



Beginner
MY ^v POINTE

By Vicki Attard & Lisa Howell

Bridging the gap between your
first pair of shoes and pre-professional training -
Lay the foundations for a long career en pointe!

COMPANION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

An invaluable asset to effortlessly integrate the program into your own pointe classes.

Introduction

Starting en pointe is one of the biggest rites of passage any young dancer faces, and it is a very exciting time. However, it is also very challenging, and the excitement of that shiny first pair of pointe shoes is often soured with the onset of pain and blisters, but it does not have to be this way. Given a slow and careful preparation onto pointe, it can be one of the most amazing times for a young dancer, and opens up a whole new world of possibility in dance.

This teachers' guide to 'My Beginner Pointe' has been designed to help you easily integrate the program into class, and to track your dancers' progress as you guide them through each stage.

This resource has been put together by Vicki Attard, former Principal Artiste of The Australian Ballet, and Lisa Howell, a well known Physiotherapist for Dancers. We are both passionate about teaching young dancers and their parents how to achieve a safe progression onto pointe as well as working closely with dance teachers to enable them to help their dancers more effectively.

Far too often we see the results of incomplete pointe training manifesting in long term injury or an inability to progress past the basics. Once we started discussing this aspect of dance training, we discovered that we both had very similar philosophies of training, from two very different backgrounds. We felt compelled to collaborate and created the *My Beginner Pointe* program in order to share this knowledge.

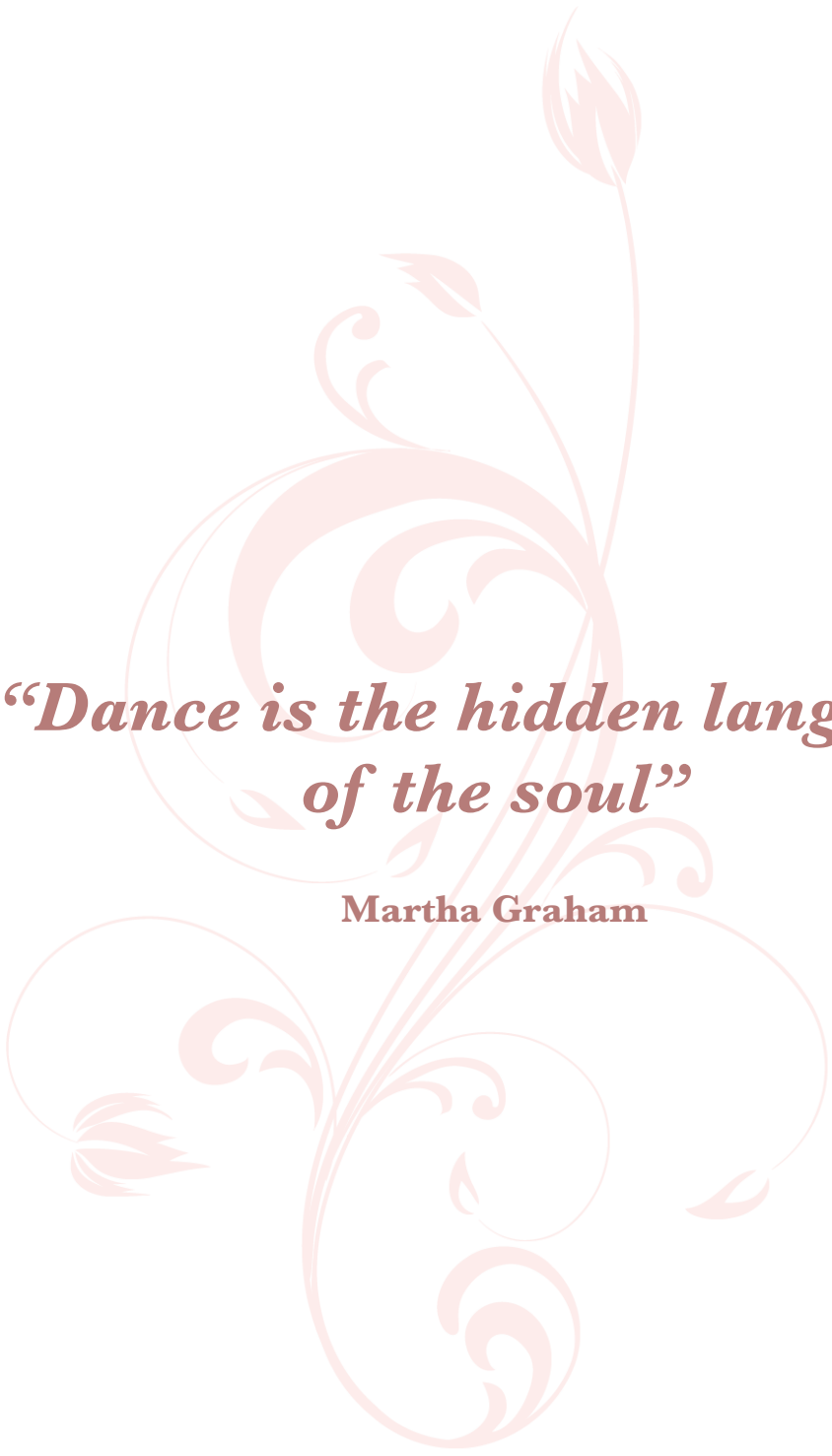


We hope you enjoy the *My Beginner Pointe* program as much as we have enjoyed producing it. We are passionate about the continual advancement of pointe work at all levels and wish you every success.

Warmest regards,

Lisa Howell and Vicki Attard





*“Dance is the hidden language
of the soul”*

Martha Graham

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Introduction

Principal Artiste, Vicki Attard and Physiotherapist for Dancers, Lisa Howell join forces to create a unique program which covers safe dance practices and aesthetic components that combine to create successful classical dancers. This comprehensive program incorporates over three hours of videos covering preparatory and strengthening exercises for pointe work, as well as three carefully choreographed stages of class work, providing a wealth of information in an uncomplicated format.

Stage One is designed specifically for the beginner en pointe, Stage Two for the intermediate level dancer and Stage Three for a dancer about to embark on a pre-professional program. The Audio Files complete the set; making the class work easy to practice at home or in the studio.



Stage One includes six exercises at the barre and all but one of these exercises (Relevé 1 to 1) is on two legs. As Vicki mentions later in this guide, Relevé 1 to 1 may be broken down initially. Three of the six exercises at the barre conclude with choreographed stretches, as muscle fatigue or muscle cramping may occur in the early stages of working en pointe if working correctly and diligently. Stage One takes approximately 20 minutes to complete, and ideally should be done at least twice a week.

Stage Two is a progression of Stage One with the same six exercises at the barre with two additional exercises on one leg, proceeding onto three exercises in the centre. As there are already progressions to perfect at the barre, it is not necessary to do the centre exercises until the dancer is deemed ready. Once again the only exercises at the barre on one leg are Relevé 1 to 1, Relevé Devant and Relevé Derrière, and these may all be broken down initially to build the required strength.

Stage Three is a progression of Stage Two and introduces the final progression of the same six exercises at the barre. The Relevé Passé exercise replaces Relevé Devant and Relevé Derrière, and there is an additional exercise - Soubresauts Sur Pointe - to develop strength for hopping en pointe. As explained on the videos, there are three natural stages of progression to successfully achieve this particular exercise. The centre exercises vary slightly from Stage Two with the addition of the Temps Lié exercise in reverse, and the combination of the two parts of the Enchaînement de Relevé exercise for further stamina and strength. Finally, there are three new exercises en diagonale.

The beauty and strength of the ***My Beginner Pointe*** program lies in the repetition within the exercises and the moderate tempo to ensure the brain and body have sufficient time to achieve what is required. These two key elements are strategic to set up the correct muscle patterning right from the very first rise en pointe. The whole program is gradual but thorough and will alleviate the issue of trying to correct bad habits at a later time, by setting up and developing good habits from the outset.

It is highly recommended to start the ***My Beginner Pointe*** program in flats, or even toe thongs, then demi-pointe shoes, perhaps alongside peers who are doing the program en pointe already. This gives new dancers time to learn the exercises and also time to identify the different areas of strength they will require when the increased challenge of pointe shoes arises.

Each detail of this program should be attempted with a meticulous, honest and persistent approach to achieve the ultimate result, which is dancing en pointe injury free, pain free and with absolute control.

Muscle Activation Exercises

Performing additional strengthening exercises is extremely important for pre-pointe dancers, beginners and advanced dancers en pointe. The exercises in this section are ones that dancers should be able to do before progressing onto pointe, however, they are also exercises that are great to include as part of a warm up before class to wake up all the specific muscles required.

Doing specific activation exercises before class is helpful because if the muscles are already activated they're much easier to recruit spontaneously in class. This is a huge advantage as it will allow dancers to take on corrections much faster, and it also highlights areas in which dancers are struggling to isolate before they put their pointe shoes on. Each muscle group is discussed on the videos in detail.

The main muscle groups that should be specifically looked at include:

- Core Stability
- Turnout Control
- Foot & Ankle Strength
- VMO & Inner Thigh
- Balance & Proprioception



Focussed strengthening exercises sometimes cause dancers and teachers to worry about bulking up too much, especially around the hips. We assure you that this is not the case with the exercises that are included in this particular section.

The first type of strengthening that people commonly think about is **Hypertrophy**, which is where the muscle fibres that you're already using within a muscle get replaced by a bigger, stronger muscle fibre after being overloaded. This kind of strengthening usually takes about 6-8 weeks and is great for athletes that want to develop power, and for improving jumps. However, the strength that dancers are often lacking, especially young classical dancers, is the slower, deeper control of the small muscles that specifically help in controlling each joint. This type of strengthening can be achieved by improving their **Neural Recruitment**. This means that we want to activate more muscle fibres within the muscle, rather than bulking up the ones that are already being used.

This is why we go through all the exercises in the program very slowly and deliberately, focussing on using the mind to master subtle muscle control to enhance coordination rather than brute strength. This also helps lay down the correct motor pattern (muscle memory) that dancers need. Basically, our bodies remember movement patterns or combinations of muscle activity that go together. If you practice something over and over again, your body remembers it as a pattern so it is easier to access for future reference. When performing something like a tendu, we want to ensure that every single time it is done, the correct muscles are being used so that the correct pattern is laid down and over time becomes effortless.

This is why it is so important to ensure that all of the beginner pointe work is done very carefully so that each of the basic patterns begin to form, and stay as ingrained motor patterns. This is particularly important when dancers get through to the higher levels so they don't have to think about their basic technique as much when tackling more complicated steps. Some research indicates that it takes 700 repetitions to install a motor pattern and over 3,500 to change one, so please make sure that from Stage One through to Stage Three dancers are constantly refining their motor patterns to perfect their technique.

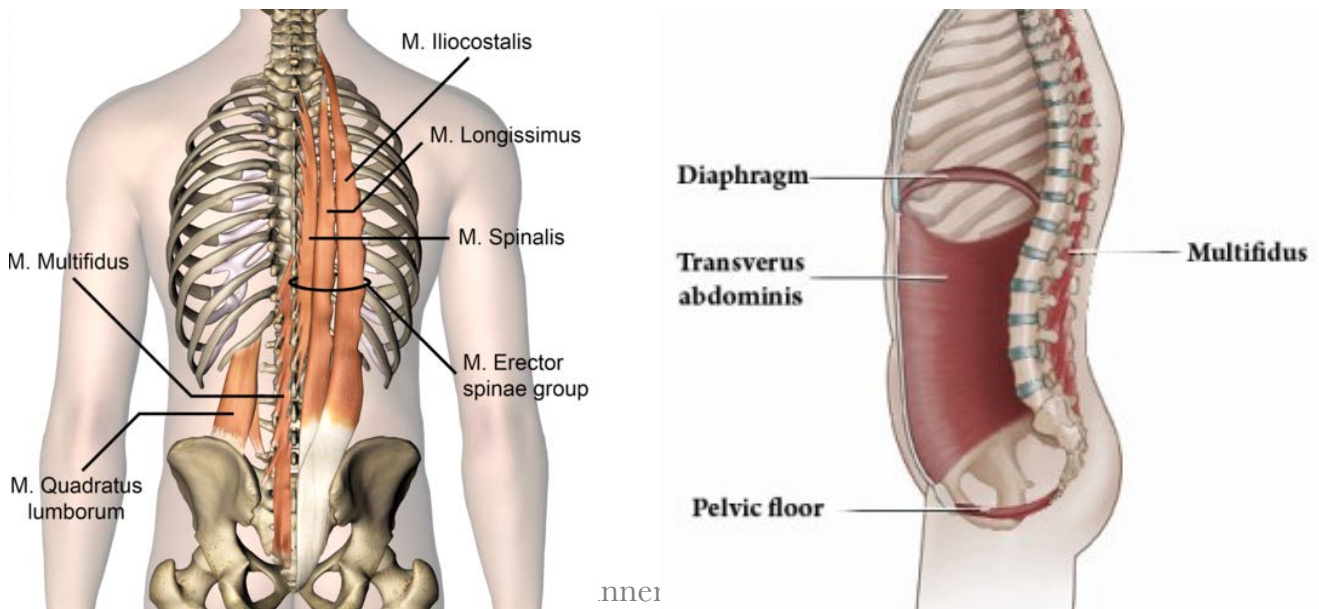
Core Stability

The Anatomy of Core Stability

A lot of dancers do training for their outer core muscles with exercises like crunches, sit-ups and plank, however for pointe work it is more important that the deepest core muscles are working well. This will help to protect the back, as well as provide dynamic stability when en pointe in the centre. The focus of these core stability exercises is to locate the deepest back muscles (esp Multifidus), which are often weak in young dancers, especially the very mobile ones.

