

Gustafson DANCE

Pointe Shoe Policies:

It is a very exciting time for a dancer to obtain her first pair of pointe shoes! Dancers in our school that are invited to begin pointe work have worked very hard to prepare their bodies and have shown the right kind of commitment to their dance training that deserves this new step. There are a few **guidelines** we would like dancers and parents to be informed about.

In our school, the Directors make the decision as to when each individual dancer is ready to begin pointe work. The general guidelines are

- *The dancer should be 11 years old.

- *The dancer should have strong muscular skeletal development.

- *The dancer should have taken a minimum of 3 classes per week the year prior (Usually Level 3A)

- *The dancer should have a good awareness of placement and alignment and be able to consistently keep aligned while executing ballet technique.

- *The dancer should have control of her center- primarily abdominals, waist and lower back.

- *The dancer must have had consistent attendance and be committed to continuing to prioritize her ballet training.

Additional Things to Know:

1. Pointe shoes are not inexpensive. It is a financial commitment as well (ranging from \$70-100 a pair, plus ribbons and elastic.) The first pair should last at least a couple of months depending on the dancer's growth, type of shoe, dancer's arch and foot strength, and the amount of time spent in the shoes.

2. In order to maintain life and shape of the shoes, they need to be aired out in between uses. They should be set out in the desired shape, rather than kept in a stuffy dance bag. (I used to shape mine and tie them to the outside of my bag to dry.) When kept in bags, they lose shape and strength and they SMELL!!!!

3. We highly recommend that the dancers learn how to sew the ribbons and elastic onto their own shoes asap! A couple of good youtube videos to reference are "How To Prepare Your First Pair of Pointe Shoes" (This one shows how to protect the ribbons from fraying by using a lighter, so we suggest a parent guides the dancer), and "Fitting Gaynor Minden Pointe Shoes: Section 8". The information in the second video can apply to other brands as well as Gaynor Minden. We have an

instructional video on our website as to how to properly tie the ribbons. For any questions, dancers should ask the instructors or dancers in the SSBYD Co.

4. It is normal for dancers to get blisters from pointe shoes. These become valuable calluses, but they can be painful. We suggest stocking up on foot repair and protection items from the drug store such as, white tape, band-aids, corn cushions, second skin, etc. Dance stores commonly sell the "Ouch Pouch". Dancers should ask to remove their shoes if they are in pain from a blister or any other sort of pain.

5. We plan to have beginners wear pointe shoes for only about 10-15 minutes per pointe class for the first couple of months. They will be doing exercises at the barre and will be supervised by Allison or Nicole. **WE DO NOT ADVOCATE DANCERS WEARING THEIR POINTE SHOES AT HOME!** Injuries may easily occur while getting used to the shoes, especially on improper floors. It is also too tempting for these enthusiastic dancers to want to try more difficult steps before they are really ready. The gradual build up of strength and flexibility in the pointe shoes is very important to the health and success of the dancer.

6. Dancers will not perform en pointe during the first year or maybe 2 of being en pointe.

7. Pointe shoes must be fit properly. Sara at Harlequin Theatrical Supplies is great at fitting shoes. If there is a question after the fitting, we do suggest that dancers bring them in for Allison or Nicole to see them on the dancer before the elastics and ribbons are sewn. They will not be returnable after that. Until a dancer has finished growing and has been on pointe for a few years, we do not suggest ordering pointe shoes on line. Dancers may need to try a few different brands or sizes before finding the right pair.