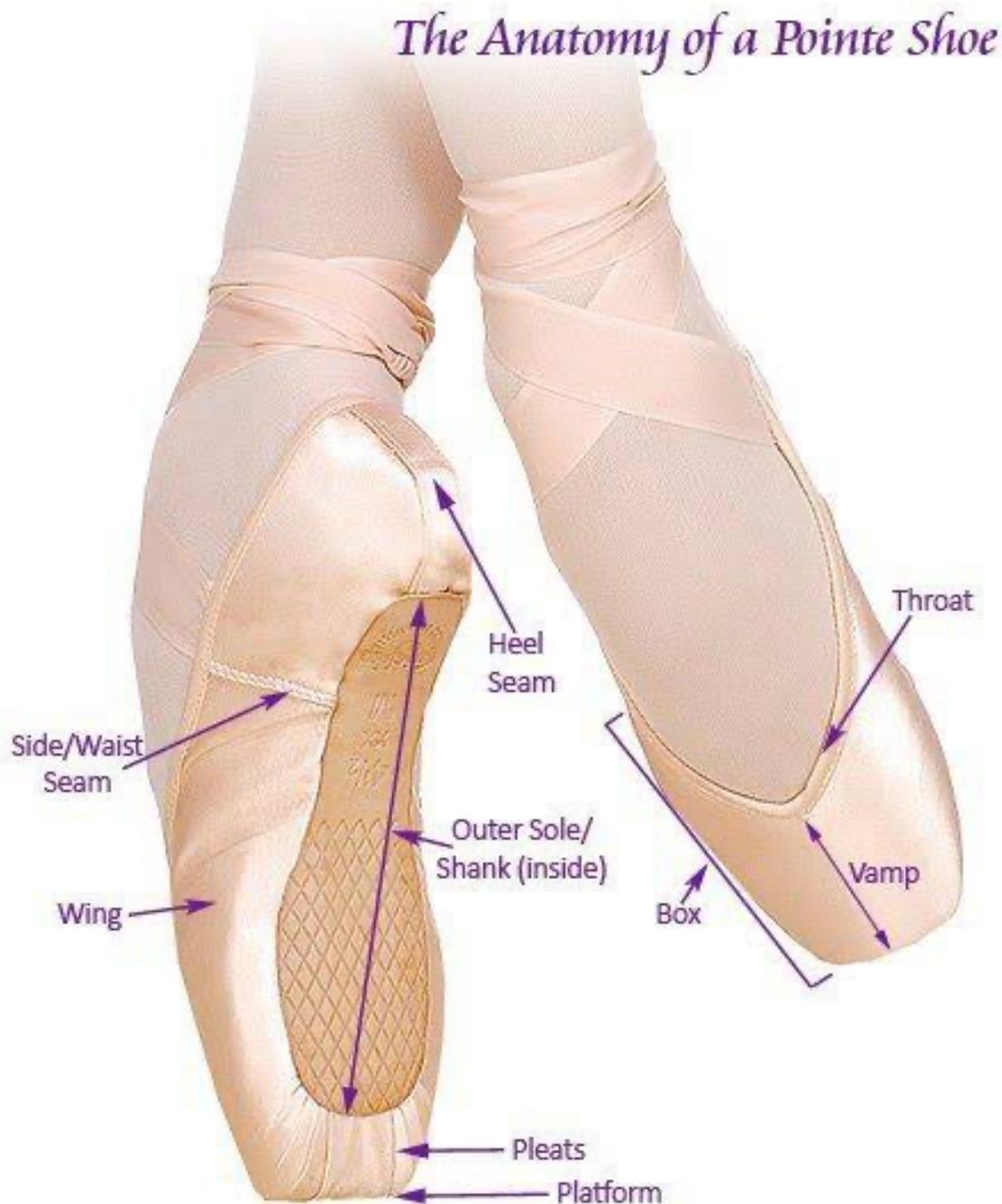


Pointe Shoe Essentials

New pointe shoes are beautiful, but don't get carried away with their silky, pink prettiness and forget to stock up on some pointe essentials so you're ready for your first class. Here are a few must-have accessories.