These deep back muscles are classed as Postural Muscles as they are designed to be on at a low intensity, for long periods of time, to support and control the position of the spine. These tiny muscles help give dancers an effortlessly stable look, rather than bracing the abdomen and appearing wooden while dancing.

It is essential that dancers can breathe easily through these exercises and remain gently lifted in the low back as they activate the deep core muscles. Effortless breathing will indicate that they are not gripping with their outer abdominal muscles or bracing the diaphragm, and will allow an expressive port de bras whilst still keeping the centre controlled.



Cat Stretches

Before we start strengthening the spine we need to ensure that it is articulating well.

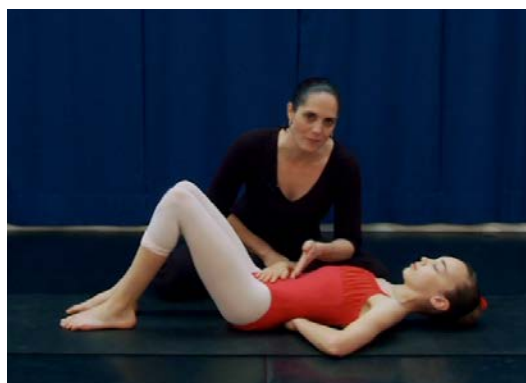
- Start on hands and knees. Make sure that the knees are directly under the hips, and the hands are under the shoulders.
- If the dancer is very mobile, make sure that they don't let their elbows over extend. Try to keep the inner parts of the elbows facing in towards each other throughout the exercise.
- Slowly tuck the tail under and arch the back up to the ceiling, one joint at a time. Draw up through the low tummy to round out the back and look down between the knees.
- Then, keeping the head tucked down, start rippling through the spine, one bone at a time, from tailbone to head, finally lifting the chest, but taking care not to over extend the neck.
- Make sure not to sink down between the shoulder blades. Keep the chest lifted up away from the floor.
- Encourage dancers to note how their spine feels each time they do this, as it may feel different from day to day.
- Repeat approximately 10 times, focussing on isolating each and every joint in the spine.
- Rest back onto the heels and stretch the arms forward to finish.



Finding Neutral Spine

Many dancers over-stabilise with their global trunk muscles when doing any ‘core’ work. Please take time to go through all of the instructions on the DVD or online videos to establish a correct neutral spine position without gripping.

- Start in crook lying with hands rested on the floor, or on the hip bones to check for movement.
- Flatten the low back by hollowing out the low tummy, making sure to stay relaxed in the Gluteals and outer Abdominals. Then gently arch the low back, keeping the big back muscles and Hip Flexors relaxed.
- Alternate between these two positions before resting in the middle where the front of the pelvis is horizontal to the ground. This position varies from person to person, but will usually have a very small lift under the base of the spine.
- Maintain a very slight hollowing sensation of the lowest part of the tummy, and an internal drawing up, like they are trying to stop going to the bathroom, but ensure that the dancer maintains regular breathing.
- Make sure that the big back muscles are relaxed in this position, as it is very easy to fake stability by gripping with the big back muscles.
- To check that dancers are maintaining this position throughout, encourage them to place one hand under the low back to feel their big back muscles and one hand on the lowest part of the tummy to check for bracing.



Bug Legs

This exercise is essential to master before progressing to pointe work in the centre. Make sure to spend some time listening to all of the instructions on the DVD or online videos to achieve the correct position of the spine and appropriate control during this exercise.

- Establish a neutral spine position, with the outer back muscles relaxed.
- To check that dancers maintain this position throughout the exercise, ask them to place one hand under the low back and one on the lowest part of their tummy.
- Maintain a very slight hollowing sensation of the lowest part of the tummy, and an internal drawing up, like they are trying to stop going to the bathroom.
- Slowly peel one foot off the floor to take the shin to horizontal.
- Slowly peel the second foot off the floor, bringing the shin to meet the other leg. Make sure the back does not change and that the low tummy remains flat.
- If this is difficult to achieve, the dancer may use the same hand to stabilise the lifted knee. Alternatively, place the ball of the foot of the lifted leg against a wall which will offer support.
- Once the second leg can be raised without any bulging of the low tummy, lower the first leg to the floor, followed by the second leg.
- Repeat, alternating the starting leg for at least 10 repetitions.



4 Point Sitbacks

Many dancers tuck their tail under when going into a plié or landing from a jump. This indicates a weakness in the tiny deep muscles of the low back. This exercise helps isolate these deep stabilising muscles by maintaining a slightly flexed upper back, to prevent bracing with the bigger back muscles that cross both areas.

- Start on hands and knees, in neutral spine, with the front of the pelvis horizontal to the floor.
- Make sure that there is a slight curve in the low back, as though they could balance a teaspoon full of water there.
- Keep the upper back slightly rounded to keep the big back muscles soft, and do not let dancers sink their chest down between the shoulder blades during the exercise.
- Maintaining neutral spine, slide the sitting bones back to the wall behind by folding at the hips.
- Keep the chest lifted and the back of the neck long.
- Return to the starting position, and then repeat in the opposite direction, taking the weight forward over the hands.
- Alternate between these two positions maintaining the neutral spine position with as little activity in the big back muscles as possible.
- It is good to practice this exercise side on to a mirror to check the position of the spine. It is also helpful to try this exercise with a broomstick along the spine to monitor for excessive movement.
- Repeat 10 times forward and back.



Side Lifts

The last exercise in the core section is a great exercise for anyone with a scoliosis or a weakness on one side compared to the other. It helps train the Oblique Abdominals and the stabilisers down the entire lateral line.

- Start in side lying, with the top shoulder open, the hips stacked on top of each other and the feet slightly forward.
- This makes sure that the exercise is targeted to the oblique abdominals rather than bracing with the back.
- There should not be any pain in the low back when doing this exercise.
- Place the fingertips of the top hand gently on the floor when first starting this exercise.
- Lift both legs just off the floor, maintaining control through the low abdominals, and hold for 5 seconds.
- Try to maintain regular breathing.
- Repeat at least 10 times on each side.
- May be done with the upper arm in various positions to challenge stability.



Variation:

A great way of implementing this exercise with a whole class is to sing along with the Nursery Rhyme “Incey Wincey Spider”. The singling helps young dancers not hold their breath, and you can be creative with having the supporting hand creeping along the floor like a spider, and then lifting through the air when the rain and sun come out.



Turnout Control

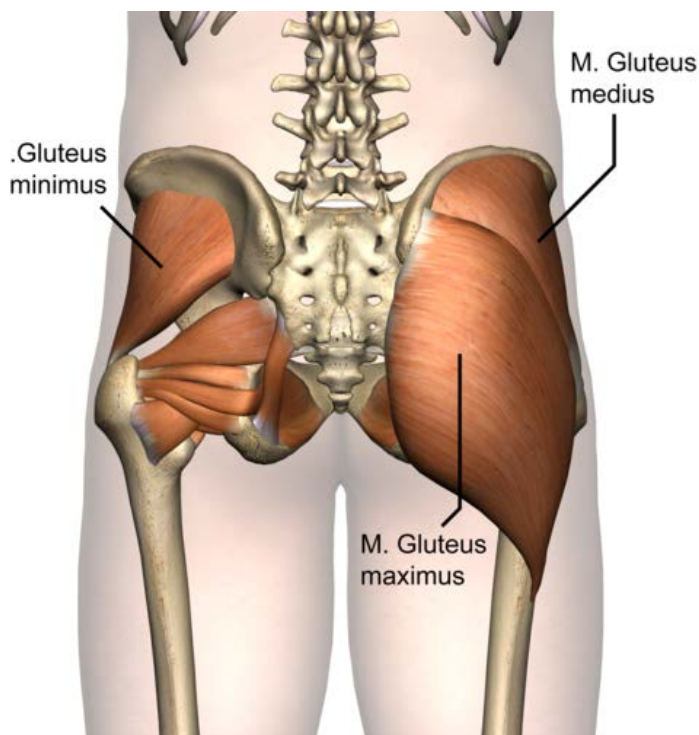
Often in class, dancers will be asked to use their turnout muscles but interestingly a lot of dancers don't actually know where these muscles are when asked directly. When they are asked to point to their turnout muscles, most dancers indicate their inside thighs, the front of their hips or the top of their bottoms. It is vitally important that dancers know where their turnout muscles are and how to work them properly.

The Anatomy of Turnout

The turnout muscles are a group of six small muscles called the Deep External Rotators. They start around the outside/back of the hip and trace in towards the tailbone and the sitting bones. They are responsible for turning the thigh bone out in the socket. They are however, very distinct from the Gluteal muscles which are the big bottom muscles, and need to be trained in isolation initially. Gluteus Maximus is important for jumping, but if a dancer attempts to use it for turnout they will struggle to maintain turnout control when travelling.

Dancers also need to be careful not to use the Gluteus Medius muscle too much for turnout. This muscle is on the outside of the hip. Its job is to help prevent sitting into the hip when standing on one leg, but if dancers try to use it for turnout, it can get very tight and may actually restrict their range.

The focus of all the exercises in this section of the program is to isolate the turnout from the true turnout muscles, rather using the Quadriceps, Gluteals, Hamstrings of Hip Flexors.



Practice in Standing

- Standing in 1st position, practice turning the thighbones out by just using the deep turnout muscles.
- Try rotating the thigh bone in the socket, keeping the upper Gluteal muscles relaxed.
- Focus on using just enough effort to achieve and maintain the position.
- Feel the difference if you grip everything at once, and imagine the long term effect of working this way.



Turnout In Retiré

- Use a light density resistance band, with one end tied to form a small loop, big enough for the foot to slide through, and attach the other end to something stable.
- Place the loop of the band over the heel rather than over the Achilles Tendon.
- Have the thigh at a 45 degree angle to the body, and the band at 90 degrees to the thigh bone.
- Cue the dancer to rotate the thighbone against the resistance of the band, bringing the leg towards a retiré position, focussing on keeping the upper Gluteals relaxed.
- Ensure that the hips stay square and do not twist at the end of the movement.
- The foot does not need to come to a full retiré position; it is better to keep the hips square.



Floor Barre Tendu

- Place both feet on the wall in parallel, with the heels 10 - 15 cm off the floor to challenge core control.
- If the dancer is under 12 years old they may use a foam roller under the heels initially.
- Focus on rotating the thigh bones slowly in the sockets to take the feet out into 1st position.
- Cue the dancer to take the outer hip bones around towards the sitting bones.
- Make sure that the rotation comes from the Deep External Rotators, keeping the upper Gluteals relaxed.
- Repeat several times to improve awareness of how to rotate correctly.
- Then place the feet in 5th position with the right foot in front.
- Slowly extend the right leg forward into a tendu devant, maintaining turnout on the 'standing' leg.
- Focus on pushing the heel of the working leg away, then drawing the pinkie toe back to keep the leg fully rotated.
- Repeat 4 x devant and à la seconde on each leg.
- Try using the finger-tips on the hip bones to monitor for excessive movement, especially when in a group setting.



Plié with Transfers

- Begin facing the barre in 1st position, focussing on maintaining turnout from the Deep Rotators, keeping the top of the Gluteals relaxed.
- Plié in 1st position keeping the alignment of the thighbone over the 2nd toe.
- Maintaining turnout, slowly transfer the weight over onto the right leg, keeping the hips square to the front and bringing the left foot into a petit retiré.
- Please note that the Gluteus Medius will stiffen a little as the dancer transfers their weight to one leg, however this should be a gentle stiffening rather than a sudden contraction.
- Slowly straighten the supporting leg, maintaining turnout control. This is especially important in hypermobile dancers who tend to lose their turnout control if they fully extend the knee into their hyperextension.
- Fondu again on the supporting leg, focussing on controlling rotation of the thigh from the back of the hip.
- Replace the left foot into 1st position and straighten both legs.
- Repeat to the left, then repeat the exercise 8 times each side.
- Once the dancers are stronger they can try this exercise away from the barre with the hands on the hips to challenge turnout control en fondu even more.



