

Pointe Information Sheet

What should I know before I commit to pointe class?

- **Pointe is not a requirement of The School at the Dance Center** and it is not the “next level” of ballet class. Pointe is a study of a unique form and ballet technique class is required in addition to taking pointe class. Students who choose to take pointe will be taking at least two classes (ballet and pointe) per week at the Dance Center.
- **Pointe can be painful.** It is likely that as they study pointe, students will develop blisters, bleeding of the toes, and other pain as their feet and legs adjust to the pressure and muscular use of the body for this form. Students should always discuss pain with their teachers to ensure it is normal, but a certain level of discomfort while studying pointe should be expected.
- **Anatomical structure has an impact.** Sometimes anatomical structure of the bones in the feet that are perfectly normal and not an issue when taking ballet class in flat shoes can make pointe work more difficult in pointe shoes due to the nature of “getting up” in the shoes. Students should also be aware that pointe can exacerbate chronic injuries or existing pain.
- **Pointe shoes are more expensive than flat ballet shoes and wear out more quickly.** Most pairs of pointe shoes cost somewhere between \$80-90 for one pair. They cannot be handed down, as they need to be fitted precisely to an individual dancer’s foot for comfort and safety. Finally, the wear and tear put on them causes them to break down and dancer may need to purchase more than one pair in a given year. Dancers will also need to purchase toe pads to insert into their shoes.
- **Pointe shoes come without ribbons and elastics sewn onto them.** These items will also need to be purchased and part of pointe class will be learning how to properly attach ribbons and elastics.

I’ve decided I want to dance en pointe. What else should I know?

- **Students who take wish to register for pointe must be approved for “pointe-readiness”.** If you were a student in The School last year, you received this information in your recommendation email. If you are new to The School, and are at least 11 years old, you can register for Pre-pointe class. During the first four weeks of the fall semester, you will be assessed as either remaining in pre-pointe OR being moved to Pointe Level 1, based on the expertise of two separate teaching artists. Pointe Level 1 and Pre-pointe classes are intentionally scheduled on the same day at the same time for this purpose.
- **Pointe classes will only take place 100% in-person and are only available to register in as a new student during the fall semester.** Having students dance in pointe shoes on non-dance floors is dangerous. The study of pointe can only take place with in-person instruction. Additionally, to ensure that students are all progressing together, students new to pointe must wait until the fall to register for pointe class. Students interested in taking pointe the following fall my register for pre-pointe class in the spring semester.
- **Pointe class will require ongoing conditioning of the feet.** Teachers will introduce exercises with TheraBands in your pointe class to strengthen your feet. You can continue these at home by [purchasing a TheraBand here](#).



THE SCHOOL at the
MARK MORRIS DANCE CENTER

- **Students should not purchase pointe shoes before the first class. You will need to go in-person to the store to have your pointe shoes fitted.** The lead teaching artist will make a recommendation to students once classes begin as to when to go purchase their first pair of pointe shoes. We recommend [OnStage Dancewear](#) in Manhattan; you can call to make an appointment and you should tell them that you are an absolute beginner.
- **Do not put on or sew your pointe shoes prior to being shown how to do so by the lead Teaching Artist. Do not wear your pointe shoes or practice in them outside of class.** Wearing pointe shoes and/or sewing them without proper guidance is not safe.
- **You will need to be warmed up to take pointe class.** When possible, students should register for the ballet technique class taking place directly prior to the pointe class for which they have been approved. If this is not possible, students should plan to arrive early and warm themselves up for pointe class.
- **You should prepare your feet for your first class.** To ensure you are as comfortable as possible when taking class, you should cut your toenails straight across prior to class. Be sure that you do not cut them too short. Additionally, students should wear tights that go over their feet for class.