

Title:

How to Choose the Right Pointe Shoe for Ballet Dancing

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1040

Summary:

Pointe shoes, in many ways, can be considered an extension of the dancer. Designed for pleasing aesthetics as well as function, these shoes typically have a short lifespan, but enable the dancer to move with incredible grace and strength.

The most critical feature of any pointe shoe is how well it fits. Proper fit safeguards the dancer's feet, ankles and legs and makes en pointe work possible. This is especially important for younger dancers, as proper bone development can be impaired by incorrectly fitting shoes. There are a number of brands and styles available, and no single type is built for every dancer. A dancer's experience, shape of the foot and strength should be considered in finding the best shoe.

Keywords:

ballet,dance,pointe shoes,ballet pointe shoes,bloch pointe shoes,capezio pointe shoes,pointe shoes picture,freed pointe shoes,dance pointe shoes,grishko pointe shoes,red pointe shoes,history of pointe shoes,cheap pointe shoes,russian pointe shoes,pointe shoes for sale,gaynor minden pointe shoes,suffolk pointe shoes,child pointe shoes,breaking in pointe shoes,sew pointe shoes ribbon,demi pointe shoes,pointe shoes fitting,pre pointe shoes,anatomy of a pointe shoes,black pointe shoes,pointe shoes tip,pointe shoes for man,pointe shoes information,pointe shoes putting,pointe shoes toe,ballet demi pointe shoes,beginner pointe shoes,pointe shoes review,how to clean pointe shoes,pointe shoes accessory,sewing pointe shoes ribbon,sew pointe shoes,tie pointe shoes,how to sew pointe shoes,pictures of pointe shoes,sewing pointe shoes,ribbons on pointe shoes,how to tie pointe shoes

Article Body:

Bloch Pointe Shoes

The Bloch pointe shoe is available in different styles including Sylphide, Sonata, Suprima, Serenade, Aspiration, Concerta, Triomphe, and Alpha $\frac{3}{4}$ Sole. Beginner dancers will be suited to the Sylphide, Sonata, or Suprima. The Sylphide has broader widths than other Bloch pointe shoes and helps beginners

with untrained feet roll up onto pointe more easily.

The Suprima will feel comfortable to beginners and advanced students as it provides good flexibility while maintaining good arch support. Note that some Bloch pointe shoes have the narrower box shape and snug heel which is not suited to a "fleshy" foot. Shoes such as the Aspiration and Alpha pointe shoe are designed with the advanced student in mind. These shoes offer better arch flexibility but should not be worn if you do not have strong feet and ankles.

Capezio Pointe Shoes

Capezio Pointe Shoes includes several styles, each intended for specific needs. The original Glissé features a hard shank, broad toe-box and a U-shaped vamp to allow dancers to roll up to pointe comfortably. The Glissé ES offers the same, but with a harder shank. The Glissé Pro and Pro ES are intended for more experienced dancers and feature a lower side and back height, with a medium and hard shank respectively. The shankless Demi Soft is based on the Glissé design, and intended for pre-pointe students.

The Plié style is best suited for dancers needing a vamp that extends beyond the toe. Plié I offers a medium shank, and Plié II features a harder #5 shank. The Tendu style offers a medium shank and boasts a quick break-in time. Tendu II has a broader box and wider platform. Both Aerial and Pavlowa shoes feature a Russian-styled tapered box. The Aerial is best to support high arches, while the Pavlowa offers a harder shank, longer vamp and heel height. The Contemporas is an American-style wide-platform shoe with a longer vamp and lower heel.

Freed Pointe Shoes

Freed Pointe shoes are available in the Classic, Studio and Studio Pro styles. The various lines are designed for a specific level of dancer, as well as their physical requirements. The handcrafted Classic is particularly designed for the needs of the experienced or professional dancer. It features a deep, round vamp, but those needing more support will favor the deep V-cut vamp and stronger insole of the Classic Wing Block.

The Studio line is intended for the younger dancer and offers extra support. The Studio II style features a wider platform and lower profile than the original. The Studio Pro is also designed for the younger dancer, but it includes a V-shaped vamp and $\frac{3}{4}$ shank for greater flexibility.

Grishko Pointe Shoes

The line of Grishko Pointe shoes features Eleve and Releve models. The Eleve

include the Ulanova I and II. These shoes are intended for dancers instructed to roll up on pointe. You can find out more about dancing en pointe at www.balletdancestudio.com. Ulanova I has a medium height vamp and versatile box for dancers with toes of an even or slightly varied length. Ulanova II has a deep vamp and is best suited for dancers with longer toes or narrow feet.

The Releve styles, Fouette and Vaganova, are designed to accommodate the Russian-style of springing on point. The Vaganova has a deep vamp and tapered box. This style is particularly suited for dancers with a flexible arch, longer toes or narrow feet. The Fouette has a broad box and wide platform best suited for dancers with shorter toes or wider feet.

Gaynor Minden Pointe Shoes

Gaynor Mindon Pointe shoes differ from many brands. While manufacturers commonly feature a variety of styles, Gaynor Mindon instead designs shoes over six fitting options; shank, vamp, heel, regular fit, sleek fit and size. So many variations can feel confusing, but the benefit of this brand is that dancers essentially custom fit their shoes. The entire line is designed to minimize the shock of impact and comfortably fit every type of foot. Shank options run from flexible/little support to hard/ample support. In order from flexible to hard shanks, options are Pianissimo, Featherflex, Supple, Extraflex and Hard. Vamp options include Regular, Deep and Sleek.

A deep vamp is best for dancers with pronounced arches, while the sleek vamp is best for feet wider along the ball and narrower towards the heel. High, Regular, Low and Sleek heels are available. Choosing between them is a mainly a matter of comfort. The Regular and Narrow fit shoes differ only in width, but less heel and vamp options are available with Narrow Fit shoes.

Suffolk Pointe Shoes

Suffolk Pointe shoes includes the Solo, which features a slightly tapered box and longer vamp. It is available with a range of shoe types, Standard insole, Hard insole or Light insole. All but Light feature a standard box which provides uniform support appropriate for most dancers. The Light version is a flexible choice designed to help dancers go on pointe more easily. Hard insoles are available with either a full or $\frac{3}{4}$ shank, so dancers have the choice of greater flexibility along with ample support. No matter the variation, the Solo Pointe shoe features a low profile to provide comfort throughout the metatarsal area without sacrificing support or function.

How do you choose?

There is not one shoe that overall is considered better than every other shoe. It really is a matter of individually fitting the right shoe to your foot. Be wary of other dancers recommendations because your feet will differ from theirs, and their shoes may feel very uncomfortable on you. You now know the major brands of pointe shoes and their different characteristics. You should have a good understanding of which style of shoe and which brand will fit best on your feet. I recommend finding a good retail dance store with a good shoe fitter. Get them to take you through the process of fitting different shoes and working out which shoe will best fit your feet.

Anita Leembruggen is a dance teacher and avid dancer herself. She has written many guides and articles for young and old dancers alike. Anita spends a lot of her time helping students overcome obstacles in their way to dancing success.
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