

How should my daughter prepare her pointe shoes?

After her teacher has approved the shoes, it is time to sew on the pink satin ribbons that secure them to the feet. The teacher will show students how to cross the ribbons across the **instep** and wrap them around the ankle. Never tie the ribbons at the back of the ankle, where the knot could damage the **Achilles tendon**. Instead, tie a double knot in the hollow between the ankle bone and the Achilles tendon. Then, tuck the knot neatly under the wrapped ribbons so that the ends do not show.

Most dancers also sew elastics to their pointe shoes, for added support. Elastics may be sewn in a single length around the ankle from one side of the heel to the other, or in two lengths crisscrossing the instep of the foot from heel to side of shoe.

Properly fit pointe shoes require little or no other preparation. Professional dancers may have elaborate rituals for preparing their shoes, but beginners should never alter their shoes in any way unless their teacher or fitter recommends it. Banging or bending the shoes, or attempting to modify their design, can compromise their structure in potentially dangerous ways. The **break-in** process should be accomplished through exercises in pointe class.



instep The arched top of the foot (opposite to the arch itself, on the sole of the foot).

Achilles tendon The largest tendon in the body, running from the heel bone into the calf.

breaking in Softening and molding pointe shoes to the feet.

What else does my daughter need?

Most dancers use padding for comfort inside the box. Lighter padding usually leads to better control and fit. Beginners should only use padding designed for pointe shoes - either special toe pads or lamb's wool - and avoid experimenting with other materials. Many dancers also tape their toes to reduce rubbing; ask the teacher's advice about what kind of tape to use, whether it is needed, and how to apply it. Extras such as toe spacers or heel pads should only be added if the fitter or teacher considers them necessary.

SHOPPING LIST

- Pointe shoes
- Ribbons (4 of equal length)
- Elastic (optional)
- Needle and pink thread
- Toe pads or lamb's wool
- Toe tape (optional)
- Mesh carrying bag
- Exercise bands (optional)