

Journey To Pointe Work

2026

Beginning pointe work is a magical milestone in a dancer's life—it's the moment many students have dreamed of since their first ballet class! We are just as excited as our students are for them to take this big step. It is a beautiful art form that requires a unique blend of grit, grace, and physical readiness, and our goal is to ensure every dancer feels strong and supported as they rise onto their toes.

- **Safety First:** To keep our dancers healthy and dancing for years to come, we treat the preparation for pointe work with the utmost care. We use careful observation and professional guidance to ensure a student's bones and muscles are ready for the challenge, as rushing this process is never worth the risk to a dancer's long-term health.
- **A Personalized Path:** Every dancer has a different physical "blueprint." Whether a student has high arches or flatter feet, we tailor our instruction to help them succeed. Every student develops on their own unique timeline, and we view this as a collaborative process to ensure they are truly ready to shine.
- **Building Resilience:** Like any great athletic achievement, pointe work involves hard work and a period of physical adjustment. We are here to coach our dancers through the "blister and band-aid" moments, helping them build the grit and determination they need to excel.

1. The RAD Syllabus

At LCDC, the first formal opportunity to engage in pointe work occurs in Intermediate Foundation. This is the entry level of the RAD Vocational stream.

The pointe work required at this level is intentionally minimal. It focuses on the absolute basics of alignment, stability, and strength at the barre.

To be considered to go en pointe, students must be taking the the following classes at LCDC:

- 3x Vocational RAD Classes
- 2x Grade 5 RAD Ballet and 1x Intermediate Foundation Ballet Class

2. The Preparation Process

The journey to pointe shoes is a multi-step adventure. Eligibility is determined by much more than just age; we assess each dancer on a case-by-case basis to ensure they have reached the physical milestones necessary to dance safely and beautifully.

Phase 1: Pre-Pointe Training

For most students, specific preparation begins in Grade 5. We integrate specialized pre-pointe exercises into our regular classes to build the foundational "core-to-floor" strength required for the exciting vocational levels ahead.

Phase 2: Professional Physiotherapy/Podiatrist Assessment

To provide the highest level of care, every student undergoes a formal Pointe Assessment with a specialized dance physiotherapist. This clinician evaluates:

- **Physical Growth:**
 - Ensuring skeletal maturity is sufficient for the unique requirements of pointe work.
- **Functional Strength:**
 - Checking the core, legs, and the "intrinsic" muscles of the feet.
- **Flexibility:**
 - Ensuring the ankle has the healthy range of motion needed to stand vertically.

The pointe assessment is designed to ensure every dancer is physically ready for this milestone. It is very common—and often expected—for students to require a bit of extra preparation after their first visit. Please see this not as a setback, but as a vital safety measure.

In these cases, the physiotherapist/podiatrist will provide a customized strengthening program. These exercises are a wonderful opportunity for students to take ownership of their training outside of regular class time. Completing this program shows us a dancer has the dedication and responsibility required for pointe work.

Physiotherapists/podiatrists should suggest a time frame they expect the student to have progressed by, and a further appointment is required. This process keeps going until the student passes their pointe assessment.

At LCDC, we recommend SportsTec Clinic as our preferred specialized dance physiotherapist, and Lauren Morrison from Queanbeyan Podiatry.

3. Approval and Fitting

Once a student has passed their pointe assessment, they move into the final preparation phase. To ensure a seamless transition into their first pair of shoes, please follow this protocol:

- **Teacher Notification & Final Review** After a successful assessment, please notify your child's teacher. They will provide the final approval for the student to purchase shoes, ensuring that their current classwork, strength, and technical consistency are fully aligned with the physiotherapist's findings.
- **The Professional Fitting** At LCDC, we require all first-time students to be fitted at Bloch for a Bloch pointe shoe. We have found these to be the gold standard for developing dancers, providing the specific support needed for those just beginning their journey. For students in Grade 5 who have received the go ahead to get their first pair of pointe shoes, LCDC will organise a group booking at Bloch in September/October that will be attended by Lisa or Jasmin. This is a lovely way for students to celebrate this milestone together.
- **The Shoe Check (Before Sewing!)** This is a vital step! After the fitting, students must bring their new shoes to class **WITHOUT** ribbons or elastics sewn on. Your teacher will personally double-check the fit to ensure they are perfect.

4. Sewing Ribbons & Elastics

Now for the part you've been waiting for: the sewing! Yes, it is a ballet tradition that pointe shoes must be sewn by hand to ensure they fit the foot perfectly.

While it might seem daunting at first, it's a wonderful skill to master. In fact, the sooner your dancer learns to sew their own ribbons and elastics, the better! Not only does it build a sense of pride in their equipment, but it also ensures they are never stuck at a performance or exam without the ability to do a quick repair.

To help you get started, we recommend these helpful tutorials:

- [How to Sew Ribbons](#) – *A step-by-step guide to achieving that classic, secure look.*
- [How to Sew Elastics](#) – *Essential for that extra support and customized fit.*

5. Starting Pointe Work & Safety Rules

Once the shoes are fitted and the ribbons are beautifully sewn, the urge to do everything en pointe is very real! We love that enthusiasm, but because safety is our absolute priority, we take this next phase very slowly. Introductory work is carefully integrated into current class levels to ensure a safe and steady transition.

We know how tempting it is to show off those new shoes at home, but practicing en pointe without professional supervision—and without a proper dance floor—can lead to serious injury. To keep our dancers safe, we have a firm policy regarding where the shoes live:

- Grade 5 Policy: To help remove the temptation of "living room performances," Grade 5 students must leave their pointe shoes at the LCDC studio. * Graduation: Shoes will remain safely at the studio until the student officially begins the Intermediate Foundation level.

Think of the studio as the "training ground"—we want every minute spent in those shoes to be guided, safe, and technically sound!

External Resources for Further Reading

For parents and students who love to dive into the "why" behind the training, we recommend these wonderful resources. They offer a deeper look into the science and artistry of dance:

- **IADMS (International Association for Dance Medicine & Science):** A fantastic resource for evidence-based information, specifically their fact sheets on the adolescent dancer and physical development.
- **The Australian Ballet's "Perfect Form" Series:** An excellent video and article series providing world-class insights into foot and ankle conditioning specifically for pointe work.
- **The RAD Vocational Syllabus:** For those looking ahead, this provides a detailed breakdown of the technical expectations for the Intermediate Foundation level and beyond.