



Ballet/Pointe

When is my dancer ready to go on pointe?

Safety is of the utmost importance when deciding whether or not a dancer is ready to go on pointe, and some people's bodies are not made to do pointe work safely. For those who have extremely flat feet, severe scoliosis, one leg significantly longer than the other, etc., going on pointe could cause injury to the body.

There are a few ways to tell if someone is strong enough to support their weight in the shoes, but before that can be considered, the dancers' growth plates in their feet must be set or they could become misshapen due to the pressure being executed on them from being up on the toes. Usually, this happens around the age of 11.

The exercises used to determine pointe readiness, in combination with our observations in class, will help us make the decision. Please also note that in addition to being physically ready for pointe, the dancers must be mentally prepared as well. Those who are unfocused in class, do not work to their fullest potential, do not apply alignment corrections given to them, and/or are not ready to work hard will not be considered for pointe *at this time*.

If we feel you are not ready, *please do not feel discouraged!* It's very important to the teachers at Studio East that you trust our judgment and experience in making the right decision for you. We will be happy to discuss why and the way you can improve, and retest soon.

Other factors that are considered are that the dancer:

- Works long and slow exercises with patience and focus (not giving up)
- Understands and applies the use of posture alignment and placement
- Can accept and apply corrections from the teacher
- Does not talk or play in class
- Does not consistently "tire out" half way through class

What can I do to better my chances of going up on pointe faster?

Dancers can of course improve their chances of going up on pointe and are more than welcome to talk to us about things they can do to improve. Going up on these types of shoes require a deep understanding of working through the feet, strong ankles, a good sense of balance, great core strength, turnout, and many other factors. However, even if you are successful in the strength/stability tests, your technique must be adequate enough to start pointe. On top of working hard in class, here are some exercises you can do at home to prepare yourself for pointe!

- Relevés in repetition on two feet, one foot, turned out, and parallel
- Slow, controlled tendus working through the feet
- Theraband work (see me for exercises!)
- Balancing in different positions (first, second, fifth/ sous-sus, parallel)
- Sautés on one foot (you should be able to jump high enough for the foot/jumping leg to stretch all the way)

Do I have to go on pointe?

The answer is quite simple... no you do not! Many dancers choose not to go on pointe for a variety of reasons, some being because of the safety risks it imposes, the expense, or lack of interest. If you are cleared to go on pointe, the decision is completely up to you.

Where can I get shoes and what additional items do I need to buy besides the shoes themselves.

There are a few locations that you can purchase pointe shoes at which usually cost between \$70-\$120, but you **MUST GET FITTED**. Dancers will sometimes go through several different brands or styles before finding a shoe that fits them just right. Along with the shoes, here are some other items to make sure you get:

- Elastic
- Ribbon
- Toe pads (preferably ouch pouches)
- Spacers between your toes IF necessary. (the less junk in your shoe, the better)

What can I expect?

After the dancer takes the evaluation, a letter will be sent to them stating if they are ready for pointe or if they should stay with their regular ballet slippers. There will also

be a note from myself on what they need to work on, and how they can do so including various exercises that can be done at home, and at the studio. For those that are ready, a date will be set to go with me to get fitted for shoes or send me pictures of the shoes via text and I will approve the shoes. We will also have a sewing session so that each dancer can learn how to sew their shoes on their own. More details will follow about where to buy pointe shoes, how much it will be, etc. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

What exercises will be on the pointe evaluation?

Each student that would like to go on pointe at Studio East must be evaluated before beginning pointe.

The following is a list of the pointe evaluation expectations:

1. Hold relevé in first position for 30 seconds
2. Hold relevé in second position for 30 seconds
3. Hold right (then left) foot coupé back on relevé for 30 seconds each
4. Hold right (then left) foot in retiré on relevé for 15 seconds each
5. Perform 20 relevés at the barre in parallel first on just the right foot with the left in parallel coupé
6. Repeat on the other foot
7. Relevés in center
8. Aligned grand pliés in 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th
9. Arms held appropriately in all exercises
10. Perform a clean single pirouette showcasing “deacceleration” and upright torso.
11. Fully stretched feet in allegro.

Please see me for any clarification on what is to be expected for each above exercise and a detailed explanation of what they are.