Our first class of 2021 we will break in our shoes together, please do not wear shoes before we start our pointe shoe class in Term 1!



#1. Ribbons

Make sure to pick up some ribbons for your pointe shoes. Ribbons not only look beautiful and ballerina-like, but they are also crucial because they support your ankles in the shoes. Single-faced satin is a good choice, as the ribbons look pretty to the eye on the outside of the ankle, but are less silky on the inside so they grip better to your tights. Make sure to buy pointe ribbon from a dance supplier so that it's the correct thickness. You don't want the ribbon to be too thin. You can purchase either rehearsal ribbon or performance ribbon, with performance ribbon made of double-faced matte satin.

#2. Elastic

Most dancers like to use elastic to accompany their ribbons. Elastic provides extra support and helps keep the heels of the pointe shoes on. Your local dancerwear store sells elastic in ballet pink at the correct width, so make sure to ask for them. You don't want the elastic to be too thin, as it will cut off circulation and be very uncomfortable.

To help you get your ribbons and elastic sewn on, the popular Bunheads Stitch Kit™ includes super-strong thread and two large-eye needles for easy threading, which is perfect for pointe shoes or ballet flats. The kit also includes detailed sewing instructions, which can be a great help when sewing those first few pairs of pointe shoes. It is a must-have in any ballet bag, and particularly handy for a quick ribbon or even costume fix.

#3. Padding

Although some dancers don't wear any padding in their shoes, most do, and beginners will most likely want something to cushion their toes, particularly as they get used to pointe. While every foot and every need is different, padding should be kept to a minimum so you can still feel your foot in the shoe. Many pointe-fitting specialists recommend lamb's wool for padding, as it adequately protects toe joints, is breathable and can be washed and re-used. You can also get Lamb's Wool Toe Pads, which combine the benefits of lamb's wool in the formation of an actual toe pad. Popular gel pads like the Ouch Pouch® are widely used. These pouches contain a thin layer of gel material inside two pieces of fabric to create a comfortable pouch that covers the ball of the foot, as well as the toes and bunion areas, providing cushioning and protection from friction.



#4. Suede Toe Caps

A pair of suede toe caps that can be easily attached to the platform of a pointe shoe, protecting the satin of the shoe whilst offering friction.

Video Tutorial: How to glue Suede Toe Caps to Pointe Shoes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwt9XIMF0-k>



#5. Toe tape or Band-Aids

Dancing en pointe is ethereal, but we all know that it can cause nasty, painful blisters. You can protect your toes with toe tape. It reduces friction and prevents the chafing that causes blisters. Some dancers use Band-Aids to help with this, but these can easily come off, and you will find yourself going through boxes and boxes of them. Tape can be a better – and cheaper overall – solution.

#6. Bunion prevention/protection

Dancewear stores sell a range of bunion prevention products that can relieve pressure on the big toe joint or protect the small toe and bunionette area on the side of the foot, if you find that you need them after several lessons. Toe spacers are also available. Discuss the need for them and how best to use them with your pointe teacher before purchasing.

