



Pointe-Work Information for Students & their Parents.

PLEASE NOTE: Pointe-Work is optional and not part of the RAD Graded Exam Syllabus but is part of the Vocational Ballet Exam.

NOTE TO ALL STUDENTS! All NVSD students will initially follow a Pointe Preparation and Strengthening Programme. Once your NVSD teacher has assessed that you are ready for Pointe-Work it will be time to buy your first Pointe Shoes and you will be shown a series of exercises, which you must do at least 4 times a week (only 5-10 minutes), even during the holidays. It is very important that you continue to do these exercises and approach your practice seriously. You must also continue to practice your core conditioning exercises to strengthen your abdominal and back muscles.

Poor technique = injury ☹️

Initially when you do get your pointe shoes you will only do 5-10 minutes and it is important to build this up gradually.

Pointe shoes should be bought either from our Uniform Shop, The Wardrobe or from a Ballet shop experienced in fitting Pointe shoes and who hold a good selection of Pointe shoes of different sizes/widths/makes. Make sure you try on a number of different pairs of shoes, as this will give you a better idea of the best fit!

Very Important Information for Girls & Parents

POINTE SHOE FITTING

Before your fittings make sure you have trimmed your toenails! Make sure they are not too long or too short. Do not cut them the day of the fitting! Cut them a few days before just in case you cut them too short. Make sure you don't have any sharp edges that might poke into your skin. As a Pointe work student you must take proper care of your feet and toe nails are the first step. **Wear Ballet Tights or Ballet Socks to the fitting.** Take your "Ouch Pouches", ribbons and elastics to the fitting if you have purchased previously.

What you will need to buy:

Pointe Shoes - These should fit snugly, but not too tight. The toes should not be jammed in and there should not be too much space at the sides. You should stand with your feet flat on the floor and check that the shoes do not gape at the sides, in which case the shoe is probably too wide. Your toes should not overlap. **YOU MUST NOT ALLOW ROOM TO GROW!** The shoe should fit perfectly. A shoe that is too big or gapes could ultimately hurt you. It is important to have your first pair fitted properly. A snug but not "toe-numbing" fit is important. Most pointe shoes have no left or right. At first, the shoes are interchangeable, but after you have worn them a few times, they will conform to the shape of your feet....you should then mark them so you know left/right. The shoes should fit like a glove. Always try the shoes on both feet. Styles and Shop prices will vary from approx. £55-£85). PLEASE DO NOT ORDER POINTE SHOES ONLINE! All pointe shoes at The Wardrobe are priced at £58.50.

Ribbons - I highly recommend the Bloch "Elastorib" or Bloch Stretch Satin Ribbon. This ribbon has been designed to alleviate pressure on the Achille Tendons. (approx £6.00-£8.50)

Elastics—although not compulsory I recommend Bloch "Covert Elastic". This is sewn to each side of the heel seam for added security when going through to demi-pointe and helps to stop the heel of the shoe slipping off. (Approx £5.00-£7.50)

Gel Toe Pads (Ouch pouches) - although you can buy cheaper options of “toe padding” I recommend this type as a long lasting, effective method of protection. (approx £19-£25)

Suede Pointe Shoe Cover/Cap - optional - these can be placed on the end of the Pointe shoes to protect the satin from wear and tear. Please ask if you are unsure where to position them, as the pads should not be visible on the top of the shoe (when foot is flat). (approx £3.50-£5.50)

Mesh or canvas bag to store your shoes

How to sew on the ribbons:

If you have any questions please ask. For guidance on sewing other Ballet shoe ribbons view [YouTube Video 1](#) or [YouTube Video 2](#)

Attaching Bloch “Covert Elastic”



Measure elastic to a length that will attach at the back of the heel, around the ankle and back to the heel again. Elastic should be attached about one fingers width away from the shoe's back seam on both sides of the shoe forming a loop. Position elastics all the way down in the shoe. Pin elastics to shoes and test placement before sewing. Be sure that elastics fit snugly but not too tight. Sew elastics tilted forward so that they will lie flat against the front of the ankle. Stitch along the top near the drawstring then continue your stitch around all four sides so your stitching pattern resembles a box. **Be careful not to sew through the drawstring.**

(If you do not sew or are unsure, NVSDD offers a Sewing Service - £9.50 per pair.)

Being on Pointe

As mentioned at the start of this leaflet, it is very important to strengthen your ankles and feet by continually practicing your foot exercises. (Remember some of these can be done whilst watching TV or chatting on the phone!) **Once you have your Pointe shoes and are ready to go up on Pointe it is very important to remember the following:**

You must support your toes and feet by pulling up out of your shoes with the rest of your body. Always keep your knees and back straight and pulled up. **Don't look down!** Your chest should be lifted and slightly forward (remember ...shoulders down). Your lower back and abdominal muscles must be held firmly. By firmly holding the muscles in your legs, bottom, back and stomach, you can make Pointe work a whole lot easier on yourself. (Think about this whilst you practice your demi-pointe work). When on Pointe think of pushing where the ribbons cross...this helps you to keep your feet/ankles from rolling in or out.