Piriformis Stretch

- Occasionally when dancers start learning to work their turnout they can begin to feel a little tight in the back of the hips, so it is important to encourage them to take some time to gently stretch out this area.
- The Piriformis muscle is one of the major Deep External Rotators (turnout muscles).
- Start with the dancer laying flat on a mat with the legs extended.
- Bend the right knee and lift the thigh up to 90 degrees.
- Use the right hand to guide the right knee gently over to the midline of the body.
- Don't bring it over too far, but try to have the knee in line with the nose.
- Use the left hand around the shin bone to slowly rotate the thighbone until a gentle stretch is felt deep in the back of the hip.
- There should be no pinching or pain in the front of the hip. If this pain is felt, it usually indicates inflammation in the Hip Capsule or Hip Flexors. Any additional compression will aggravate this, so please avoid if this is felt.
- Try various positions to explore the six different Deep External Rotators.
- Breathe into the stretch, being sure to keep the chest open and the spine long and straight. Young dancers may tend to go into a “banana back” position.
- Hold for four breaths before repeating on the other side. Do at least twice each side.



Foot and Ankle Control

Dancers need to understand how the muscles in the foot and ankle are designed to work, because if they can get these working correctly, it may help prevent up to 90% of the common foot and ankle injuries that many dancers suffer with. Achieving optimal articulation of the foot in a tendu, and with every single rise onto pointe, helps prevent injuries by using each muscle for its specific action, and avoiding overload in any one area.

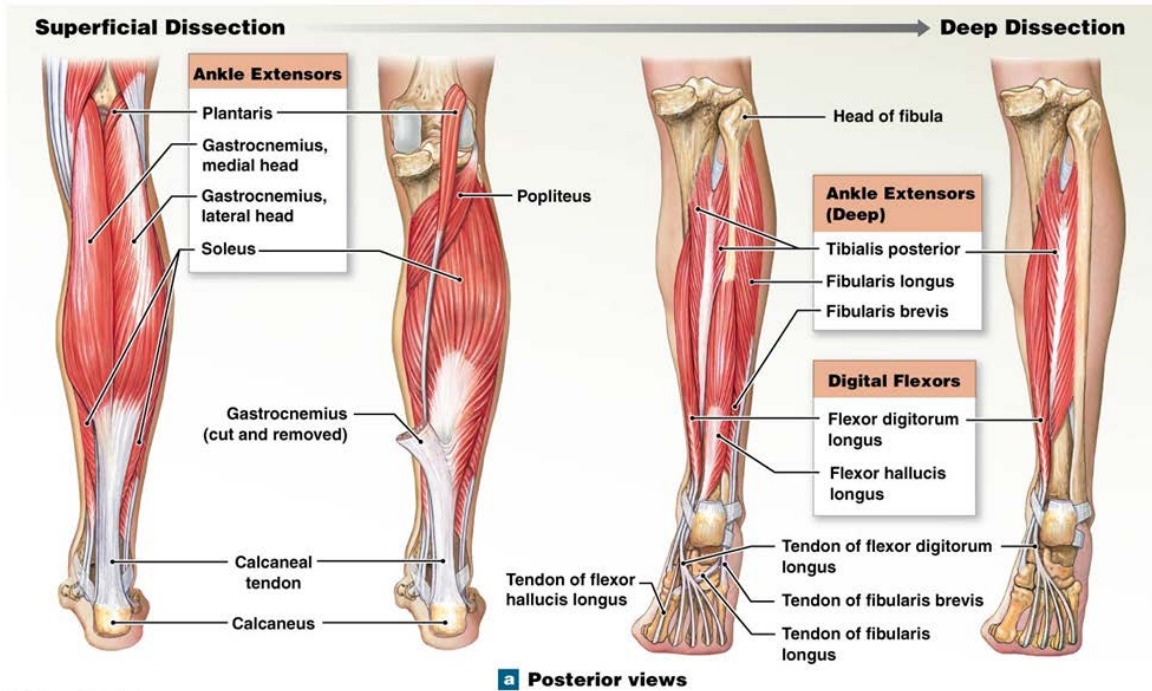
This is why we take such care with all of the foot work in the program, focussing on working through the demi-pointe and maintaining a high 3/4 pointe on the way back down. This series of exercises is designed to strengthen all of the correct muscles needed to execute each of the exercises in the *My Beginner Pointe* program well.

The Anatomy of the Foot and Ankle

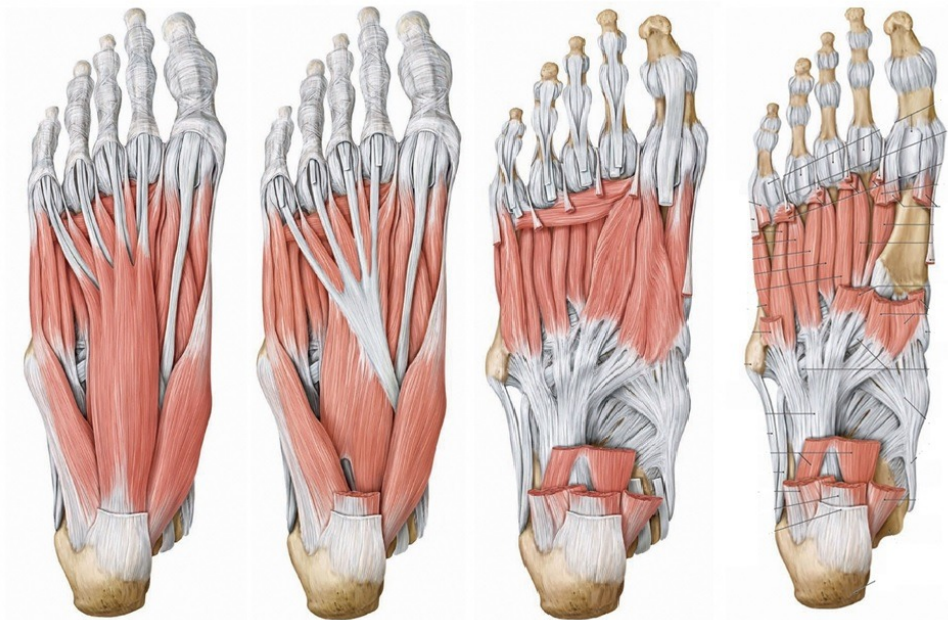
When we point the ankle to a demi-pointe position, we want the big calf muscles (Gastrocnemius) to do most of the hard work, which is what we train when we do rises. The extrinsic foot muscles that have tendons passing the ankle, such as the Peroneals and Tibialis Posterior, will help control the position of the ankle, making sure it's not sickling inwards or fishing outwards too much. The smaller intrinsic foot muscles, help point the toes correctly and keep them aligned. These intrinsic foot muscles also maintain the arch when standing in 1st position. It is very important not to use the long toe flexors (Flexor Digitorum Longus) to point the toes as these tendons often get overused and irritated.

When returning from a pointed position, the action is reversed. As the toes are peeled back, keep the ankle pointed with the Tibialis Posterior to develop optimal articulation. Ensure that the ankle is flexed slowly, maintaining correct alignment to help protect all of the tendons that pass around the joint. Many dancers have problems when they start en pointe, as they start using the extrinsic foot muscles excessively for all three roles; pointing the ankle, stabilising the ankle and pointing the toes. These roles should be done by the three separate groups of muscles; the ankle plantar flexors, the extrinsic foot muscles and the intrinsic foot muscles.

Ankle Extensors & Extrinsic Foot Muscles

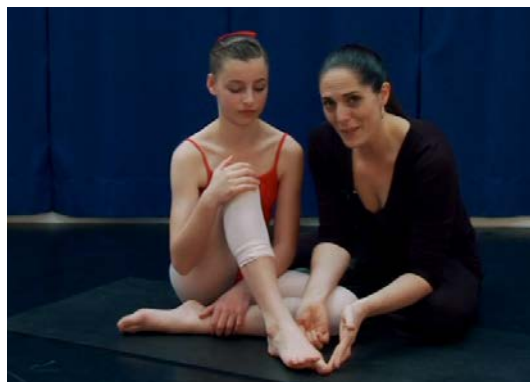


Intrinsic Foot Muscles



Toe Swapping

- Make sure to set the foot up well, with the centre of the heel gently pressed into the ground and the joints of the big toe and little toe evenly placed on the floor.
- Do not roll the foot in or out during this exercise.
- Ensure that the knee stays aligned and the inner arch of the foot is slightly lifted throughout.
- Lift the big toe up on its own (using the fingers to help if needed initially).
- Then press the big toe on the ground and lift the little toes, keeping the arch lifted.
- Alternate between these two positions at least 20 times.
- Try to keep the big toe in line, rather than letting it drift over toward the little toes, especially if there is a history of Bunions.



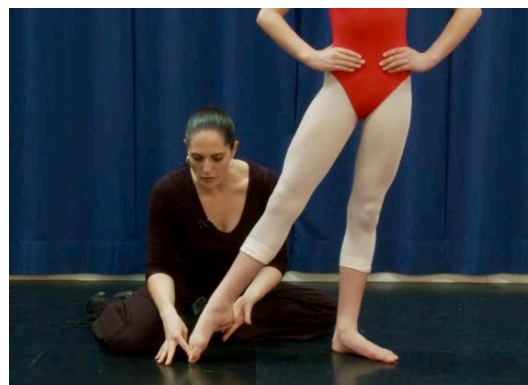
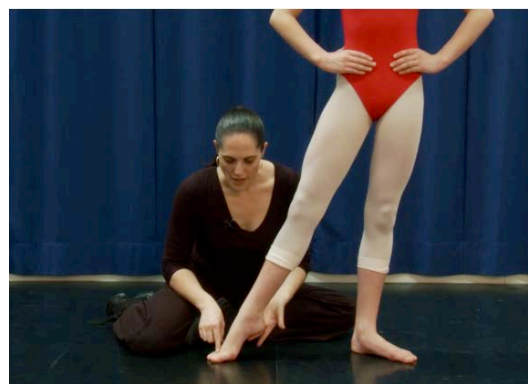
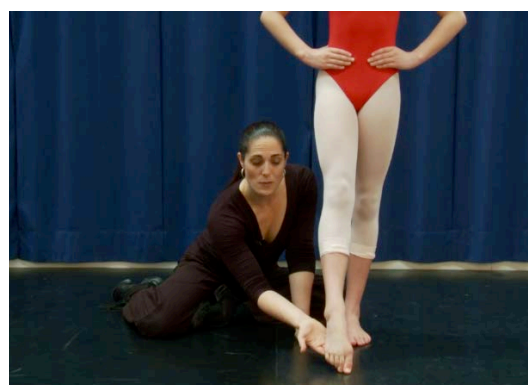
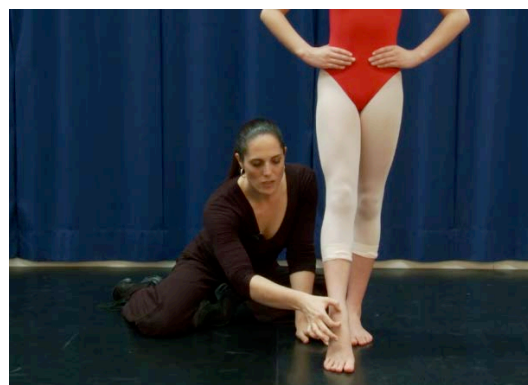
Doming

- This is very important to master before starting en pointe to correctly move from demi-pointe onto full pointe, and to keep the toes long in the shoes.
- Gently press the pads of the toes into the floor and lift the ball of the foot up to create a small dome/space under the forefoot, keeping the toes long.
- Work towards keeping the tendons at the front of the ankle relaxed.
- Once the dancer has mastered control of the forefoot, it needs to be incorporated into their classwork, especially in Tendus.



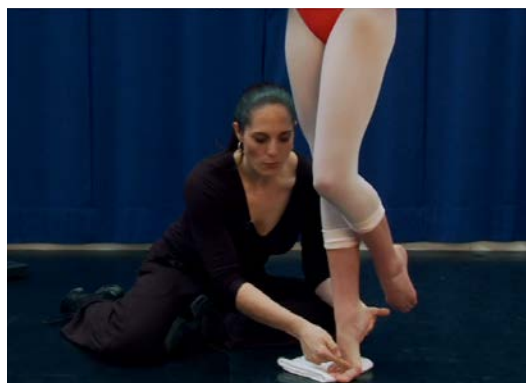
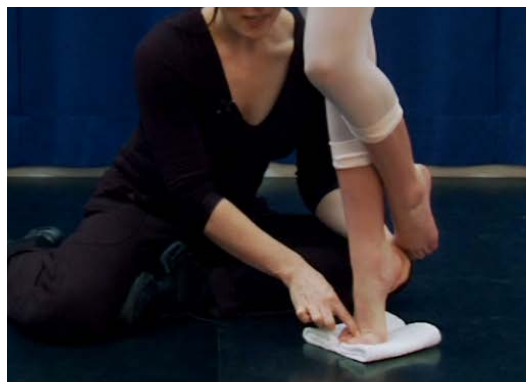
Tendu in Standing

- Start standing in parallel.
- Extend one foot forward through the demi-pointe position with the front of the ankle fully stretched.
- Press down gently with the toes as for the Doming exercise to bring the foot into a full tendu, with the toes long and straight.
- Reverse the movement, moving through the demi-pointe position, while keeping the length through the front of the ankle, then return the foot to the starting position.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Remember to keep the standing leg in parallel with the foot nicely aligned by maintaining deep turnout control at the hip.
- Once effective articulation of the foot has been achieved in parallel, repeat in 1st position to add on the extra challenge of controlling turnout.
- Extend the foot à la seconde, working through the demi-pointe position, then point the toes long.
- Return through the demi-pointe position, keeping the ankle pointed as the toes are flexed, then softening the ankle to close.
- Repeat several times on each side.
- It is important for dancers to learn how to integrate this movement early in their training so that it becomes habitual.
- Make sure to work on this in class to integrate this careful articulation into their set tendu exercise.



