



STAGE READY PERFORMANCE

POINTE SHOE QUICK GUIDE

FIT • PREP • CARE • REPLACEMENT

SAFE POINTE READINESS AND INJURY PREVENTION



Science. Strength. Artistry.

FREE EDUCATIONAL GUIDE
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SRP



GUIDE I

Four Things to Look for in a Pointe Shoe Fitting

The shoe should fit the dancer - not the other way around.

A first pair of pointe shoes should be fitted in person by an experienced pointe-shoe fitter. Pointe shoes are built with different box shapes, widths, vamps, wings, platforms, and shank characteristics, and the same model can fit two dancers very differently.

Use these four observations as conversation starters with the fitter and teacher - not as a substitute for professional fitting.

1. Length & Width

- The foot should be securely contained without excess growing room.
- The dancer should not visibly sink into an overly wide box or feel the toes severely compressed by a box that is too narrow.

2. Box, Platform & Toe Support

- The box should contain and support the forefoot without excessive pressure concentrated on one toe.
- The platform should allow the dancer to stand securely when appropriately assisted by the fitter or teacher.

3. Vamp, Wings & Foot Shape

- The vamp and wings should work with the dancer's foot shape and flexibility rather than fighting it.
- A shoe that is too restrictive or too open for the dancer's foot can alter how securely the foot is supported.

4. Alignment & Control

- The shoe should allow the dancer to maintain clean foot and ankle alignment rather than visibly rolling, sickling, or sinking.
- Fit is only one piece of the picture: strength and technique are still required to move through demi-pointe and onto pointe with control.

SRP NOTE

A well-fitted pointe shoe does not determine whether a dancer is ready to begin pointe. Readiness also involves technical preparation, physical capacity, training history, and professional teacher judgement.



GUIDE II

Before You Sew

Protect the option to exchange the shoe.

For a first fitting, keep the shoes unsewn until the dancer's teacher has had the opportunity to check the fit when that is the studio's policy or preference. Once ribbons and elastics are attached, return options may be limited.

Bring to the fitting

- The padding the dancer expects to wear in class.
- Convertible tights and clothing that allows the fitter to see the ankle and lower leg.
- Any teacher instructions regarding preferred brands, padding, ribbon, or elastic.
- Questions about how the shoe feels during pli  , relev  , and supported pointe work.

Keep the first preparation simple

New dancers do not need to aggressively manipulate a shoe to make it look 'broken in.' The shoe should be prepared to support the individual dancer. Excessive manual bending can damage the shank or change where the shoe supports the foot.

BEFORE ALTERING

Ask the teacher or fitter before cutting, bending, darning, gluing, removing material, or making other permanent modifications to a new pair.



GUIDE III

Care & Replacement

Dry shoes are happier shoes.

Pointe shoes absorb substantial moisture during class. Traditional paste-based components can soften more quickly when shoes remain damp, so post-class drying is one of the simplest ways to protect a pair. There are several brand name pointe shoes that are made with plastic, these tend to last longer but breaking them in is more difficult and they breathe less. These are not typically recommended for a beginner.

After class

- Remove toe pads and other padding from the shoes.
- Do not leave damp shoes sealed in a plastic or tightly closed dance bag.
- Use a ventilated or mesh bag for transport.
- At home, place the shoes in a dry, well-ventilated area and allow them to dry fully.
- Dancers training frequently may benefit from alternating pairs, so each pair has adequate drying time.

How long will a pair last?

There is no reliable universal number of classes or hours. Shoe construction, dancer age, strength, foot mechanics, climate, perspiration, rehearsal load, and intensity of pointe work all effect lifespan. That being said, a “dead” shoe offers very little support so expecting a pointe shoe for to last upwards of 3 months is unlikely.

Signs it may be time to replace the shoe

- The shank no longer provides the support it previously did.
- The box or wings have softened enough that the dancer feels unsupported or begins sinking.
- The platform has lost its useful structure, or the dancer can increasingly feel the floor.
- The fit has changed because the dancer's foot has grown or changed.

WHEN UNSURE

Have the teacher and/or an experienced fitter inspect the shoes. Replacement decisions should be based on the dancer and the actual condition of the pair - not a calendar rule.



GUIDE IV

The Next Question: Is the Dancer Ready?

A shoe can fit beautifully, and the dancer can still need more preparation.

Pointe readiness is a separate question from pointe-shoe fitting. The shoe provides external support, but the dancer must still create and control movement through the feet, ankles, legs, pelvis, and trunk.

Stage Ready Performance is developing SRP Pointe Ready™, a teacher-administered, evidence-informed system designed to support the decision-making process before introductory pointe training.

COMING SOON

SRP Pointe Ready™ Assessment - Join the studio waitlist at StageReadyPerformance.com to be notified when the complete assessment launches.

Want a deeper guide to pointe-shoe anatomy, preparation, care, troubleshooting, and a printable shoe-life tracker? Look for the SRP Pointe Shoe Companion in the Stage Ready Performance digital shop.



REFERENCES

Selected Educational Sources

Evidence-informed. Teacher-friendly.

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- Boston Ballet. "Pointe Shoe How-To: Sewing Your Pointe Shoes."

Educational Disclaimer

This guide is educational and does not replace instruction from a qualified ballet teacher, professional pointe-shoe fitting, or evaluation by an appropriately qualified healthcare professional. Individual studio policies should always be followed.

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