If you are buying your shoes from another shop, please show Miss Natalie or Miss Sophie BEFORE sewing ribbons etc.

Tying the Ribbons

Before you tie the ribbons around your ankle, you should tie the drawstring. The drawstring should be pulled by both ends until there are no gaps in your shoe. Then, tie a bow and tuck the ends into your shoe. Anything in excess of two or three inches should be trimmed off.

The ribbons must be tied correctly so that the shoe will remain correctly positioned on the foot. Slip the foot through the elastic and into the shoe. The foot should be flat on the floor, not on Pointe. It is best to kneel or sit on the floor, with one foot in front, so that your knee is over your foot. Cross the ribbons over the instep, continue wrapping them around the Achilles tendon and again across the instep. Now take the ribbon which is going around the outside of the foot and bring it across the Achilles tendon to meet the inside ribbon.

Tie a square knot at the soft part of the foot between the **inside ankle bone and the Achilles tendon**. Neatly

fold up the excess ribbon and tuck it, from the top, under all the ribbons wrapped around the ankle. Any ribbon in excess of about three inches is trimmed off. To prevent the ribbons from fraying, the ends can be run very quickly through a match flame to melt the nylon fibres together. (An adult should do this for you)The ribbons which wrap around the ankle should lay on top of each other rather than wind up the lower leg. **For an online video guide to tying your ribbons visit : [Video 1](#) or [Video 2](#) Or type “video of tying pointe shoe ribbons” into your search engine.**

What to do once you have sewn the ribbons and elastics. Warm-up your feet and ankles properly by doing your strengthening exercises, then put on your Pointe shoes, tying the ribbons correctly. (You will need to practice tying your ribbons.....it is not easy and you must be able to tie them correctly and quickly!) Put a pair of thick socks on top, so that your feet are warm. Walk around as much as you can, a little bit on demi-pointe if possible. This will be difficult and painful at first....you may feel like a duck or penguin! However increased flexibility in this area of the shoe will make it much more comfortable to work in. **TAKE CARE NOT TO SLIP ON WOOD/LAMINATE FLOORS.** (Socks with non slip grips are the best)

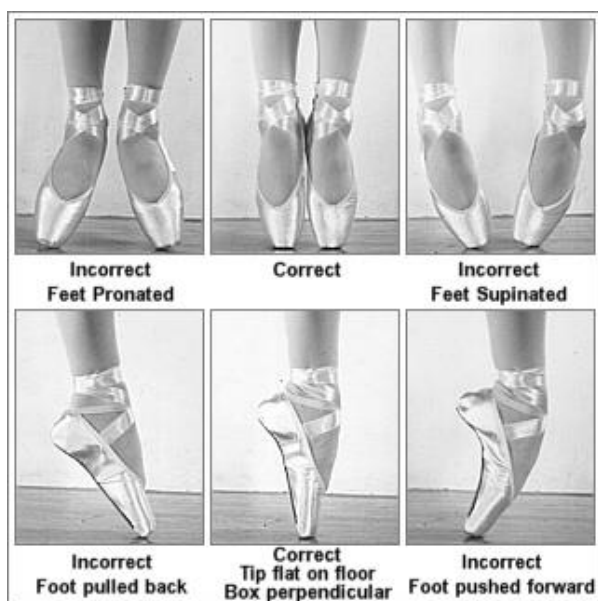
After your first class you will be given some simple exercises to practice.....ensure you do these properly. Further exercises can be found on the [Learning Hub](#).

Correct Placement of the foot on Pointe

When standing on Pointe, the foot should be placed so that the instep is fully stretched and the toes form a perpendicular angle with the floor. A straight line can be drawn through the centre of the hip, knee, ankle and big toe joints (when viewed from the side). From the front, a straight line can be drawn through the hip, knee, and ankle joints through the box of the shoe, on or between the second and third toes. The entire flat surface of the tip of the box should touch the floor. Leg muscles must be lengthened and knees must be pulled up.

SAFETY

To avoid injury you must have a positive, sensible approach and attitude to Pointework: pay close attention and work diligently on the corrections given by your teacher. If, at any time, we do not feel you are working safely, or that it is obvious that you have not done any practice, you will be asked to remove your shoes immediately and the matter will be discussed with your parents before you can participate in Pointe work again.



**POINTE SHOES ARE EXPENSIVE - DO NOT ALLOW OTHERS TO PLAY IN THEM!
ALWAYS LOOK AFTER YOUR POINTE SHOES AND HANDLE THEM WITH CARE!
LOOK AFTER YOUR FEET AND TOES!**

I hope you have found this information useful, however if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me! Thank you.

Natalie@ascot.dance