

# *Dancing En Pointe with Grace Christian Dance Company*

This is a guide to the steps and a rough timeline for how we safely and effectively prepare dancers to dance en pointe. We are committed to progressing dancers through each level only if their body is strong enough to avoid injury, they are dedicated to quality at-home practice, and they attend year-round classes faithfully. We do not rush this process.

For the safety of the dancer, those pursuing pointe must have a healthy BMI and a strong physical body type with no repeated sprains, strains, fractures, or other injuries.

Please read each level's description carefully and discuss any questions or concerns with Mrs. Black and Mrs. Fehr. If your dancer is not ready to make the commitment to the full process, we still strongly recommend all dancers attend Foot Strengthening Class as an addition to their regular classes. This will strengthen and improve their feet and legs, which is crucial to all dancing.



## **1. Foot Strengthening**

This class will strengthen the dancer's feet and legs for beautiful pointing and relevé. This is a great add-on class for all dancers.

### **Prerequisites for Foot Strengthening Class:**

- At least 9 years of age
- Has been enrolled in a GCD Company Class or a ballet class for at least one year

For those with the goal of dancing en pointe, this class is the first step in that process. Foot Strengthening Class will help create a strong, safe base for the stresses that will be put on those areas of the body. Dancers will participate in this year-round class for at least 1-2 years before moving on to step 2 in this process.

### **Those joining the Foot Strengthening Class with the desire to work toward possibly dancing en pointe should be:**

- Enrolled in a GCD Company Class for at least 3 years
- Enrolled in an additional GCD Ballet Class for at least 1 year



## 2. Pre-Pointe

Pre-Pointe Class will increase the level of strengthening needed for future pointe work. This class meets during the Foot Strengthening Class and requires 5-8 hours of independent documented work outside of the classroom. Dancers will participate in this year-round class for at least 1 to 2 years before moving on to level 3 in this process. This is based on the dancer's physical development, strength, coordination, and dedication.

### Prerequisites for Pre-Pointe Class:

- At least 11 years of age
- Has had close to 100% attendance and effort in Foot Strengthening Class
- Consistently demonstrates 180° plantar flexion in elev  and while pointing the foot
- Consistently demonstrates proper body alignment coordination of heels and knees, turn out from the hip, and the strength to maintain balance and repeated elev s
- The dancer is mature enough to handle the responsibility and accountability of putting in quality at-home practice time on a daily basis
- Teacher recommendation

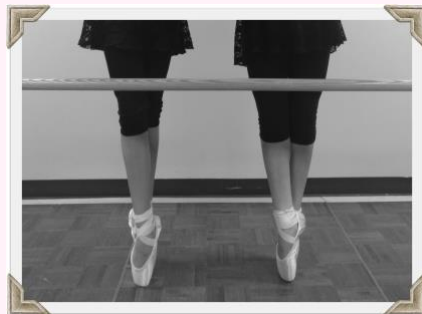


### 3. Pointe 1

Pointe 1 Class will start the dancer on specially designed pointe shoes. This class will take place on a supportive barre and prepare the dancer for further pointe repertoire. Dancers will participate in this year-round class for at least 1 to 2 years before moving on to step 4 in this process.

#### Prerequisites for Pointe 1 Class:

- At least 13 years of age
- A doctor's examination and permission to begin pointe work as growth plates in the feet need to have hardened enough so as not to cause any damage to the feet while dancing en pointe
- Schedule a pointe shoe fitting at Tutu in Bridgeville with a fitting specialist and purchase the require items, which can cost \$80-\$150 yearly
- Continue in Foot Strengthening Class in addition to Pointe 1 class
- Has had close to 100% attendance and effort in Foot Strengthening Class
- Commits to quality at-home practice time on a daily basis and documents these sessions for the instructor
- Teacher recommendation



#### 4. Pointe 2

Pointe 2 class will move the pointe dancer off of the supportive barre and into the centre for more strenuous pointe work and choreography. Pointe dancers have the opportunity to perform in a Christmas Show and possibly the Spring Show.

##### **Prerequisites for Pointe 2 Class:**

- At least 14 years of age
- The dancer will continue to attend Foot Strengthening Class and Pointe 1 Class year-round
- Has had close to 100% attendance in both of those classes
- Continues quality at-home practice time on a daily basis and documents these sessions for the instructor
- Progresses through Pointe 1 Class and is able to handle pointe work off barre
- Teacher recommendation

