

HOW DO SPACERS AFFECT POINTE SHOE FITTING?

When you wear spacers, the overall shape and size of your toes changes.

Dancers who need spacers have toes that aren't staying in alignment in pointe shoes. This means that they are shifting, slanting or compressing in problematic ways. When a spacer is added to correct this problem, it makes sense that a pointe shoe's toe box will fit differently.

The fitting process

Your fitter is likely to start by evaluating your bare feet – looking at the structure of your toes, how they change when you point your foot, and how they line up when you stand on flat. Just by looking at your feet, most professional fitters can recognize issues that could cause problems on pointe but be solved with spacers.

"I might also use my hand to squeeze the metatarsal joints to see how compressible the foot is," says Megan Fuechsl, one of Russian Pointe's expert fitting consultants. "But I can usually tell just by looking. When I see an issue, I'll put my finger between the toes as if it were a spacer. If this seems to improve alignment, I'll try a spacer."

At that point, your fitter should evaluate the toes again with the spacer in place. "I want to see the toes on flat and pointing and press them together to see how they react with the spacer," Megan continues, adding that she might try both narrow (<https://www.russianpointe.com/product/rp-toe-spacers-narrow/>) and wide (<https://www.russianpointe.com/product/rp-toe-spacers-wide/>) spacers before deciding which one is best for the dancer.

Changing spacer use

If you are wearing spacers, it's essential that you wear them consistently. Going without them at any time will change the fit of your pointe shoes, which could lead to injury. And if you're wearing them for bunions, you're putting your feet at risk every time you go on pointe without your spacers.

However, wearing spacers isn't always forever! Sometimes a dancer's foot changes as it develops so that spacers are only needed for a certain period of time. Other times, changing to a different pointe shoe model can eliminate the need for spacers because of differences in box shape.

Because it's best to wear as little as possible inside your pointe shoes, you and your fitter or teacher should evaluate your need for spacers regularly.

Wear them for every fitting

Just like toe pads, spacers must be brought to every fitting if you are wearing them while dancing. If you and your fitter believe that you should continue using them, they should be in place when you try on shoes. If your feet have changed or you are considering different pointe models, your fitter will need to evaluate your feet again, both with and without the spacers.

Remember, most dancers don't need spacers at all. Some need them from the first pair of pointe shoes, to compensate for inborn gaps or alignment issues. Others start using spacers because bunions are developing. Read more about the need for spacers [here](https://www.russianpointe.com/blog/2017/04/07/when-to-use-toe-spacers/) (<https://www.russianpointe.com/blog/2017/04/07/when-to-use-toe-spacers/>).