



# Pointe ...

## For MDA Students Eligible and Interested in Pre-Pointe and Pointe Classes

### What is Pointe?

Dancing en pointe means dancing on the tips of the toes. A special shoe is required. Pointe shoes are made of a wood shank and a box for the toes which allow dancers to be supported on the tips of their toes. A special, and usually intense, fitting is required to find the right fit for the dancer.

### What is Pre-Pointe Class?

Pre-Pointe is a pointe preparation class for serious ballet students interested in dancing en pointe. Pre-Pointe is a 30-minute class that meets weekly, usually before or after the student's ballet class. The class is taken barefoot. A portion of the class is spent doing foot/ankle exercises and stretches on the floor. Students also do strenuous core strengthening exercises. A portion of the time will be spent at the barre doing repetitious strength-building exercises. Pre-Pointe Class is required before being considered to dance en pointe. The student will need to take a minimum of one year of Pre-Pointe before being considered for advancement to Pointe class.

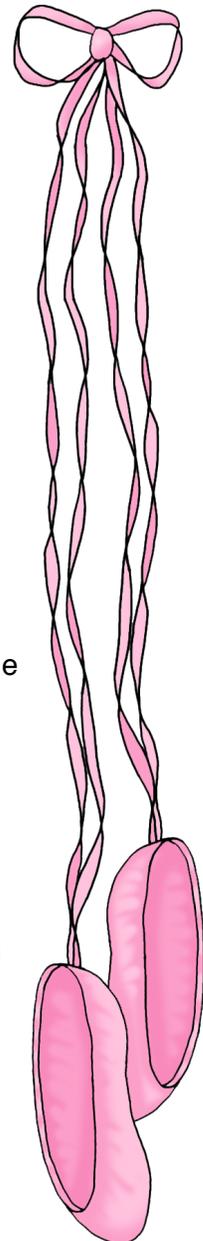
### When can I take Pre-Pointe?

Each student will selectively be given permission to join Pre-Pointe. All students who take ballet seriously are considered for Pre-Pointe. The student must concurrently take multiple ballet classes per week. The student must be nearing age 11, and sometimes later if the student is not ready. The student must have taken at least two years of ballet.

### What are the requirements for Pointe?

- The student must have taken a minimum of two years of ballet.
- The student must be at least 11 years old.
- The student must be taking multiple ballet classes concurrently to dance en pointe.
- The student must demonstrate a serious attitude towards ballet.
- The muscles in the ankle and foot must be strong enough to demonstrate certain exercises flawlessly.
- The student must have a strong core and turnout ability.

The instructor will evaluate each student individually. Some students advance right away, some students may need to repeat Pre-Pointe. Advancement depends on both attitude and physical ability. Each student's body is unique and will be assessed accordingly.



## **Is dancing en pointe dangerous?**

Dancing en pointe *before* the student is ready provides risks for the dancer. It is extremely important to take the advice of the instructor. When in doubt, wait a little longer. Pre-Pointe is good for the dancer, whether dancing en pointe or on flat. If the student *is* ready, risks are not great. There are risks when dancing en pointe as there are risks in many sports and physical activities. However, if the instructor and student are well-paced and in tune with weight placement over the shoe and body alignment there should be no great effect. If the dancer looks wobbly or feels abnormal strain in the foot or ankle, she will need to be evaluated and might be asked to dance en demi-pointe (not fully on the tips of the toes) until ready to go fully en pointe. Each foot is different and each dancer may be prone to various soreness and/or minor injuries if at all. Again, each student will be assessed and addressed individually.

## **What happens after Pre-Pointe?**

Each student will take at least one year of Pre-Pointe. If the student is not completely ready for pointe, the instructor will have the student stay in Pre-Pointe until the student is ready. If the student advances to pointe, the instructor will advise the student regarding where and when to purchase pointe shoes. The student will continue to work on basic pre-pointe exercises while wearing pointe shoes. The instructor will gradually increase the exercises at the barre to lead the student into full pointe exercises.

## **Can transfer students dance en pointe immediately?**

Students who were trained to dance en pointe at another dance studio and transfer into Mongan Dance Academy will be evaluated by MDA instructors in both ballet and pointe classes prior to acceptance into our Pointe class. The student must meet all requirements to dance en pointe, including foot, ankle, and core strength, as well as technique. Transfer students who do not meet MDA's criteria for pointe readiness may be required to take one year of Pre-Pointe and additional ballet classes, or even postpone Pre-Pointe and Pointe for a year or more. If transfer students are approved to dance en pointe, they will be required to take multiple ballet classes each week.