Single Leg Rises

- Start standing in parallel on one leg, with fingertips underneath the barre.
- Perform slow, controlled single leg rises through to full height, with good form.
- All dancers must be able to do 20 single leg rises before progressing onto pointe.
- Repeat 20 times on each leg for Stage One and 25 for Stage Two. Pre-Professionals should be able to do 32 single leg rises.
- During the rises make sure that:
 - The hips stay square
 - Leg alignment is being maintained
 - The knee remains active
 - Rise to full height & lower with control
 - Drop to double leg rises if form drops
- For a long big toe, place a folded hand towel under toes 2,3,4 & 5 to allow more room for the big toe and to reduce pain in the joint.
- For a longer second toe, pad up the toes 1,3, 4 and 5, leaving a hollow for 2.



Flexor Digitorum Longus (FDL) Stretch

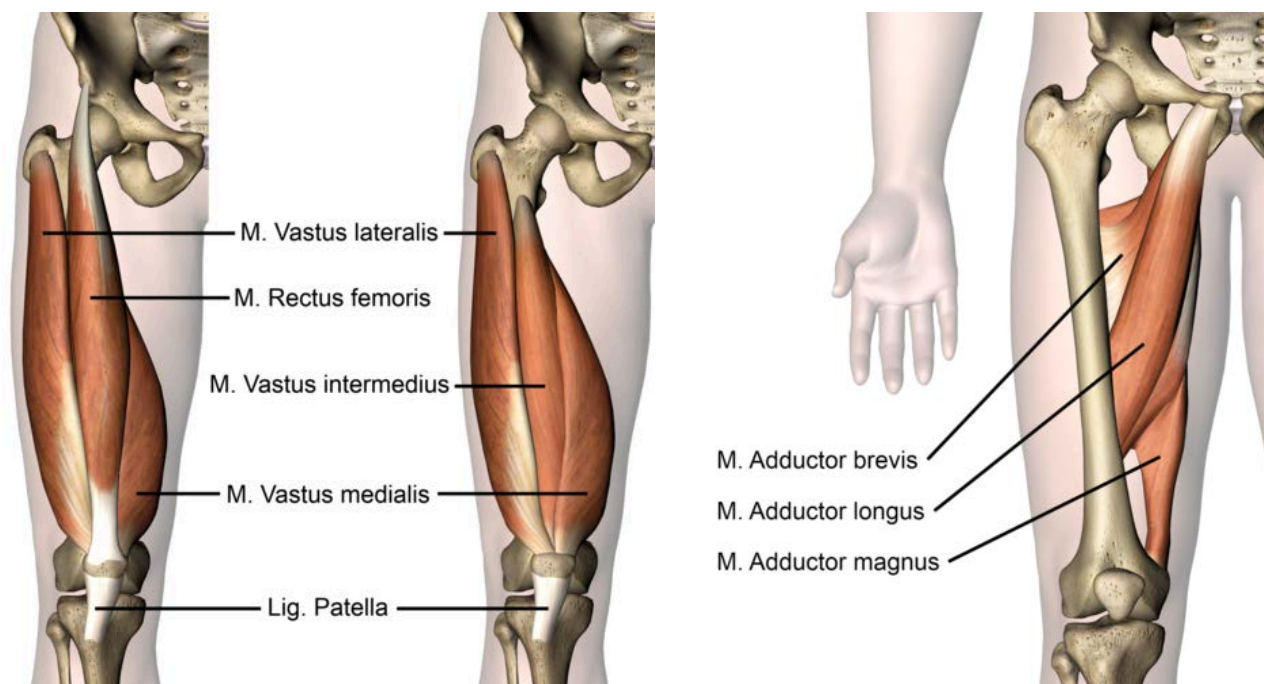
- This is a more specific mobiliser to restore mobility to the muscles that curl the toes.
- Place the toes up against a rolled up towel, with the other foot in front, in parallel.
- Gently bend the back knee to go into a plié. Feel the stretch deep in the back of the calf, or under the foot, but not around the inside of the ankle.
- Glide gently into the stretch 3 to 4 times, twice each side.



VMO and Inner Thigh

Anatomy of the VMO and the Inner Thigh

The VMO (Vastus Medialis Oblique) is the oblique portion of the Vastus Medialis muscle, part of the Quadriceps group. It is a tear drop shaped muscle that sits about 5cm up, and 5cm in from the top of the knee cap. It is a very important part of the Quadriceps group that needs to be strengthened for pointe work. Effective timing and endurance of the VMO helps support the knee, assists in preventing knee injuries and also helps maintain leg alignment en fondu. Another key area to focus on is the Adductors, or inner thigh muscles. These muscles are very important to train before dancing en pointe, to aid in stabilising the legs and pelvis when balancing on such a small platform.



The *My Beginner Pointe* program demonstrates several different exercises combining the use of the inner thigh and the inner knee muscle, as they work really well together. Be sure to work through this section carefully as it is an area that is often very weak. It is also a great section to go through with any male dancers, to help support their knees in Grande Allegro and partnering.

Pointe Through Demi-Pointe with VMO Endurance

- Sit up tall in long sitting, with one leg extended and maintain a good sitting posture throughout.
- Keep the thigh bone of the working leg turned out, and use the sole of the opposite foot against the inner thigh for a little resistance, to gently activate the adductors of the working leg.
- Feel for the VMO, approximately 5cm in and 5cm up from the centre of the knee cap.
- Straighten the working leg slowly, aiming to feel the VMO engage gradually, rather than grabbing on.
- Point the ankle to take the foot to a demi-pointe position using the big calf muscle.
- Focus on lengthening the front of the ankle and pointing both inner and outer aspects of the foot to avoid twisting.
- Fully point the toes keeping them long, using the muscles developed in the doming exercise, ensuring the toes are not curled under.
- Release the toes, keeping the ankle pointed and the knee cap pulled up.
- Flex the ankle, making sure to keep the knee activated, yet not hyperextended.
- Repeat 8 times on each side, but make sure that each repetition is done well. It is better to do 4 perfect ones than 8 sloppy ones.



Cushion Squeezes with Leg Extension

- While the inner thighs are not technically turnout muscles, they do help to support turnout in dancers. This exercise really helps secure a dancer's balance en pointe, especially when balancing in 5th.
- Begin in crook lying with the knees bent.
- Place a small stability ball that is 3/4 inflated between the knees, with the feet almost together and the back in neutral.
- Cue to squeeze the inner thighs as though bringing the legs together in parallel.
- Make sure to stay relaxed through the front of the hips as a lot of dancers grip with their hip flexors to stabilise.
- Hold for 3 breaths then slowly release the inside thighs. Repeat several times.
- If 10 repetitions of this variation can be done with no gripping in the hips, you may move onto the next stage.
- While maintaining the Cushion Squeeze, slowly extend the right leg, keeping the knees in line with each other.
- Then, keeping the knee extended and the VMO and inner thighs engaged, slowly rotate the thigh bone inside the socket to turn the working leg out.
- Keep the pelvis aligned.
- Try to feel the transition of the load from the inner thighs, to the turnout muscles, and back again as you de-rotate.
- Maintain the Cushion Squeeze as the foot is lowered to the floor.
- Repeat 10 times on each leg, alternating, consciously relaxing between each repetition.

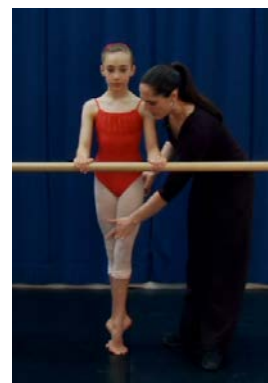
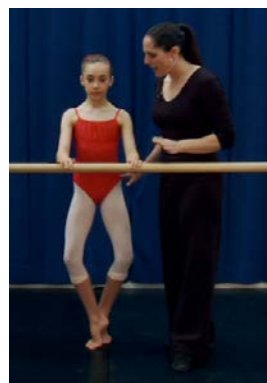


Plié on Demi-Pointe

This is a great exercise to bring awareness of VMO and inner thigh control into a dancer's class work.

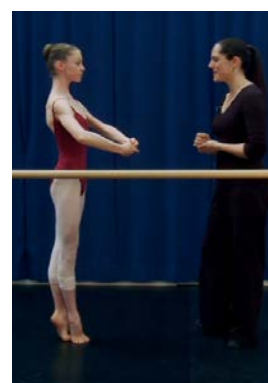
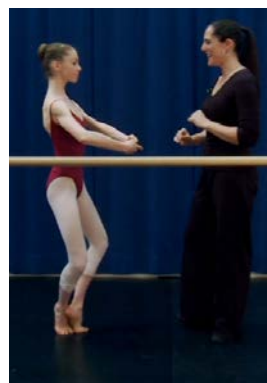
Stage 1:

- Begin with both hands on the barre.
- Keep the waist lengthened, legs rotating from the hips, and VMO engaged.
- Perform a small plié on demi-pointe, and then draw the inner thighs together as the knees are straightened.
- Focus on closing the gap between the thighs.
- Perform 3 plié then pick up the front foot and place at the back.



Stage 2:

- Repeat the exercise with just one hand on the barre.
- Make sure to keep the front part of the pelvis vertical at all times.
- Repeat 3 times on each leg and then lower and plié.



Stage 3:

- Repeat the exercise with the hands off the barre, either on the hips, or with the arms in 1st or 5th position.

Balance and Proprioception

Often when working in class dancers tend to sit back from their full pointe range. This may indicate that they haven't yet developed the strength or awareness to hold their foot in a fully pointed position, which is where they need to be when dancing en pointe. This highlights the importance of practicing some balance exercises in their full available pointe range before starting en pointe. Proprioception is the brain's ability to feel where the joint is in space and this needs to be specifically trained in a very high demi-pointe position. If this is not worked on prior to commencing pointe work, young dancers will often shake excessively through the ankles when rising onto pointe and this can put them at risk of injury.

Demi-Pointe Balance with Port de Bras

The DVD and online videos demonstrates a couple of different variations of this exercise. In all stages the dancers aim to hold a nicely placed demi-pointe balance with the lifted foot in pirouette position, however the challenge is added in the amount of support from the barre, and the time the balance is held.

Stage 1: Keep both hands on the barre. Aim to hold for just 10 seconds.

Stage 2: One hand on the barre. Increase the hold to 30 seconds.

Stage 3: The dancer should attempt to balance unsupported and be able to hold anywhere from 10 - 30 seconds.

- Focus on rotating both legs from the top of the thigh.
- Keep the pelvis nice and square.
- Ensure the supporting knee is pulled up but not snapped back.
- Demi-pointe should be squarely placed, not rolling in or out.
- Keep lengthened through the side waist.
- Maintain a high demi-pointe position.
- Dancers may find it hard to hold the position initially, so build up gradually.



Demi-Pointe Balance in 5th with Port De Bras

This is a wonderful way to combine the awareness and strength developed in all of the other exercises in a way that will really enhance young dancer's stability en pointe. All variations begin in 5th position on demi-pointe and add a simple port de bras. Pick up the front foot and place it at the back, before repeating the port de bras.

Stage 1: Take the arms through a simple port de bras, moving the arms slowly through 1st, out to 2nd position and back down to bras bas.

Stage 2: Bring the arms up through 1st position, then move into 1st arabesque. This off centre position of the arms challenges control of the centre much more. Change the arms to 2nd arabesque, then open to 2nd position and lower to bras bas.

Stage 3: Add extra challenge to the dancer's stability on demi-pointe by adding upper back movement and a little épaulement. Adding in extension and rotation while in 1st or 2nd arabesque, 3rd, 4th or 5th, will really challenge their dynamic core control.



Final note

Please remember that this is not an exhaustive list of activation exercises. If you have any other exercises focussing on isolating these muscle groups, they may be added into each section. Encourage dancers to use these exercises in their warm up before class to wake up the appropriate muscles, or at other times to build strength and endurance in these specific areas.

