair in accordance with today's modern standards. For example, you may see ballets with *natural hair, no tights, and shoes to match the dancers skin tone*. Some dancers of color wear their hair natural and some prefer to straighten it. We do our best to work with what works within the ballet and makes the dancer feel confident. I am addressing this in the hope that it will help you discern whatever works best for your dancer day to day, as well as to provide an understanding of costume choices for a show where artistic values may require a variety of shoes and tights.

SKIN TONE OPTIONS

LINKS:

	Adult	Child
Skin Tone Tights	LINK LINK 2	LINK LINK 2
Ballet Slippers	LINK 1 LINK 2	LINK 1 LINK 2



Another great brand to be aware of for **skin tone tights and undergarments** is [Nude Barre](#)

Pancaking Shoes

Unfortunately not all pointe shoe brands have the option of skin tone shoes. More and more companies are starting to offer this option which is fantastic. If your pointe shoe brand does not yet offer skin tone shoes, you have the option to “Pancake” your shoes to match your skin tone.

How to pancake shoes:

- Use Water Based Make-up in your skin tone
- [Directions Here](#)

Hair

Each person’s hair texture is different, so these are just some suggestions. Trial and error and advice from older dancers will help quite a bit! For short hair we suggest two buns. Since there are many textures of hair, and kids are running from school to dance, as long as their knots or braids are off the face, pulled back, and not whipping their face while dancing, that is totally acceptable for class. It does not need to be a classic, smooth bun for everyday wear.

For performances, it is again up to the artistic director, but we try to allow for authenticity where it allows. We have had Asian “Claras,” for example, and we have encouraged them to wear their hair straight if they feel more genuine that way. For performance, it is not necessary to straighten hair. As long as the braids, knots, or locs can be tight against the head and appear smooth and tidy.

[Instructional Video 1](#) | [Instructional Video 2](#)

