

# Essential Exercises for the Feet

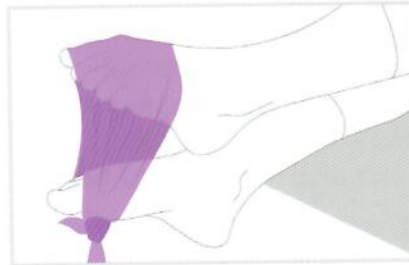


Dr. Lisa Schoene recommends this set of exercises to every dancer on pointe. Follow the instructions carefully, to help your daughter build the strength to make her pointe experience as safe and satisfying as possible. Keep all movements slow and controlled, in both directions of each exercise. Keep toes extended but relaxed - neither flexed nor strongly pointed - unless instructions specify pointing or flexing the toes. Start with one set of 8-10 repetitions of each exercise, on each foot. As strength increases and the exercises are learned, increase to two or three sets (about five minutes per set). After the exercises, gently stretch feet and ankles.

**Equipment:** Elastic exercise band (knotted into loop at end), small towel, thin cushion. When possible, perform exercises 1-4 with space below the feet (sitting on a firm bed or elevating the feet slightly off the floor with a firm cushion, not thick enough to put strain on the knees) for better range of movement.

## 1 Dorsiflexion (flexing the foot upward)

Sit with legs extended forward, one foot resting on top of the other. Wrap band as shown, with end hanging loose. Without flexing toes, flex the working (top) foot at ankle, slowly and smoothly, upward toward the body. Do not move other foot. Return to starting position slowly and smoothly.



### Target muscle

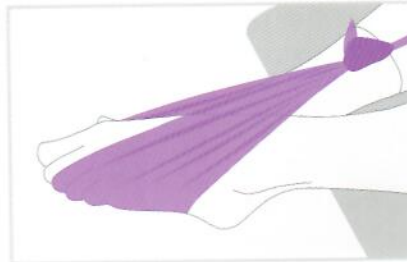
Tibialis Anterior

### Importance

Alignment of foot and ankle; control for jumps and pointe work

## 2 Plantar Flexion ("pointing" the foot)

Sit with legs extended forward. Wrap band as shown and grasp with hands. Without strongly pointing toes, slowly and smoothly extend foot into a "pointed" position (at ankle, not toes) then return to starting position.



### Target muscles

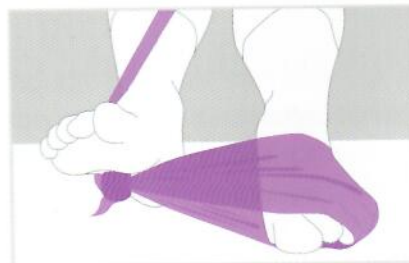
Gastrocnemius and Soleus

### Importance

Strength on pointe and throughout dance technique

## 3 Eversion

Sit with legs extended forward, ankles a few inches apart. Wrap band as shown and grasp with hands. With working foot extended, but not strongly pointed, move foot smoothly outward (to an **everted** position). Move exactly to the side, without changing angle of foot or moving toes. Return smoothly past starting point to fully **inverted** position.



### Target muscle

Peroneus Brevis

### Importance

Control and stability; avoidance of sickling and winging