My First Pointe Shoes

The Pre-Pointe Assessment

The importance of getting each dancer individually assessed prior to going onto pointe can't be overestimated. The 'best dancer' within a class may not necessarily have the most control, and many weaknesses can be hidden inside regular ballet slippers. It is impossible to assess all of the relevant areas during a regular class, so time must be set aside on a regular basis to screen potential dancers as to their suitability for pointe work. This assessment may be done by a qualified teacher or a Physiotherapist who specialises in working with dancers. Try not to think of a Pre-pointe Assessment as a one-off occurrence. It should be done frequently in the 6 -18 months before a dancer is intending to progress onto pointe. This allows a careful and intelligent progression. Following an initial assessment, strengthening and mobility exercises should be taught to correct any weaknesses in the dancer's feet, ankles, hips and core muscles, to help the dancer cope with the demands of pointe work.

Areas that need to be specifically checked before going onto pointe include:

- Flexibility of the feet and ankles
- The ability to stabilise the ankles in a fully pointed position
- Correct articulation of the foot and ankle in tendus and on demi-pointe
- Dynamic control of turnout
- Awareness and control of the pelvis and spine, especially on demi-pointe
- Technical mastery of the basic classical ballet steps
- Balance and proprioception
- The status of any current or previous injuries

Unfortunately, there is a distinct lack of qualified therapists with this knowledge, so **The Perfect Pointe Book** and **The Perfect Pointe System** allow dance teachers to gain the necessary knowledge to confidently determine their dancer's readiness for pointe. The assessment forms can be printed out and used to record assessment findings and specific areas of weakness for each dancer. By closely assessing the dancer's ability in each area, the subjectivity is taken out of the decision concerning readiness for pointe, making it easier to explain to parents.

The Perfect Pointe Book

The Perfect Pointe Book is a fantastic resource for dancers of all ages. It is designed to guide young dancers through the stages required for pointe work, to ensure a safe and fun progression onto pointe! This invaluable resource combines classical technique training with physiotherapy techniques to fine tune and accelerate your dancer's pointe preparation! The book, available in a downloadable e-book or a hard copy, and accompanying MP4 video files are split into four stages:



Stage One - Flexibility of the foot and ankle

Stage Two - Strength and articulation of the foot and ankle

Stage Three - Turnout range and control

Stage Four - Core stability and balance

Each stage goes through testing to assess where the dancer is at, and then gives exercises to improve range and control of each area. The dancer then works on the exercises for two weeks before retesting. Once the dancer can pass each test at a high standard, they can progress to the next stage. All of the tests and exercises are recorded on video, accessible in an exclusive online Members Area where your dancers can watch videos of other dancers going through the program.

The program includes:

- Simple tests to show you how prepared each dancer is for pointe work.
- What any weaknesses mean, and how to fix them.
- Simple massage techniques to improve pointe range.
- How to strengthen the small intrinsic foot muscles to avoid injury en pointe.
- Techniques to wake up the true turnout muscles and strengthen them for ballet.
- How to get true core stability to balance en pointe safely.

The Perfect Pointe Book is available at a wholesale price to get all of your dancers working on the same program. Many teachers now include the cost of this book into the yearly course fees to save issues with some having it and others not.

Fitting Pointe Shoes

Once you have cleared a dancer to go en pointe, contact your local dance shop to organise a fitting as they may have limited stock, and may need to order some pointe shoes in for the dancer. If your dancers' are going to use padding in their shoes, there are quite a few different types to choose from, and this decision needs to be taken into consideration when trying on their first pointe shoes.

It is most important that your pointe shoe fitter is experienced. Each brand of shoe tends to train its own fitters, and the most experienced fitter will often be able to assess the shoe needed with a good analysis of the foot.

The fitter should look at the width of the foot, length of the metatarsals, height of the instep and the transverse arch. They will look at the shoes on your dancers' feet in various positions, including en pointe in a parallel position, turned out and most importantly in a plié as this is where the foot is at its longest.



When sending dancers for a pointe shoe fitting, remind each dancer:

- To wear their ballet tights.
- If they intend on wearing toe pads, be sure to have the shoe fitted with them in place as they will make quite a difference to the fit of the shoe.
- It may take quite some time to find the 'right' pointe shoes, so patience is required!
- If they have already been en pointe, take in their old pointe shoes to the next fitting to explain to the fitter how they have broken down, what problems they may have experienced and what they would like to try in their next pair of shoes.
- Try to get pointe shoes fitted in the afternoon when the foot is warm. Feet can be significantly smaller in the mornings.

There are many different styles of pointe shoes to accommodate each dancer's personal requirements and preferences. Most brands on the market have a style of shoe that is specifically designed for the beginner en pointe.

For beginners we recommend:

- A supple/flexible shank that allows the beginner to articulate the foot in the shoe, as opposed to a hard shank that does all of the work for them, but doesn't allow them to articulate the foot correctly.
- The wings should go up to the level of the big toe, so that the foot is not spilling out of the shoe.
- If the wing is too short and presses in against the big toe this can exacerbate the development of Bunions.
- The width of the shoe should allow for the index finger to be inserted up to the level of the first knuckle.
- The platform should be wide for greater surface area on which to balance.
- Check the placement of the foot in the shoe en pointe for twisting or sickling.
- Make sure to check the length of the shoe with a deep pli  in second position as this is where the foot is at its longest.
- Do not get shoes fitted with "growing room". However, if feet are still growing, get pointe shoes fitted with the thickest padding that will be used. As the dancer's feet grow and the fit becomes more snug, drop to a thinner padding, then to just a toe wrap, before getting new shoes.



Parts of a Pointe Shoe

It is important for dancers to understand a little about all the different parts of a pointe shoe and their functions, so that they can become involved in finding the best fitting shoe for them. This glossary of pointe shoe terms will help you teach dancers the technical terms for each part of the shoe before they arrive at their first fitting at the dance shop. Empowering them with this information, as well as knowing what to expect during the fitting, will help them communicate better with the fitter if they feel any pressure or pain with the fit of the shoes.

Binding: The tape that finishes the top edge of the upper part of the shoe which also encases the drawstring/elastic. It is important that when attaching the ribbons that the dancer does not sew through the binding as this will inhibit the sliding of the drawstring.

Block/Box: The hardened enclosure of a pointe shoe which comprises the vamp, wings and platform encasing the dancer's toes. The block/box is commonly made of multi layers of paper, fabric and glue. It is essential to assess the placement of the MTP (Metatarsophalangeal) break point of the dancer's foot in the shoe to ensure that they may rise through a high 3/4 pointe position. Dancers with short toes may need a shorter box, while dancers with long toes need to make sure that the heads of the metatarsals are supported. A good measure of the fit of the box is to insert one finger into the box, on top of the foot. It should allow one finger to be slid in up to the first knuckle.



Drawstring: A length of cotton cord or elastic cord encased within the binding that allows the upper to form a snug fit around the foot. Make sure that this is not drawn too tightly as it may cut into the heel and cause irritation of the insertion point of the Achilles Tendon.

Last: The foot shaped mould around which the pointe shoe is constructed.

Outsole: A single piece of leather attached to the outer sole of the shoe. The shape of this varies and can influence the stability of the foot when standing.

Paste: Specially formulated glue used in both the process of hardening the toe block/box and attaching the insole to the inside of the pointe shoe. Many pastes are water soluble so it is essential to remove toe pads from the shoes after dancing to avoid early break down of the box.

Platform: The flattened surface at the end of the pointe shoe which allows the dancer to balance en pointe. A wider platform is better for beginners. Beware of tapered boxes and narrow platforms when there is any indication of a bunion.

Shank/Insole: A piece of rigid material (leather, plastic, cardstock) of many different strengths that stiffens the sole to provide support for the dancer's arch. Shoes with a 3/4 length shank must mimic the dancer's actual foot dimensions to be effective.

Upper: All the parts above the shoe's sole that are joined together to become a single unit which is attached to the insole and the outsole.

Vamp: The lower forward part of the shoe's upper, covering the forepart of the foot and includes the block/box and platform. Again, make sure that this does not extend more than 1cm above the break point of the toes.

Vamp Shape: The vamp refers to the length of the shoe's upper, and the vamp shape is the shape of the entrance of the shoe. The shape may vary from rounded to tapered.

Wing: The sides of the vamp directed toward the heel. This area can vary in shape and hardness, and will depend on the style of pointe shoe. Make sure that the wings come up to the level of the big toe joint to avoid excessive development of bunions.

Breaking In Pointe Shoes

Obviously after paying lots of money for beautiful new pointe shoes, young dancers and their parents are often dismayed to hear talk of “Breaking in” the shoes. This is actually a very important step, and if done correctly may even extend the life of the shoe. However; if this is done incorrectly it can drastically shorten the life of the shoe, so it must be done with caution.

Initially the shank of a pointe shoe is reasonably hard and needs to be broken in to conform to the dancer’s foot. If the shoe is worn in class without pre-weakened, it will tend to break in the middle of the shank where it is under most stress. However, if the shoe is pre-weakened in the correct areas before wearing, it will continue to weaken at these points, preserving the rest of the shank and often extending the life of the shoe. It also gives a much nicer line to the foot and offers much more support to the dancer en pointe. This is explained in detail on the DVD’s and online videos.



Some dancers and teachers suggest breaking in the shoe on the foot. We disagree with this as we find that if this is attempted, the shoe tends to break in the area under most stress, often the middle of the shank, rather than at the heel break and the demi-pointe area.

For full instructions on how to do this safely, please watch the ‘My First Pointe Shoes’ DVD or online video in the *My Beginner Pointe* program.

Ribbon Placement

There is no one perfect placement of the ribbons for every dancer, as it all depends on the length of the heel and where the arch bends, which is unique to each dancer.

Find this point by placing the ribbon under the dancer's arch before putting the shoe on and cross the ribbons over the ankle where they will be tied. Mark the placement of the ribbons on the inside of the shoe, then sew the ribbons deep into the shoe. When stitching across the top edge of the binding, take care to avoid catching the drawstring or elastic.



If the ribbons are placed in a more forward position, elastics may be needed to help hold the heel in place. It is recommended to arrange the elastics in a cross formation, ending inside the ribbons, rather than a loop around the ankle, especially in hyper-mobile dancers. This helps avoid excessive pressure on the tendons around the ankle.

If using ribbons with pre-inserted elastic, ensure the elastic is placed at the back of the ankle to best offload the pressure on the Achilles Tendon. Perfect placement of ribbons and elastics is different for every foot so experiment with these ideas to find the best solution for each dancer.

Tying the Ribbons

After years of experience and quick costume changes, Vicki Attard has a secret tip to keeping the ribbons neatly tied during demanding performances. This is demonstrated on the My First Pointe Shoes DVD or online videos. Using the outer ribbon first and passing it around the back of the ankle in a certain way, allows the knot to be completely hidden and stay in place. We have combined her technique with a simple reef knot to allow fast and easy untying of the ribbons. This technique is perfect for quick costume changes, and removes the need to sew ribbons in place.

- Start with the outside ribbon, taking it around the ankle to the inside of the ankle.
- Then take the inside ribbon around the ankle going underneath the first ribbon and back around to the inside of the ankle.
- To make the ribbon very easy to untie, do a simple reef knot: If you are working on your right shoe, take the ribbon on the left over the ribbon on the right and under, then, right over left and under.
- Tuck the knot in from the upper edge.
- Then run your finger underneath the inside ribbon from the seam of the shoe, and trace the ribbon all the way around the ankle. This effectively places that ribbon on top of the other one, neatly hiding the knot.
- To untie, free the knot from under the ribbon. Pull the right ribbon end over to the left to unlock the knot. Then slide the knot easily down the length of the left ribbon to untie.



Tip: Roughly 5cm or 2 inches of ribbon length from the knot is all that is needed to tuck in. If the ribbons are too long, it creates a bulky look around the ankle, and is very difficult to tuck away neatly and aesthetically.

Looking After Your Pointe Shoes

A few simple tips can make all the difference to the life of pointe shoes;

- Have a few pairs of pointe shoes on rotation, especially if dancing more than 3 days a week.
- Be sure to dry each pair out fully between wears.
- Remove all padding after each wear and wash and dry separately.
- Avoid using water on the box - use only to soften in the top part of the wings if needed.
- Do not store pointe shoes in plastic bags, even if they come in one.
- Stuffing the box (top of the shoe that encases the toes) with tissue or absorbent paper after wearing will draw out the moisture whilst retaining the shape of the box.
- Do not get shoes fitted with “growing room”.
- Do not let dancers use their pointe shoes outside. If pointe shoes are required for an outdoor photo shoot, we suggest using an old pair as this will usually damage them beyond repair.
- Dancers may use shellac, Hot Stuff or Jet Glue to extend the life of the pointe shoe. To see how, watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbpvWGFwFJQ&t=73s>
- Remind your serious dancers to separate their class shoes from their performance shoes.
- Educate parents as to the possible risk of injury if the dancer attempts steps that they haven't been taught in class on their own.
- Please discourage dancers from bending their pointe shoes in the middle of the shank, or from forcefully bending the shanks in a door. Some dancers do this to “break them in” but this is not necessary and shortens the life of the shoe. If you need to soften the shank, please watch the ‘Breaking in Pointe Shoes’ video online to learn how to do this safely.

