



Clip: Feet

Episode 2: Week Zero

## Activity: Pointe Shoes

Theme: Dance Knowledge, Dance Skills

Elements of dance: body

Different forms of dance require different specialised footwear. A tap dancer creates sound by dancing on a hard floor with metal “taps” attached to his or her shoes. Female ballet dancers wear pointe shoes. Pointe shoes were developed in the late 1800s by the father of Marie Taglioni, a very famous ballet dancer of the Romantic Period. She was renowned for her ability to appear as light as a feather. Her pointe shoes were not like the wood, satin, glue composites we have today. Hers were comprised of layers and layers of satin glued together to create a fairly soft shoe.

1. As a class, view the clip, *Feet*, and discuss with students how dance styles evolved as a response to individual, cultural and environmental influences. It is likely that Marie Taglioni’s ability to stand on the tips of her toes was due to very strong and flexible muscles in the arch of her foot, combined with strong calves and thighs. Using the **Student Activity Sheet E2.4: Pointe Shoes** as a guide, follow some of the activities to create strong muscles of the lower body: ankle joint, calves and hips, and the core muscles of the back and stomach. Each student can mark how many repetitions they performed and reflect on personal, physical strengths and weaknesses.
2. Allow students time, individually or in small groups, to research different footwear worn by dancers. Ask students to create a timeline of footwear designed specifically for dance throughout history.

## Download

- Student Activity Sheet E2.4: Pointe Shoes

## Useful resources

- Ausdance Video Segment 8 - Feet & Calf Exercises
- [Ausdance Factsheet 12, Healthy bones for female dancers](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 16, Caring for the dancer's body](#)
- [The Australian Ballet: The pointe shoe](#)
- [Melanie Fuller & David Peirce, \*Screening Practices in Dance, Applying the research\*](#)



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Student Activity Sheet: E2.4 Episode: Week Zero  
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## Pointe Shoes

The following challenge is to see if you are ready for pointe shoes. It is based on single leg rises (or calf rises).

### THE RULES

1. The single leg rises must be performed in succession without rest.
2. Take 3 seconds to rise, hold for 1 second and lower for 3 seconds. No rest in between
3. The single leg rises must be completed with control and perfect alignment through the ankle.

5 repetitions	<b>BEGINNER</b>	Lots of work to get ready for Pointe.
10 repetitions	<b>TUTU TOUGH</b>	Good Work! You're on your way to being Pointe ready.
15 repetitions	<b>BEAUTIFUL BALLERINA</b>	Fantastic! You're ready to start Pointe.
25 repetitions	<b>BUNHEAD</b>	WOW! You're at a professional level!

To improve your ability, repeat this exercise three times on each leg, every morning and night for two weeks and see how much improvement you get.