

# Pointe Training

## Everything You Need to Know



### What are the risks to start pointe work before being ready?



- Building bad habits which may take years to correct
- Potential for injury or permanent damage to the bone or muscle structure of the foot

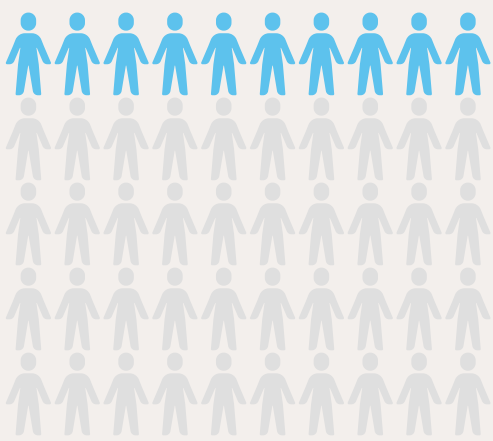
### Considerations to Start Pointe

The decision to start pointe work should be made only by a prepared and knowledgeable ballet teacher that knows the qualifications required for pointe met by a pointe assesment



## Age

No student should attempt pointe work before the age of 10. The pressure of the body's weight on the foot and toes, which are still soft and growing before that age, can cause malformation of the bones and joints.



The average age to start pointe is 12, however, It is very important not to base any progressions in ballet on age due to this discrepancy between age and developmental stages. Occasionally a 13 year old may have the bones of a 10 year old, while her little sister at 11 may be more skeletally mature.

## Training

The student must have had at least two to three years of serious ballet training and be currently taking at least two-three ballet classes per week. This is the minimum time and preparation needed for a student to develop sufficient technique and strength to prepare her for pointe work.

## Physique

The student's individual physique must be carefully evaluated. There are six test in the pointe assesment that will allow us to analyze the biomechanics and physique of the dancer at the moment.

# Attitude

Ballet requires discipline and commitment, the student must have a good attitude: paying close attention to and working diligently on the corrections given by her teacher. Some teachers even pay attention if the dancer wears her uniform and hair as it is requested, this tell us a lot about her maturity level and discipline.

## Peers

It is important for students and parents to understand that the guidelines listed above are minimum age and technique requirements. Because students develop at different rates, it is unlikely that an entire class would be ready to attempt pointe work at the same time. Most students who require further work on posture, strength, or other special problems will eventually be able to join their classmates on pointe.

In a few cases, after careful consideration of the student's physique and foot structure, the teacher may deem it best for the student that she not attempt pointe work at all.

**When the teacher says the student is not ready yet**

A good teacher will not necessarily put an entire class on pointe at once, it should be done on an individual basis. The children can all participate in the pointe exercises on flat, until their time comes.

This practice of starting children on pointe so early should be considered irresponsible, as the bones are entirely too malleable. Their time would be much better spent strengthening their muscles and working on proper technique. With concentration in those areas, the musculoskeletal structure can better handle the demands of beginning pointe work without causing such damage.

**Won't that Put My Dancer at a Disadvantage?**

**Should a child do any pointe work unless she is taking her dancing more serious?**

The once-a-week class can never be a suitable preparation for pointe work, on the other hand, the child that has more ballet training it means that her training will be systematic and concentrated, therefore, it will put the child in a path where when the time has come the dancer will be ready to start a safer pointe work practice.