

A DANCER'S FEET

FOOT CARE FOR DANCERS

1. Pre-pointe screening
2. Pointe shoes

HOW YOUNG IS TOO YOUNG FOR POINTE WORK?

The RAD, The Royal Ballet, The Washington Ballet and Staatsballet Berlin all support the notion that “the earliest age a child should start on pointe is 11, however, 12 or 13 is more common”.

Often children are assessed in class based on subjective measures such as assessing; the frappe, the coordination of a fondu, or descending from rise to a pile.

However....

- Chronological age and Biological age can differ significantly
- The frequency of dance, goals (recreation / professional aspirations), training, body/foot shape and type all differ also.
- The range of motion in joints, both too much and too little is a risk factor for injury



RESEARCH, CARE & EDUCATION

Harkness Centre Pre-Pointe Assessment

- 3 objective tests
- Strength and range of motion assessments
- A number of subjective tests

But....

Passing the pre-pointe assessment does not mean you are automatically ready.

Technique, strength, postural control, flexibility & maturity.

Growth plate closure & risk of damage

2017 study (by Shah): premature closure of growth plates in a 13-year-old who started pointe at 9 years old resulting in a visibly shortened second toe.

1. Try not to be impatient
2. You will have plenty of time to dance en pointe, there's no need to rush the process now and it's best to get the foundations right.
3. Work up slow, even if it is 10 minutes at the barre at the end of class while you train to do slow rises & learn how your foot moves.

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Guideline –

- Not before the age of 12
- If the student is not anatomically sound (e.g., insufficient ankle and foot plantar flexion range of motion; poor lower extremity alignment), do not allow pointe work.
- If he/she is not truly pre-professional, discourage pointe training
- If he/she weak trunk and pelvic (“core”) muscles or weak legs, delay pointe work (and consider implementing a strengthening program)
- If the student is hypermobile in the feet and ankles, delay pointe work (and consider implementing a strengthening program)
- If ballet classes are only once a week, discourage pointe training
- If ballet classes are twice a week, and none of the above applies, begin in the fourth year of training

POINT SHOES

How are you supposed to choose the right pair for your feet?

ANATOMY of a POINTE SHOE

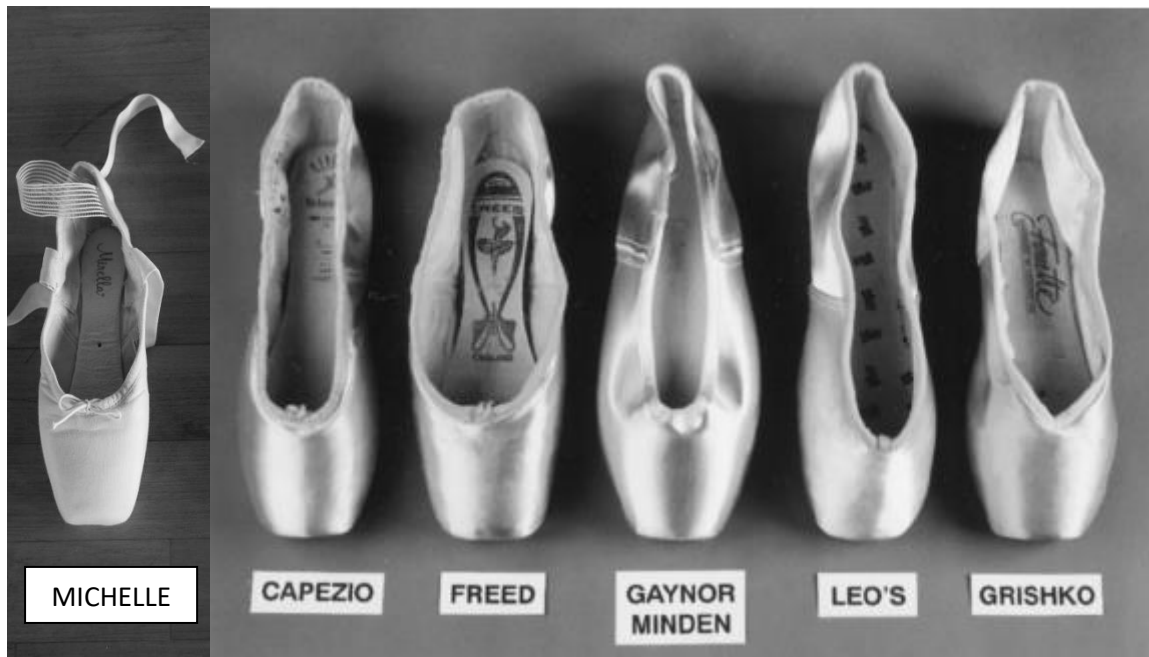


- 1 Drawstring
- 2 Insole
- 3 Shank
- 4 Outer Sole
- 5 Box
- 6 Wings
- 7 Pleats
- 8 Back Seam
- 9 Waist Seam
- 10 Heel Section
- 11 Vamp
- 12 Platform



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Foot Features		Shoe Features
Toe length	Box & Vamp length	Tapered / Medium / Box
Foot width	Box width	
Forefoot height	Profile	Too low of a profile – foot spills over Too high of a profile – toes sink into box
Instep/arches	Shank strength	
Heel shape / width	Heel height & width	Diamond (triangular) or rectangular shape

Foot / Toe Shape	Example of Shoe Suggestions
Greek foot	S6 Danca SA40 Sancha Lyrica
Peasant foot	Bloch Euro stretch Mirella Whisper Capezio Airess
Egyptian Foot	Grishko Nova Freed Classic Gaynor Miden Sleek



Greek



Peasant



Egyptian

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Wear Patterns –

Not getting all the way up on the platform

- Suggest: softer shank & lower vamp

Rolling over the platform

- Suggest: harder shank & higher vamp