Preparatory Exercises

As pointe shoes are so much harder to balance in than regular ballet slippers, it is wise to spend some time with first-time dancers getting the feel of the shoe before progressing on to their class work. We call these exercises “Preparatory Exercises” and they are very useful for all dancers. They encourage the dancer to achieve correct patterning of all of the small foot muscles in the shoe, and how to correctly place the foot en pointe from Day One. It is much easier to teach good habits from the beginning than to retrain the patterning of the foot later on.

If you are concerned about progressing a dancer onto pointe, this is an excellent set of exercises to safely work through. The dancer can still get excited about getting their pointe shoes, and can perform the following strengthening exercises in sitting and standing positions for several weeks before progressing on to Stage One of the *My Beginner Pointe* program or to regular class work. These exercises will highlight their weaknesses in a very impartial way, alleviating any feelings of favouritism in the classroom.

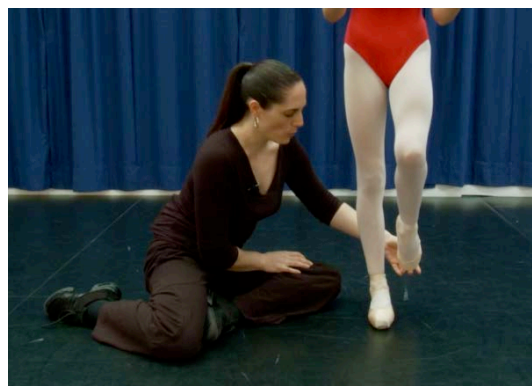
Tripod Foot

- Start standing in parallel.
- Roll heel bones in and out, then find the centre of the heel.
- Repeat with the forefoot.
- Do a mini rise so that the heel bone lifts just off the floor, but the skin of the heel is still touching.
- Balance and hold for at least 10 seconds to build endurance.
- Repeat in turnout.
- Take note of the amount of activity in the tendons at the front of the ankle.
- If the dancer has their weight too far back or is focussing on ‘lifting’ the arches there may be a lot of tension in this area.



Single Leg Balances

- Stand in parallel on one foot.
- This is a great exercise to test the proprioception of the foot and ankle.
- The pointe shoe acts as a mini wobble board and is a lot more challenging than it looks.
- It's ok for it to wobble side to side initially.
- Trying with eyes closed will increase the challenge, but be sure the dancer has something to hold onto.
- Try in parallel and in turnout.
- Good to do before normal classwork.



Single Knee Bends

- Start standing in parallel.
- Transfer to one foot keeping the pelvis aligned.
- Slowly fondu on the supporting leg, making sure that the knee is pointing directly over the second toe.
- Use turnout muscles (even in parallel) to keep the thigh bone aligned.
- Perform at least 3 knee bends in parallel on each side.
- Repeat in turnout with the lifted foot fully pointed.
- Can be done with or without the barre for an additional challenge.



Seated Rises

- Start sitting on a chair with the legs in parallel.
- Push one foot up through the high 3/4 rise.
- Focus on pointing through the front of the arch while keeping the toes flexed.
- Then focus on using the same muscles as you use for Doming to rise fully onto pointe.
- Check the alignment of the ankle, with no sickling in or out.
- Slowly lower through the demi-pointe, making sure to keep the ankle pointed.
- Repeat several times both sides.
- May be done facing the mirror so that the dancer can keep a close eye on their own alignment.
- Repeat in turnout, sitting over the corner of the chair.



Prances at the Barre

- Begin facing the barre in parallel.
- Work one foot through the demi-pointe, up to full pointe.
- Start to bring that foot back down and meet it with the other foot in the high 3/4 rise position.
- Continue to lower the heel of the first foot as the second foot pushes up to full pointe.
- Repeat at least 8 times.
- Repeat the exercise, meeting on full pointe.
- This is great way to warm the feet and shoes up before class.



Single Leg Roll Through

- Begin facing the barre in 1st position.
- Lift one foot up through the high 3/4 rise to place fully en pointe.
- Roll back down through the foot, replacing the foot in a good 1st position.
- Repeat side to side, maintaining turnout on the working leg as well as the standing leg.
- Take care to keep the pelvis facing directly forward throughout this exercise.



Tendu in Pointe Shoes

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Make sure that the front foot and the back foot are correctly aligned.
- Extend the front foot forward into a tendu devant, working through the demi-pointe.
- Make sure to maintain a crossed position, and use the strength in the forefoot to shape the front of the pointe shoe.
- Keep a careful focus on the placement of the supporting leg, making sure that alignment of the entire leg and foot is maintained.
- Close the working foot, maintaining turnout throughout the movement.
- Repeat à la seconde, carefully working through the demi-pointe in the pointe shoe.
- Repeat derrière, keeping lifted through the front of the pelvis and maintaining alignment of the supporting leg.



Stage One

Introduction to Stage One

The beauty and strength of the **My Beginner Pointe** program lies in the repetition within the exercises and the moderate tempo to ensure the brain and body have sufficient time to achieve what is required. These two key elements are strategic to set up the correct muscle patterning right from the very first rise en pointe. The whole program is gradual but thorough and will alleviate the process of needing to correct bad habits at a later time, by setting up and developing good habits from the outset.

Stage One includes six exercises at the barre and all but one of these exercises (Relevé 1 to 1) are on two legs. Three of the six barre exercises conclude with choreographed stretches, as muscle fatigue or muscle cramping may occur in the early stages if working correctly and diligently. Stage One will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and ideally should be done at least twice a week.

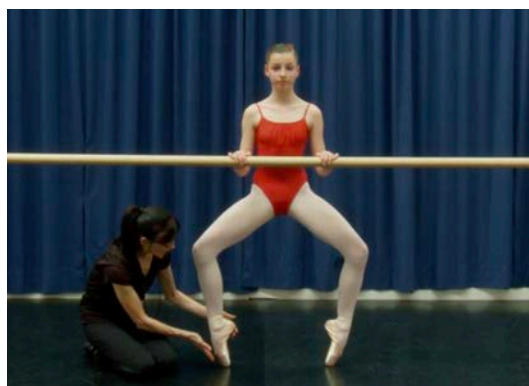
Mini Rises

- Begin facing the barre in 1st position.
- The first rise is slightly off the floor at 1cm only, keeping the calves, knees and inside thighs together.
- The second rise is to 5cm height, keeping the knees and inside thighs together.
- The third rise is to 3/4 pointe keeping the inside thighs together.
- Finally rise to full pointe, working through the 3 positions.
- Lower slowly through the 3 positions.
- Repeat.
- Add the choreographed stretch, then repeat the exercise.
- Focus on developing endurance and turnout control, VMO and intrinsic foot strength.



Rolling Through the Feet

- Begin facing the barre in 1st position.
- Plié in 1st position, roll up to full pointe through 3/4 pointe whilst in plié and articulating the whole foot to pointe.
- Straighten the knees, balance with arms in 1st position. Plié en pointe, then slowly lower through the feet back to a plié in 1st position.
- Stretch the knees, then slow rise to pointe and lower down to 1st position. Repeat.
- Add the choreographed stretch, then repeat the exercise.
- Be sure to control the ankles on the way up to pointe. In order to maintain control, the exercise may be done articulating one foot off pointe at a time.
- Ensure the arch is fully extended in the plié en pointe before working through to pointing the toes.



Échappés à la Seconde

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position, then échappé relevé to à la seconde. Slowly lower to straight legs, plié à la seconde to relevé à la seconde and repeat the relevé and roll down twice. Relevé à la seconde, close 5th position with a change of feet, relevé 5th position, lower to plié. Repeat 3 times.
- Execute exercise 4 times in all with no choreographed stretch.
- Cross the 5th position en pointe. The audience should only see the front leg and the heel of the back leg. Keep the legs glued together so that there are no gaps.



Shaping the Foot

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Wrap the front foot into sur le cou-de-pied¹, lead with the heel to unfold the leg to tendu devant, close 5th position. Perform 2 tendu devant, repeat à la seconde closing derrière first. Repeat derrière. Perform 2 double tendu à la seconde closing devant then derrière and repeat on the other side immediately.
- This exercise is devised purely to promote a heel forward position devant and for recognising when the heel is down in tendu derrière.



Rise to 5th

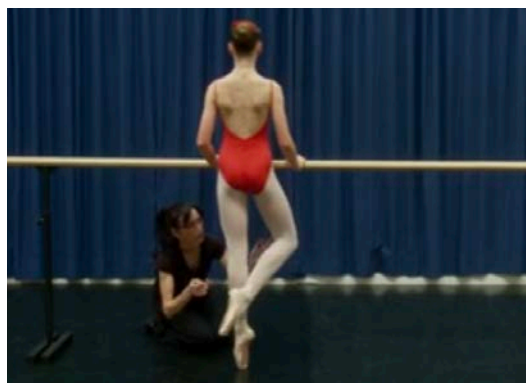
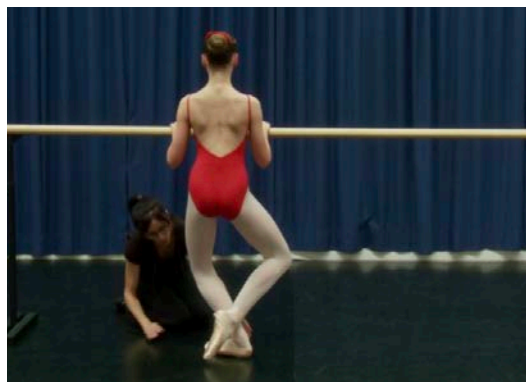
- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position, straighten the knees.
- Slowly rise to 5th en pointe drawing the front foot up to 5th position through 3/4 pointe.
- Balance in 5th position with arms in 1st position.
- Lower slowly by adjusting the front foot to 5th position with straight legs.
- Repeat twice, then temps lie à la seconde closing 5th position devant to repeat on the other side immediately.
- To promote tension between the knees for greater stability for balancing in 5th position, be sure not to bend the front knee when alighting from pointe down to 5th position.



¹ Sur le cou-de-pied devant denotes the position with the heel at the front of the ankle bone and the toes wrapped around toward the back of the ankle.

Relevé 1 to 1

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Développé en fondu à la seconde to piqué decoté to sur le cou-de-pied derrière².
- Roll down through the foot to a straight leg then fondu.
- Relevé in sur le cou-de-pied derrière, repeat the roll down, repeat relevé and roll down once more, then close to 5th position plié.
- Echappé relevé à la seconde and close with change of feet to repeat on the other side.
- Add the choreographed stretch then repeat.
- This is the only exercise in Stage One that is on 1 leg. Relevé 1 to 1 may be broken down initially by doing the exercise on flat or without the relevé, then perhaps relevé to demi-pointe before finally achieving the exercise as it is demonstrated in the video.



Choreographed Stretches

- **Mini Rises** - Calf Stretch, Ankle circles outward and inward, Articulating foot to pointe
- **Rolling Through the Feet** - Quadriceps stretch with ankle circles, Gluteal stretches, Port de bras sideways
- **Relevé 1 to 1** - Quadriceps stretch with ankle circles, Gluteal stretches



² Sur le cou-de-pied derrière denotes pointing to a position with the heel touching just under the back of the calf and toes pointing away.

Stage Two

Introduction to Stage Two

Stage Two is a progression of Stage One with the same six exercises at the barre with two additional exercises on one leg, proceeding onto three exercises in the centre. As there is already natural progressions to perfect at the barre, it is not necessary to do the centre exercises until the dancer is deemed ready. Once again the exercises at the barre on one leg are Relevé 1 to1, Relevé Devant and Relevé Derrière, and may be broken down in order to build the required strength.

There is a choreographed stretch placed midway through the barre as the dancer may still experience muscle fatigue or muscle cramping in the early stages if working correctly and diligently. Stage Two would normally take approximately 25 minutes to complete, and ideally should be done at least twice a week.

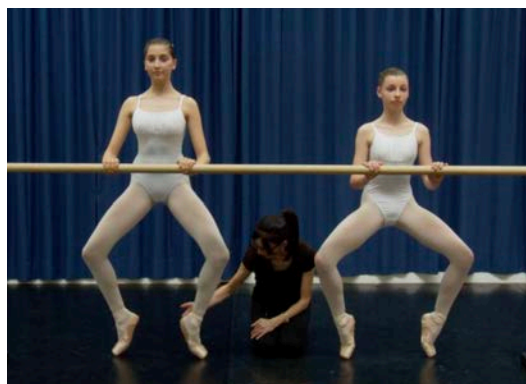
Mini Rises

- Begin facing the barre in 1st position.
- First rise is slightly off the floor at 1cm only, second rise to 5cm height, third rise to 3/4 pointe, then full rise to pointe, working through the 3 positions.
- Lower slowly through the 3 positions achieved on the way to pointe.
- The progression of this exercise involves an extra repetition, 4 times in all, with no choreographed stretch.



