



# the dancer's

## R O O M

Unit 3b City Point, Swan Road, Lichfield WS13 6QZ  
Phone 01543 415014 or email [sales@thedancersroom.co.uk](mailto:sales@thedancersroom.co.uk)  
[www.thedancersroom.co.uk](http://www.thedancersroom.co.uk)

### Thank you for choosing The Dancer's Room for your pointe shoe fitting and purchase.

Here at The Dancer's Room we take our role as pointe shoe fitters very seriously and it is very important to us that you are completely satisfied. If you do have any concerns or questions following your fitting, please get in touch straight away so we can help you.

#### IMPORTANT

Following on from your fitting, we please ask that you get your shoes checked by your dance teacher before you wear, break in the shoes or sew ribbons and elastics in place. Our aim is always to work collaboratively with dance teachers so if your teacher has a concern, we are more than happy to try and address this before you use the shoes. Please be aware that we are unable to refund any pointe shoes that have been worn, broken-in or have ribbons and elastics sewn in place and refunds will only be given if the shoes are returned in a saleable condition.

#### POINTE SHOE CARE

It is vital for your pointe shoes to be dried out after use. Shoes should be well ventilated with any protection removed from the inside of the shoe. Drying can typically take 24 - 48hrs depending on the duration and situation of use. For proper aeration we recommend the use of a mesh shoe bag. Shoes that are not dried out consistently and correctly break down quicker and will need replacing sooner. If a dancer does a lot of pointe work we may recommend that you purchase more than one pair of shoes and wear on rotation.

The platform (outside tip) of the shoes should also be protected by using suede toe caps or darning. This reduces the wear and improves grip. For the non-sewer, suede tips are the way to go – simply glue on using a strong fabric or contact glue and trim to butt up to the edge of the outer sole. For a more traditional look you can also darn the platform using a curved needle and darning thread.

The only exception here is if you have purchased Gaynor Minden shoes which come with toe caps already incorporated into the construction of the shoe. Please visit our website for tutorials on attaching suede tips and darning the platform of your shoes.

#### SEWING YOUR SHOES

It is essential to make sure that your ribbons are correctly sewn and positioned. This will ensure that your pointe shoe is held securely against your foot whilst dancing and achieve peak performance. Many dancers also like to use elastic to give them extra security. Ribbon and elastic positioning and sewing will have been discussed at your fitting but we have plenty of how-to guides available our website should you need a little refresher.

#### BREAKING IN YOUR SHOES

Modern pointe shoes do not need hammering and bashing before you wear them. Unless you are a professional dancer who is breaking in their shoes for performance purposes, the only breaking in you need to do is wearing them!

Pointe shoes are designed to respond to the heat and sweat of your foot so you simply need to wear them around the house: pop a pair of socks over for a couple of hours, practice roll-up rises onto demi-pointe and the shoes will quickly take the form of your feet. Some dancers even sleep in them. **Caution – please do be careful and definitely no going up and down the stairs!**

Again, the exception here are Gaynor Minden shoes which do not need breaking in - the shank of the shoe should feel broken-in and sufficiently flexible from the beginning.

#### FAQs

##### Why do you not fit shoes with growing room?

We understand it's frustrating when your feet are still growing not to include growing room in your pointe shoes, especially because it is such an expensive purchase. Shoes that are too big, especially a shoe that is too wide at the metatarsal head, does not provide the proper support for a dancer. Inadequate support can cause severe pain and serious injury.

##### Why have I been sold toe spacers or toe spreaders?

A solid gel toe spacer or spreader is used to help keep your big toe joint straight in your pointe shoe. It is used to fill a gap a dancer may have between their big toe and 2nd toe. This can prevent pain and bunion formation. If you have been fitted with spacers, please remember to wear them. Not only does it protect your foot health but it also affects the fit of your shoes.

Very occasionally, we may use a spacer to aid the fit of a shoe for a dancer with exceptionally narrow feet.

##### Why have I been sold shoe inserts, box liners, wings, size changers or heel grips?

Pointe shoes should always fit as snugly as possible. This is often quite a challenge during fittings if you have compressible metatarsals, narrow heels, tapered toes, longer second toes or simply have different sized feet or are in-between shoe sizes.

Any of these accessories may have been used to ensure your pointe shoes fit as well as possible to give you the most comfortable and best dancing experience.

##### Why have I been sold toe tubes, gel toe caps, micropore tape or dancer's dots?

Sometimes, even with well-fitted shoes, dancers experience sore or painful points on their feet. We will always aim for pain free dancing during a fitting and may have targeted a niggle area with items designed to protect and cushion the skin.

