

Pointe Work Criteria Assessment and Evaluation Program

Before you Start: Students and parents must be made aware of the requirements for safe entry into this particular aspect of the dance. At New Haven Ballet we allow all our students (usually in Ballet 4 Spring Term) to add beginning pointe technique to their class work. It is important to understand that some students may find that their individual anatomy does not easily lend itself to this particular aspect of ballet. This should not prevent any student from continuing with ballet, or doing pointe class in soft shoe, nor should it be considered a failure in any form.

Risks: The bones of the feet are not fully developed, strengthened and hardened until somewhere in the early teen years. Naturally there is a great deal of individual variation. If a student attempts pointe work without fulfilling the prerequisites, there is a chance they will permanently damage those not-fully-developed bones. Body weight multiplied by the energy of momentum carries a great deal of force.

The very beginnings: If she has the strength and technique, and if the introduction pointe work is gradual and under total supervision, everything should be fine. For first year students, NHB faculty puts emphasis on special exercises for the feet and toes, then the students put on the shoes and perform a few brief exercises at the barre. It is not until the second year that students wear their pointe shoes for more than 15 to 20 minutes.

Exceptions: Occasionally a very mature & strong 10-year-old has fulfilled the prerequisites and is ready for pointe, but this is very rare. Many adult beginners are not ready either, but the risk with them is less because their feet have fully matured and hardened.

Do not practice at home! Unless there are specific exercises the teacher has told the student to do at home, practice without professional supervision should not be done. Steps can too easily be executed incorrectly, causing injury. Incorrect execution can also lead to lowered performance in classes and on stage. Practicing steps the wrong way will only make it a longer and more difficult process to re-train to do steps the right way. This must be clarified to the student and parent.

When getting the first pair of pointe shoes: All feet are unique and individual, and there are numerous kinds of shoes on the market. There is no particular pair that is better than another. Common sense should dictate the decision: What shoes are going to fit properly so that dancing will progress correctly and safely. When being fit for the first pair, make sure to go to a place that has:

1- A large selection of brands and sizes

2- persons that are knowledgeable in fitting pointe shoes

3-after you buy your shoes, have them approved by one of your teachers at NHB before sewing in ribbons or elastics.

TRY THIS SITE FOR POINTE SHOE SEWING AND CARE

www.ballet-feetfirst.com/sewing-ribbons.html

Basic Criteria for starting Pointe Students should:

be at least 11 years old.

have at least three years of training in ballet.

be taking at least 2 classes a week in ballet however , NHB recommends 3-5 per/wk

be responsible enough to consistently bring all items needed for class.

have maturity and respect for the art

be well-groomed, with hair out of the face and in a bun.

pay attention and perform well in class.

have enough of an arched instep to properly stand on pointe.

Student should have sufficient strength to do the following:

holding rotation (turnout) while dancing

have a strong, straight back while dancing, especially the lower back

keep heels forwards when dancing (no sickling or pronating)

use plié while dancing

pointe feet while dancing

16 relevés in passé (center floor) without stopping. (with proper posture)

balance on demi (1/2) pointe in passé center floor. (with proper posture)