

Criteria for Pointe Work

- 1. The student must be at least 11 years old.**
 - The bones of the feet do not fully develop and harden until approximately 13-15 years old. A dancer must be strong enough to protect the bones before they are fully developed. Beginning pointe too early can permanently damage immature bones.
- 2. The student must have at least 3 years of consistent training in ballet.**
- 3. The student should be taking a minimum of 2 ballet classes a week consistently in addition to the prepointe/pointe class.**
- 4. Be able to hold correct turnout while dancing from foot flat to demi-pointe.**
 - Correct turnout is achieved from the hips and not from the feet and knees. In the turned out position, the foot is in line with the knee cap and hip joint.
 - Correct turnout should be easily maintained in demi-pointe. Weight centered forward over the big toe, heels forward to avoid sickling, and knees straight. Maintaining this correct turnout is more difficult en pointe.
- 5. Be able to maintain a strong, straight trunk while dancing without any tilt in the pelvis.**
 - A straight trunk is held by both the back muscles but more importantly by the lower abdominals.
 - A weak trunk will throw the student off balance while en pointe and will make it difficult to do ballet steps. This also puts the dancer at risk for injury.
- 6. Be able to perform a correct demi-plie position for all transitions.**
 - Demi-plie should be performed with turnout from the hips while maintaining the knee cap in line with the 2nd toe, and without allowing the heels to pop up. This should occur in pirouette preparation, jump preparation, and prior to en pointe positions.
- 7. Pointing of feet: she should be able to full pointe her foot in all steps especially at the barre and then in center without "sickling". She should try to achieve full pointe with stretching because it is required to get en pointe.**
 - Using the floor to point is also very important to build muscles in her feet and ankles: For example - need to slide the foot in and out on the floor
- 8. Pique passé with straight leg.**
 - Student should have enough strength to push themselves onto half-pointe. This step is harder to do en pointe and a bent leg is usually a sign of weakness or improper step preparation.
- 9. Be able to do 16 relevés in the center without stopping.**
 - Strength for pointe work is achieved by repeating exercises. Relevés are excellent for building up calf muscle strength, which is vital for pointe work. This exercise is more difficult to do en pointe because of the extra height, so strong relevés on half-pointe is a good sign of strength. The student must also go up as high on half-pointe as she can, since pointe work demands this ability. A student who keeps her heels very low to the ground is not preparing her calf muscles adequately, and will not have the strength for pointe work.
- 10. Be able to hold a passé balance on half-pointe.**
 - The student should be well-placed (hips square, back straight, legs turned-out), and have the strength to balance on half-pointe. This pose is more difficult to correct en pointe, as the surface area for balancing is smaller and the strength requirements are greater.
- 11. The student must be in good health and able to take a whole class.**
 - If the student frequently needs to rest because of illness or injury, she is not strong enough for the extra demands that pointe work requires.
- 12. The student must have enough of an arched instep to stand on pointe.**