Rolling Through the Feet

- Begin facing the barre in 1st position.
- Plié in 1st position, roll up to full pointe, straighten the knees, balance with arms in 1st position.
- Plié en pointe, lower through the feet back to 1st position plié, stretch knees.
- Rise to pointe and lower down to 1st position.
- The progression of this exercise involves an extra repetition, 4 times in all, with no choreographed stretch.



Échappés à la Seconde

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position, then échappé relevé to à la seconde.
- Slowly lower through the feet to à la seconde on straight legs.
- Plié, relevé à la seconde and repeat the roll down. Repeat the relevé and roll down again, then relevé à la seconde, closing 5th position plié with a change of feet.
- Relevé 5th position, lower to plié.
- Repeat but demi detourné instead of relevé 5th to repeat on the other side.
- The progression of this exercise involves a demi detourné to repeat on the other side immediately, with no choreographed stretch.



Shaping the Foot

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Place sur le cou-de-pied, extend to tendu devant, close 5th position. Perform 2 tendu devant. Repeat à la seconde closing derrière first. Repeat derrière. Perform 2 double tendu à la seconde then reverse.
- Rise to 5th position and balance with the arms in 1st position.
- Choreographed stretch: Calf Stretch, Ankle circles outward and inward, articulating foot to pointe, Quadriceps stretch with ankle circles and Gluteal stretches
- Repeat on the other side.
- The progression of this exercise introduces a port de bras with corresponding head movements and a 16 count balance in 5th position with the arms in 1st position.



Rise to 5th

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position, straighten the knees. Rise to 5th en pointe, balance in 5th position with arms in 1st position. Lower to 5th position.
- Repeat twice. Rise and demi detourné to repeat on the other side immediately.
- Maintain tension between the knees for greater stability and security for balancing in 5th position.
- The progression of this exercise involves using 1 hand at the barre, additional port de bras with corresponding heads and a demi detourné to repeat on the other side immediately, with no choreographed stretch.



Relevé 1 to 1

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Développé en fondu à la seconde to piqué to retiré derrière. Roll down to a straight leg, then fondu. Relevé in retiré derrière and repeat the roll down. Repeat the relevé and roll down closing in 5th position plié.
- Échappé relevé à la seconde, closing with a change of feet to repeat other side.
- The process is the same as alighting from Mini Rises and Echappés à la Seconde.
- The relevé should be instigated from the base of the heel and the height of the retiré passé position should not alter at all throughout.
- The progression of this exercise involves an extra repetition, 4 times in all, retiré derrière position and the arm in 5th position with corresponding head movements.



New Exercise - Relevé Devant

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position. Relevé devant to hold, then close 5th position devant en pointe.
- Lower through the feet to 5th position with straight legs. Repeat 2 times.
- Échappé relevé à la seconde, lower heels to plié à la seconde, relevé à la seconde, closing with a change of feet.
- Relevé 5th position, lower to straight legs, and repeat on the other side immediately.
- The working leg should be positioned no lower than just under the knee cap.
- Remember to squeeze between the knees in 5th position en pointe.
- Articulate the feet through to the à la seconde plié.



New Exercise - Relevé Derrière

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position.
- Relevé derrière to hold, closing 5th position derrière en pointe.
- Lower through the feet to 5th position with straight legs. Repeat 2 times.
- Échappé relevé à la seconde, lower heels to plié à la seconde, relevé à la seconde, closing with a change of feet.
- Relevé 5th position, lower to straight legs, and repeat on the other side immediately.
- The working leg should be positioned no lower than the back of the knee.
- Remember to squeeze between the knees in 5th position en pointe.
- Articulate the feet through to the à la seconde plié.



Centre Practice

It should be remembered that the centre exercises in Stage Two need only be introduced when the dancer demonstrates readiness. For instance, the Temps Lié exercise may be practiced initially with the support of one hand at the barre, as the most difficult part of this exercise is achieving the strength, stability and control for the demi detourné. It is possible to have simultaneous streams of dancers doing the same exercise using the barre and/or unsupported in the centre.

Vicki has been conducting open pointe classes for many, many years attended by a wide range of abilities and ages. With a little planning and forethought, you too will be able to combine larger groups of dancers of varying levels, which will not only save you studio time, but will also be cost effective. Vicki supplies each dancer with their own personalised program which is constantly edited to record their progress. This is done on an individual basis and not as a whole class elevation for many reasons, some of which have been mentioned above, but also as she believes only in rewarding personal merit when it is due.

New Exercise - Temps Lié

- Begin 5th position en croisé.
- Plié 5th position, dégagé devant en fondu with arms in 1st position.
- Temps lié en avant to 5th position en pointe, open arms to à la seconde, lower to straight legs arms in bras bas.
- Repeat 2 times leaving the arms in à la seconde.
- Plié 5th position, demi detourné to other side to repeat all.
- This introduces a simple and repetitive en avant transfer of weight with an emphasis on squeezing between the knees in 5th position en pointe, activating the turn out muscles at the top of the leg.



New Exercise - Enchaînement de Relevé

Part One

- Begin 5th position en face.
- 2 echappé relevé à la seconde en face with change of feet.
- Retiré relevé devant, closing devant, then relevé passe derrière.
- Repeat.
- Perform 2 echappé relevé à la seconde en face with a change of feet. Échappé relevé à la seconde to hold à la seconde en pointe, closing with a change of feet.
- Repeat second section. Repeat all.



Part Two

- Begin 5th position en croisé.
- Echappe relevé 4th position, plié lowering heels in 4th position.
- Relevé onto front leg to retiré derrière, lower to fondu.
- Pas de bouree piqué dessous to 5th position devant en croisé en pointe.
- Plié 5th position, repeat on the other side.
- Coupé dessus, 2 coupé fouetté raccourci dessous, piqué retiré devant, closing 5th position derrière en plié.
- Relevé 5th.
- Repeat second section on the other side, then repeat all.



Stage Three

Introduction to Stage Three

Stage Three is a progression of Stage Two with the same six barre exercises. The Relevé Passé exercise replaces Relevé Devant and Derrière, and there is an additional exercise – Soubresauts Sur Pointe – to develop strength for hopping en pointe. As explained on the DVD and videos, there are three stages of progression to successfully achieve this particular exercise. For example, at first the soubresauts may be done without jumping, building up to jumping only the soubresauts and just placing the sur le cou-de-pied positions, then finally doing the whole exercise as it is demonstrated on the DVD and videos. The centre exercises vary slightly from Stage Two with the addition of the Temps Lié exercise in reverse, and the combination of the two parts of the Enchaînement de Relevé exercise for further stamina and strength. Finally we have included three new exercises en diagonale.

Mini Rises

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 1st position.
- First rise is slightly off the floor at 1cm only, second rise to 5cm height, third rise to 3/4 pointe, then full rise to pointe working through the 3 positions.
- Lower slowly through the 3 positions achieved on the way to pointe.
- On the third rise lift slightly higher than 3/4 pointe to further strengthen the muscles under the balls of the feet.
- The progression of this exercise involves the use of 1 hand at the barre.



Rolling Through the Feet

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 1st position.
- Plié in 1st position, roll up to full pointe whilst in plié articulating the whole foot.
- Straighten the knees, balance with arms in 4th position.
- Plié en pointe, lower through the feet back to 1st position plié, stretch knees.
- Rise to pointe and lower down to 1st position.
- The progression of this exercise involves the use of 1 hand at the barre as well as incorporating a balance in 1st position with the arms in 4th position.



Échappés à la Seconde

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position, then échappé relevé to à la seconde.
- Slowly lower through the feet to à la seconde on straight legs.
- Plié, relevé à la seconde and repeat the roll down. Repeat the relevé and roll down again once more, relevé à la seconde, closing 5th position plié with a change of feet.
- Relevé 5th position, lower to plié.
- Repeat but demi detourné instead of relevé 5th to repeat on the other side.
- The progression of this exercise involves an additional port de bras to 5th position of arms on the relevé 5th.



Shaping the Foot

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Place sur le cou-de-pied, extend to tendu devant, close 5th position. Perform 2 tendu devant.
- Repeat à la seconde closing derrière first. Repeat derrière. Perform 2 double tendu à la seconde then reverse.
- Rise to 5th position en pointe to balance with arms in 5th position.
- The progression of this exercise involves a port de bras to 5th position on the balance in 5th position and repeating on the other side immediately.



Rise to 5th

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Plié in 5th position, straighten the knees.
- Rise to 5th position en pointe, balance in 5th position with arms in 5th position.
- Lower to 5th position on straight legs with arms opening to à la seconde.
- Repeat twice.
- Rise to pointe and demi detourné to repeat on the other side immediately.
- Maintain tension between the knees for greater stability and security for balancing in 5th position.
- The progression of this exercise involves a balance in 5th position with the arms in 5th position.



Relevé 1 to 1

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Developpé devant to piqué retiré derrière, roll down to straight leg then fondu.
- Relevé in retiré derrière and repeat the roll down. Repeat the relevé and roll down once more. Relevé then turn to the other side, developpé devant en fondu to repeat on the other side.
- Repeat again on the original side closing to 5th position plié.
- Perform 2 echappé relevé à la seconde with a change of feet and demi detourné to repeat all.
- The progression of this exercise involves the use of 1 hand at the barre performed in double time turning from 1 side of the barre to the other, with the arm in arabesque line and corresponding head movements.



New Exercise - Relevé Passé

- Begin 1 hand at the barre in 5th position.
- Plie 5th position, relevé devant, passé to retire derrière, close 5th position derrière en pointe. Lower to straight legs. Repeat from derrière to devant. Repeat devant to derrière.
- Echappé relevé à la seconde, lower heels to plie à la seconde. Relevé à la seconde closing with a change of feet, demi detourné to other side and repeat other side immediately.
- Repeat all.
- Aim for a relevé devant above the knee cap.
- Aim to take the knee back to adjust to the retiré derrière position, as opposed to just moving the working foot from the front to the back of the supporting leg.



New Exercise - Soubresauts Sur Pointes

- Begin facing the barre in 5th position.
- Relevé 5th position in preparation.
- Perform 3 soubresauts sur pointe, hop onto front leg placing sur le cou-de-pied derrière en fondu.
- Repeat the soubresauts to conditional sur le cou-de-pied en fondu³.
- Repeat the soubresauts to sur le cou-de-pied derrière, pas de bouree piqué dessous to 5th position en pointe.
- Execute exercise 4 times in all.
- This exercise may be taught initially without any jumps at all, then progressing on to jumping the soubresauts and placing the sur le cou-de-pied positions without a hop, finally reaching the originally intended exercise.
- Be meticulous about the positioning of the foot in both the sur le cou-de-pied derrière en fondu and the conditional sur le cou-de-pied en fondu.
- Sustain the retiré passé devant positions on the pas de bouree piqué dessous.



³ Conditional sur le cou-de pied denotes the position in which the toe is pointed in front of the leg and the toes touch the ankle bone.

Centre Practice - Stage Three

Stage Three centre exercises are a natural progression from Stage Two, with the addition of the Temps Lié exercise in reverse and the combination of the two parts of the Enchaînement de Relevé exercise for increased stamina and control. The three exercises en diagonale are moderate in tempo therefore should be achievable for a dancer that has already progressed to this level.

The Enchaînement de Relevé exercise made be taught initially in ballet flats/demi-pointe shoes with the support of the barre. It may take dancers some time to achieve the strength required for the retiré relevé devant, the relevé passé derrière and rolling down through the foot after the relevé onto the front foot from 4th position. After this is effectively achieved the exercise can progress into the centre unsupported by the barre. When first trying in pointe shoes the dancer may return to using the support of the barre initially.



Temps Lié

- The progression of this exercise involves the extension from a conditional sur le cou-de-pied to an extension devant at 45 degrees en fondu for increased balance and control, and the introduction of varying port de bras and corresponding head movements on each temps lié en avant.
- Begin 5th position en croisé.
- Place conditional sur le cou-de-pied, extend devant en fondu at 45 degrees with arms in 1st position.
- Temps lié en avant to 5th position with arms in 2nd arabesque. Open arms to à la seconde, lower to straight legs arms in bras bas.
- Repeat with arms to 4th position, repeat with arms to 5th position.
- Plié 5th position arms à la seconde, demi detourné to other side to repeat all.



New Exercise - Temps Lié in reverse

- Begin 5th position en croisé.
- Place conditional sur le cou-de-pied, extend derrière en fondu at 45 degrees with the arms in 1st position.
- Temps lié en arrière to 5th position, arms in 2nd arabesque. Open arms to à la seconde, lower to straight legs arms in bras bas.
- Repeat with arms to 4th position. Repeat with arms to 5th position.
- Plié 5th position arms à la seconde, demi detourné to the other side to repeat all.
- It should be encouraged to step the length of the leg en arrière to utilise a full body transfer of weight.