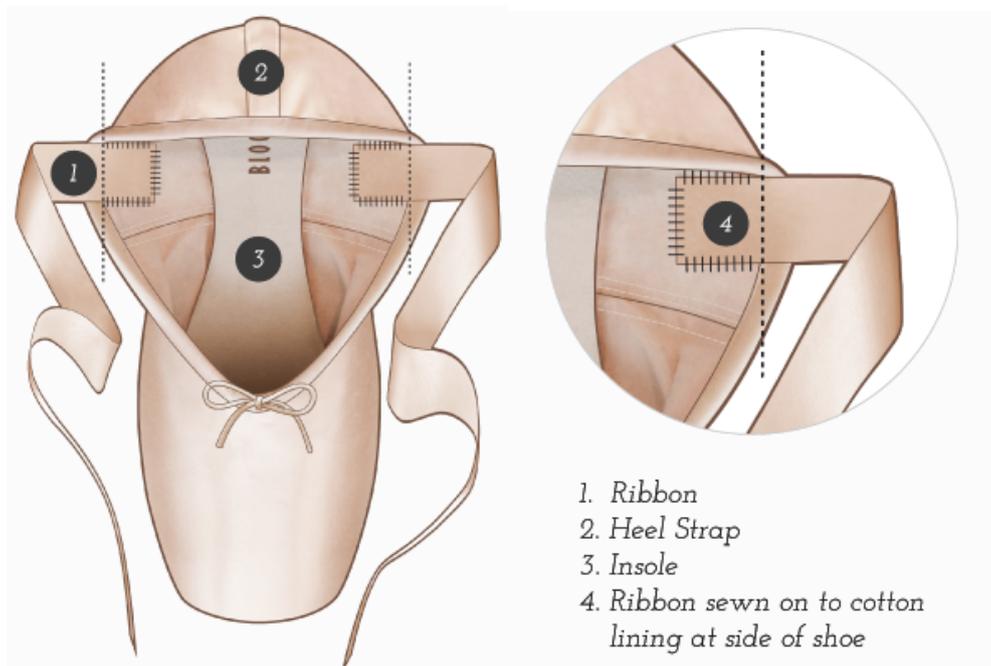
#7. Pointe shoe bag

Make sure to purchase, or even design and sew, your own pointe shoe bag to keep your shoes and accessories cleaner and more organised in your dance bag. Make sure to let your shoes breathe, though, to ensure no mildew or bacteria build up. Take them out of the bag when you get home, or between lesson breaks, and let them dry out before storing them in your bag until your next class or performance.

By Deborah Searle of Dance Informa.

<https://dancemagazine.com.au/2019/01/starting-pointe-this-year-here-are-some-essentials/>

SEWING RIBBONS



- Ribbon bundles are sold in one long 2¼ metre length so the ribbon needs to be cut in half and then in half again so there are four pieces, one for each side of the shoe.
- Take one piece of ribbon and at one end fold one centimetre over once and then fold it over two centimetres again.
- To attach the ribbons at the correct angle, fold the back of the shoe forward and down, then mark each side of the shoe on the cotton lining in the angle made.
- Place the folded end of the ribbon at the marked position and sew as shown in the drawing onto the side of the shoe through the cotton lining but not through the satin. The ribbons may be angled forward if required to hold the shoe on more securely.

For extra support the ribbon can be sewn further down the shoe close to the inner sole at the same position. Do not sew the ribbon through the binding as the drawstring cord can not be adjusted and the binding may pull away from the satin. The cord inside the binding of the pointe shoe is to adjust the tension of the width of the upper. It should be adjusted while on the foot, and tied in a double knot with the excess cord tucked into the shoe and not be visible. Do not cut the excess of the cords off, as should the knot come undone the ends would be lost inside the binding.

VIDEO TUTORIAL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M74oEzzfXes>
<https://www.bloch.com.au/blogs/education/sewing-ribbon-onto-ballet-shoes>

Sewing Elastics on Pointe Shoes

Many dancers use elastics as well as ribbons to keep their pointe shoes from slipping off their heels. Pointe shoe elastic tends to be wider and more heavy-duty than technique shoe elastic. Some dancers sew the elastics near the ribbons, which helps conceal them once the ribbons are tied. Others sew them at the back of the heel, on the outside of the shoe, to prevent chafing the Achilles tendon. Still others find that the ideal position is in between, often a thumb's width in front of the back seam. For additional security and support, you can use two pieces of elastic per shoe, crisscrossing them over your instep.

<https://dancer.com/ballet-info/about-pointe-shoes/sewing-ribbons/>