

How to Darn Pointe Shoes

adapted from www.wikihow.com

Darning pointe shoes has become out of practice due to a lack of knowledge about it. However, darning the tips will help your feet look more arched, break in the shoe exactly right, and provide a lot more traction so you don't slip, especially in pirouettes. If you have trouble "getting over the tip," or standing completely flat on the platform, darning will help put you over. Darning can have a lot of benefits.

1. Thread the needle: The thread will have to be about three feet long. It is better to go with too long rather than too short. Also, the thread must be thick, about the size of floss. You can even use floss if you want, but it can be tiresome since it unravels and isn't as strong. Never use the thin cotton thread used in clothes. That's nothing! Knot the end of your thread (you can double it) and cut the tail to the edge of the knot.

2. Insert the needle at the bottom of the platform (the part you would stand on) through the satin. You can start at the bottom right-hand corner. Under the platform, there is the "pleats" section. Put the needle through the satin on the pleats and pull through, a little less than a centimeter wide. The needle will poke through at the very edge of the platform. This is shown in the picture by the purple line drawn around the edge of the platform. Pull the thread all the way through.



3. Repeat the same thing one half centimeter over to the right. Before pulling the needle through all the way this time, leave it half way. Take the thread that hangs out of the previous stitch you made and wrap it tightly, clockwise around the needle that is poking out. Hold the thread down with your left thumb as you pull the needle through. It makes a loop around the stitch you've just sewn. Continue all around the edge of the platform. If you've ever knitted, you'll probably notice a similarity.



Product after having done step 3 all the way around the platform.

4. Reinforce the darn. You notice that the thread you've sewn has made a circle with spokes pointing out of it. Concentrate only on the circle. This is the easiest part: just slide your thread through the sections of "circle" thread and pull tight. Go all the way around. The circle now has a look like rope, rather than stitches. You don't have to go through the satin at this point, just underneath the thread.



Reinforcing the darn. You can see that the stitches to the left side of the needle are already done.

5. Secure with a knot when you are done. The last time you do the previous step (going through the piece right next to your original knot) circle the remaining thread around the needle twice before you pull through to knot it. Then knot it normally. Make sure you cut off the string hanging out of the knot.



TIPS:

- A thimble will really come in handy. Try it!
- If the satin is running or tearing on the tip, that's all right.
- If the needle is unyielding, meaning it is taking enormous efforts to push it through, take it out and try again, this time not so deep. However, you want it to go through the canvas underneath so that when the satin rips while you are dancing on it, the darned thread won't just fall away. So you will have to push a little. That's where a thimble or hard surface comes in handy.
- Don't make your stitches too far apart, or too short. You'll figure it out with some practice. Soon, it will take you 3 minutes at top.
- That is but the tip of the iceberg. The old Russian technique is to darn the entire tip in carpet thread in a honeycombed pattern, overlapping triangles, and then to reinforce the inside of the box with white shellac. This makes good shoes last a long time. It also makes them quieter on the floor. I think it even improves their look on stage.