### **Why was I advised to change toe pads or dance en pointe without pads?**

The use of toe pads is very common for dancing en pointe. However, there are many styles and makes on the market so if you are experiencing problems with a certain shoe, decide to change brand and/or style of shoe, we may have recommended another kind of toe protection. Padding thickness, shape and materials all alter how the foot is seated in the shoe. We may even recommend you try dancing without a pad, using alternative cushioning such as gel toe caps or animal wool. Please remember, if you have been fitted this time without a toe pad or with new/different padding and you subsequently decide to return to another pad, your shoes may not fit correctly.

### **How do I tell when my shoes are 'broken'?**

The materials used to construct pointes shoe are meant to be stiff yet flexible, however shoes will break down over time with wear. When the box and/or shank of your shoes are no longer stiff enough to support your alignment – it's time for a new pair.

As a novice this can be a challenge to recognise, so if you are unsure please book an appointment to visit the store and we will be happy to advise you. In addition, as your feet grow or become stronger, a different size or style may also be required.

### **How long will my shoes last?**

The quoted average life span of a pair of pointe shoes is actually 4-12 hours of work but it can vary dramatically taking into account many factors: dancing experience and technical ability; shape and strength of your foot; number of continuous hours dancing en pointe; dancing surface; humidity; foot growth and whether you are using your shoes for class work or performance. Even given all of these parameters, some dancers just get through shoes quicker than others!

The biggest 'killer' of point shoes is sweat so please dry your shoes out correctly. If you are concerned about how quickly you are getting through your shoes, we are happy to discuss this with you in more detail at your fitting – solutions may be as simple as using pointe shoe glue, having several pairs on rotation or recommending a shoe with different properties.

### **Why have foot and/or ankle exercises been recommended to me?**

Please do not be offended if we have recommended foot or ankle exercises. It is our utmost priority that you dance en pointe safely but also have a wonderful dancing experience. Pointe work is exceptionally hard and relies on so many physical attributes working together, nobody is ever perfect, even the professionals!

Successful pointe work requires a strong core, general strength and flexibility in your ankles and feet (particularly the metatarsal area) and good alignment. We always encourage our customers to focus on correcting technique by strengthening the foot and ankle muscles which also alleviates bad habits that are hard to break.

Please visit our website for examples of exercises that might help your pointe work.

### **How can I reduce the cost of dancing en pointe?**

Purchasing pointe shoes is certainly an investment and we understand that it can be quite a financial commitment to dance en pointe. As a thank you for choosing The Dancer's Room for your fittings, we run a Pointe Shoe Loyalty Scheme where customers receive 30% off every third pair of shoes purchased.

## **HINTS & TIPS FOR FUTURE FITTINGS**

- Always bring your previous pair of shoes when you come for a new fitting. The way a shoe has worn or broken-in can often help us troubleshoot and advise on suitable styles moving forward. Don't forget to also bring any accessories that you may use such as toe pads, spacers etc.
- Attend your fitting in comfortable clothes that allow movement. If you are able, please wear transition (convertible) tights so that we are able to see your bare feet.
- Attend with clean feet and make sure your toenails are cut to the correct length. We do not recommend that dancers dance en pointe with long toe nails as this can cause ill fitting shoes and injury to your toes.
- Please avoid attending a fitting with bruised, blistered or sore feet. It is much easier for us to fit pointe shoes when you are comfortable and not distracted by pain. Please cover any verrucas with a plaster.
- If there is a particular shoe you'd like to try, especially a Gaynor Minden, please let us know at the time you book your appointment so that we can make sure we have that shoe in stock for you.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

If you have any questions regarding pointe shoes or pointe shoe fittings please do get in touch, we are always happy to help. Alternatively, you can find lots of useful information on our website at [www.thedancersroom.co.uk](http://www.thedancersroom.co.uk).

The correct fitting of pointe shoes is extremely important and as such, pointe shoes can only be purchased when you attend a fitting in our store. Buying pointe shoes or demi pointes (soft blocks) without visiting the shop is at the discretion of Becky Edwards the Managing Director. Please contact us for further assistance.

Any young dancer wishing to go en pointe will need the approval of their dance teacher before attending a fitting.

If you are visiting us for your first fitting please ask your teacher before you come if he or she has any specific preferences such as toe protection or brand of shoe – this will ensure you don't have a wasted journey if we don't have the right products in stock.

We don't charge for pointe shoe fittings but we kindly request that you give us due notice if you need to cancel your appointment. Our fitting slots are much sort after, especially on a Saturday and we may be able to offer the time to another dancer.

We hold a large range of pointe shoe brands, styles and sizes but we can also order in specific requirements. If you have a particular shoe in mind, please contact us in advance for further assistance.

For any gentleman wishing to be fitted for pointe shoes, we'd be delighted to help you. Please contact us in advance to discuss your requirements so that we are able to ensure we have the right shoes available for you to try.

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