

Let's Dance Academy

Pointe Progression Pathway

Pre-Pointe

Focus Areas:

- Range of movement
- Strength and stability
- Dexterity of the foot (metatarsals and intrinsic muscles)
- Proprioception and maturity in understanding foot type and physique
- Alignment and balance

Example Exercises:

- Grand pliés in all positions, focusing on turnout and pelvis alignment
- Rises (parallel, turnout, single-leg, bent leg for instability, small ball between ankles)
- Plank hold
- Aeroplane test (x5 by end of 6 weeks)
- One-leg balance (eyes closed)
- Foot exercises: doming, piano toes, rock-paper-scissors, big toe up/down
- Rolling foot with hard ball
- Passive ankle stretch
- Theraband exercises (ankle isolated from toes)
- SEBT (Modified Star Excursion Balance Test)
- Achieve 1-leg rises in turnout x16
- Temps levé in coup de pied with alignment x16

Stage 1 – Introductory Pointe (Term 1–2)

Goals:

- Reduce fear and build confidence in wearing pointe shoes
- Establish alignment, posture, and correct foot placement
- Begin understanding extension through the foot

Exercises:

- Encourage wearing pointe shoes at home (not en pointe)
- Basic barre work: demi-pliés, tendus en croix, stepping up and rolling down
- Rises in parallel, 1st, 2nd positions
- Walking/running in shoes, demi-pointe work to loosen shoes
- Relevé 5th (with preparatory step for feeling)
- Walking along barre en pointe

Stage 2 – Weight Transference (Term 2–3)

Goals:

- Develop safe weight transference and stronger ankle stability
- Prepare for more complex movement

Exercises:

- All relevés 2–2 (5th, échappés to 2nd and 4th)
- Couru preparation and execution
- Relevé 5th with demi-détourné (introduce early for confidence)
- Step onto one leg (posé 5th facing barre)
- Begin courus in centre
- Relevé 5th – releasing front or back foot at barre
- Walking/running in centre en pointe

Stage 3 – One-Foot Work (Term 4+)

Goals:

- Strength and control moving from two-foot to one-foot work
- Secure roll-downs through the foot

Exercises:

- Roll down through one foot (posé coupé prep)
- Divided échappés en croix
- Posé coupé at barre, then centre
- Relevés 2–1 at barre
- Posé to arabesque prep at barre
- Pas de bourrée piqué (intro at barre then centre)
- Pas de bourrée piqué section in centre

Stage 4 – Intermediate Level

Goals:

- Develop complex balance and turning movements
- Transition towards ISTD Intermediate pointework standards

Exercises:

- Posé arabesque in centre
- Coupé fouetté raccourci
- Pas de bourrée piqué
- Relevé 2–1 in centre
- Posé turns
- Petit pas de basque en tournant
- Posé assemblé soutenu
- Posé coupé in all directions
- Courus en tournant in centre
- Relevés with $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ turns

ISTD Grade Pointework Progressions (for reference)

Grade 6: Alignment, posture, stability on pointe

Intermediate Foundation: Rises, échappés, courus, demi-détournés, relevés 5th

Intermediate: Echappés, posés, pas de bourrées piqués, coupés fouettés, relevés, courus, pointe enchaînements

Advanced 1: Relevés 1–1, sissonnes, ronds de jambe relevés, pirouettes, posés, petits pas de basque