Enchaînement de Relevé

- Begin 5th position en face.
- Perform 2 echappé à la seconde en face with change of feet.
- Retiré relevé devant closing devant then relevé passé derrière.
- Repeat.
- Perform 2 echappé relevé à la seconde en face, closing with a change of feet.
- Echappé relevé à la seconde to hold à la seconde en pointe, closing with a change of feet.
- Repeat second section.
- Echappe relevé 4th position, plié lowering heels in 4th position.
- Relevé onto front leg to retiré derrière, lower to fondu.
- Pas de bouree piqué dessous to 5th position devant en croisé en pointe.
- Plié 5th position, repeat on the other side.
- Coupé dessus, perform 2 coupé fouetté raccourci dessous, piqué retiré devant, closing 5th position derrière en plié.
- Relevé 5th.
- Repeat from 2 coupé fouetté raccourci dessous on the other side.
- Progression of this exercise involves the combination of Parts 1 and 2 from Stage Two to form one exercise for increased stamina and control.



New Exercise - Soutenu en Dedans en Tournant En Diagonale

- Begin in corner 8 in 5th position en croisé, dégagé devant to prepare.
- Perform 7 soutenu en dedans en tournant to finish with a passé derrière to 4th position lunge en croisé en fondu with arms in 5th position.
- Also to be taken on the other side.
- It should be stressed to place a crossed 5th position en pointe immediately followed by rolling down through the foot to fondu on the supporting leg.
- It is preferable to control the initial transfer of weight for each soutenu.
- Aim to maintain turnout on the supporting leg whilst allowing the working leg to pass through the devant position and opening to à la seconde with each soutenu.
- Diagonale turns should appear very smooth, without any jumping onto pointe and definitely no falling down from pointe.
- These short diagonal exercises performed at a very manageable tempo have been introduced to incorporate all that has been achieved in the program up to this point.



New Exercise - Posé Piqué en Dedans en Tournant En Diagonale

- Begin in corner 8 in 5th position en croisé, dégagé devant to prepare.
- Perform 7 posé pirouette en dedans en tournant to finish with a chassé passé en avant to dégagé derrière en croisé with arms in 4th crossed position.
- Also to be taken on the other side.
- Try to maintain turnout on the supporting leg whilst allowing the working leg to pass through the devant position and opening to à la seconde with each posé.
- A very high retiré passé derrière position should be strongly encouraged, ensuring that the toe of the working leg is placed behind the knee of the supporting leg, without overcrossing.
- Be mindful that the dancer brings the working leg down from the retiré passé derrière position close to the supporting leg to create a very tidy diagonal.



New Exercise - Piqué en Dehors en Tournant En Diagonale

- Begin in corner 8 in 5th position en croisé, dégagé devant to prepare.
- Perform 7 piqué en dehors en tournant closing 5th derrière en plié to finish with relevé 5th position en pointe with arms in 2nd arabesque line.
- Also to be taken on the other side.
- A very high retiré passé devant position should be strongly encouraged.
- The supporting leg should be placed directly in front of the dancer for easy transition of weight.
- The arms should be placed in 1st position directly in front of the body, being careful not to leave them behind in the corner from which they came.
- Aim for a small balance in the retiré passé devant position.
- Ensure the dancer does not collapse off pointe from the supporting leg after the retiré passé devant position is made.



Integrating the Program into Class

Vicki Attard conducts open pointe classes three times a week, and stresses how imperative it is that these classes run to a strict time frame. In order for this to work successfully, with approximately 15 dancers varying in age from 12-70 and obvious ranges of ability, she provides everyone with their own personalised pointe programs. Specifically, all the dancers are doing the same exercise, at varying stages, and she elevates them when appropriate and updates their personalised pointe program.

In the table below, she has presented a rough guide of four varying levels of dancers that can be grouped into one pointe class, which demonstrates how such a class can run smoothly. The beginner to the pointe class will wear demi-pointe shoes and can be 10-12 years old or an adult beginner. Stage One can be approximately 12-13 years old, Stage Two approximately 13-14 years old and Stage Three approximately 14+ years old. Adult dancers will obviously be placed according to ability and experience. As the three stages of the ***My Beginner Pointe*** program cohesively graduate on to the ***My Pointe*** program, it is possible to have beginner, pre-professional and professional dancers included in the same class.

Vicki has often given basic exercises like the Mini Rises and Rolling through the Feet to professional dancers, who still find them challenging to say the least. Simple exercises done with clear cut diligence and focus can be demanding on a very broad spectrum of dancers.

It is hugely advantageous to have the younger dancers alongside the older dancers. This allows them to experience the way in which they should approach the exercises and class work, and also to be able to pre-learn the exercises they will do in the future, which means less teaching time. Doing the exercises in flats, then demi-pointe shoes not only strengthens their feet (if working in them correctly), but teaches them how to engage the required muscles and sets up good habits.

My Beginner Pointe Teachers Guide

	Beginner - Demi Pointe	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Track 1 - Mini Rises	Mini Rises - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Mini Rises - Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Mini Rises - Complete Set	Mini Rises - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set
Track 2 - Mini Rises	Mini Rises - Facing the Barre - stretch	Mini Rises - Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Mini Rises - Complete Set	Mini Rises - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set
Track 3 - Rolling through Feet	Rolling through Feet - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Rolling through Feet - Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Rolling through Feet - Complete Set	Rolling through Feet - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set
Track 4 - Rolling through Feet	Rolling through Feet - Facing the Barre - stretch	Rolling through Feet - Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Rolling through Feet - Complete Set	Rolling through Feet - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set
Track 5 - Échappés à la Seconde	Échappés à la Seconde - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Échappés à la Seconde Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Échappés à la Seconde - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set	Échappés à la Seconde - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set, Both Sides
Track 6 - Shaping the Foot	Shaping the Foot - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Shaping the Foot - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Shaping the Foot - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set	Shaping the Foot - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set, Both Sides
Track 7 - Rise to 5th	Rise to 5th - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Rise to 5th - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Rise to 5th - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set	Rise to 5th - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set, Both Sides
Track 8 - Relevé 1 to 1	Relevé 1 to 1 - Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Relevé 1 to 1 - Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Relevé 1 to 1 - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Relevé 1 to 1 - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set, Both Sides
Track 9 - Relevé 1 to 1	Relevé 1 to 1 Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Relevé 1 to 1 - Facing the Barre - 1/2 Set then stretch	Relevé 1 to 1 - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Relevé 1 to 1 - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set, Both Sides
Track 17 - Relevé Devant	Relevé Devant - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Relevé Devant - Facing the Barre - Complete Set without relevé	Relevé Devant - Facing the Barre - Complete Set as appropriate	Relevé Devant - 1 Hand at the Barre - Substitute relevé 5th with échappé à la seconde in 4 counts, échappé à la seconde in 2 counts, demi detourné, Both Sides

My Beginner Pointe Teachers Guide

	Beginner - Demi Pointe	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Track 18 - Relevé Derrière	Relevé Derrière- Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Relevé Derrière - Facing the Barre - Complete Set without relevé	Relevé Derrière - Facing the Barre - Complete Set as appropriate	Relevé Derrière -- 1 Hand at the Barre - Substitute relevé 5th with échappé à la seconde in 4 counts, échappé à la seconde in 2 counts, demi detourné, Both Sides
Track 29 - Relevé Passé	Relevé Passe - Facing the Barre - Complete Set	Relevé Passe - Facing the Barre - Complete Set without relevé	Relevé Passe - Stretch	Relevé Passe - 1 Hand at the Barre - Complete Set - Both Sides
Track 30 - Soubresauts Sur Pointes	Soubresauts Sur Pointes - Facing the Barre without jumps	Soubresauts Sur Pointes - Facing the Barre - Change into demi-pointes	Soubresauts Sur Pointes - Without jumps	Soubresauts Sur Pointes - Facing the Barre - Complete Set
		CENTRE		
Track 31 - Temps Lié	Temps Lié - Complete Set	Temps Lié - Complete Set	Temps Lié - Complete Set	Temps Lié - Complete Set
Track 32 - Temps Lié in Reverse	Temps Lié in Reverse - Complete Set	Temps Lié in Reverse - Complete Set	Temps Lié in Reverse - 1 Hand at the Barre	Temps Lié in Reverse - Complete Set
Track 33 - Enchaînement de Relevés	Enchaînement de Relevés - Part A or Part B - As appropriate	Enchaînement de Relevés - Part A or Part B - As appropriate	Enchaînement de Relevés - Part A or Part B - As appropriate	Enchaînement de Relevés - Complete Set Parts A and B
Track 34 - Soutenu en Dedans en Tournant	Soutenu en Dedans en Tournant - As appropriate	Soutenu en Dedans en Tournant - As appropriate	Soutenu en Dedans en Tournant	Soutenu en Dedans en Tournant
Track 35 - Posé Piqué en Dedans en Tournant	Posé Piqué en Dedans en Tournant - As appropriate	Posé Piqué en Dedans en Tournant - As appropriate	Posé Piqué en Dedans en Tournant	Posé Piqué en Dedans en Tournant
Track 36 - Piqué en Dehors en Tournant	Piqué en Dehors en Tournant - As appropriate	Piqué en Dehors en Tournant - As appropriate	Piqué en Dehors en Tournant	Piqué en Dehors en Tournant

The Next Step

My Pointe Program

The natural progression after Stage Three of the *My Beginner Pointe* program is the *My Pointe* program. *My Pointe* DVD/CD is a unique program specifically designed for an advanced dancer to increase sensitivity, develop control and heighten awareness. The challenging 75 minute program meets the needs of dancers and teachers requiring supplementary pointe work.

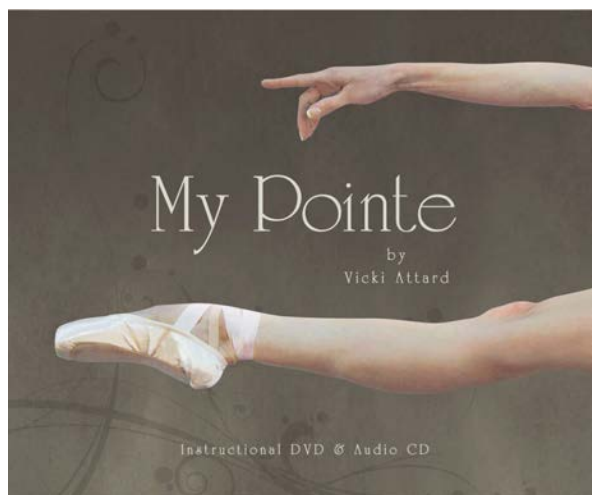
The *My Pointe* program includes detailed introductions, slow motion demonstrations and meticulous explanations by Vicki. The centre exercises progress to pirouettes, hops en pointe and further and more challenging turns en diagonale. *My Pointe* includes an Audio CD to encourage practice at the correct tempo.

This remarkable and distinctive program has the ability to adjust to the dancer's existing capabilities and develop with their progression. This is an absolute must have for all dancers en pointe!!

Please visit

<https://www.vickiattard.com/shop/my-pointe>

for more information.



Common Questions About Starting En Pointe

Once the decision has been made for a dancer to start en pointe, parents and caregivers, as well as the dancers themselves, often have a lot of questions about pointe work. Many have never really considered all of the implications of packing a young foot into a narrow pointe shoe, let alone the challenges of dancing in one, as the older dancers make it look so easy. It is important to allow some time to discuss these issues with everyone involved so that they are all comfortable with the process.

We have gathered a collection of handy videos that answer the most common questions we receive about pointe work on the www.mybeginnerpointe.com. If you have a new question, do let us know. We will continue to add on new videos as we create them, so be sure to check back frequently for updates.



DOES POINTE WORK
CAUSE BUNIONS?



WHAT ABOUT EXAM
WORK?



DEMI-POINTE SHOES



YOUNG STUDENTS EN
POINTE



HOW TO IMPLEMENT
THE PROGRAM



SHOULD POINTE WORK
HURT?



I HAVE NO TIME!



WHEN TO USE THE
PROGRAM



ESTABLISHING MOTOR
PATTERNS

Conclusion

Going en pointe is such a significant and memorable time in a dancer's life. It is the beginning of a series of trials and errors, experimentation and hopefully moments of pure joy. Our aim is to equip you with all of our present knowledge in order to make this very special transition for your dancers as pain free as possible. Good things really do come to those who wait, so encourage your dancers to take time to prepare themselves thoroughly.

We hope you have enjoyed our ***My Beginner Pointe*** program as much as we have enjoyed producing it. We are passionate about the continual advancement of pointe work at all levels and wish you every success.

Please visit our ***My Beginner Pointe*** website as it is constantly updated with new and interesting dance related articles and videos.

Warmest regards,

Lisa Howell and Vicki Attard

