



Pointe Level 1

A year long training guide

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Exercises

About the Exercises

The exercises selected for this program are designed to develop and reinforce proper alignment as well develop and increase the strength and endurance of the dancer (especially in the feet, ankle and legs). Parallel alignment is used regularly throughout the exercises. It is very important for dancers to develop the proper use of muscles in both parallel and turned out positions. Different muscles and parts of muscles are activated and used depending on the alignment of the leg, ankle and foot. Working in a combination of parallel and turned out positions help to reduce the risk of injury to the dancer as well as maximizing her training and development.

Please note that interest of space, the pictures that accompany the movement sequence in the **Exercise** section of the manual do not show every position. When an exercise is done in both a parallel and turned out alignment, the parallel position is shown and then at least 1 of the turned out positions is also shown. We have tried to present as many different positions throughout this section as is practical.

The **Lesson Plans** that accompany this manual are designed to serve as guidelines of progression. Each sample lesson is designed to be repeated for 2 – 3 classes. It is important that the teacher assess the progress of the students accurately. Moving dancers through the program more rapidly than they are ready for will create challenges for the dancer as she progresses in her training. In addition to strength and alignment benefits, one of the goals of this program is to teach the dancers to become more aware of how their bodies are moving as well as encourage the concept of deliberate practice. For dancers to excel, it is not enough to just go through the motions of a class, but instead they need to focus on what they are doing and how they are doing it. To put the importance of repetition in perspective, in order to learn or re-learn a movement pattern correctly and make it “automatic” or “muscle memory”, the pattern must be repeated correctly 50,000 times.

While the focus of the included exercises is on the legs and feet, it is still important to look at the whole dancer. Body posture / alignment, quality of movement, arm positions when 1 hand at the barre or in center, are all important and will influence what is happening in the lower body. To reinforce the goal of creating body awareness, remember to make corrections to the whole body. Encourage the dancers to think about the assessment areas that indicated improvements were needed. These are the top areas for the dancers to focus on.

Movements that are basic ballet steps and not pointe work specific are not demonstrated or pictured. These movements are defined in this manual with points of focus noted. The reasons why the exercises are included in the pointe syllabus is discussed in the description as well.

Not all of the variations and progressions are included in the lesson plans. They are provided to provide you with more options as the students master the skills presented in the lesson plans.

*Exercises
About the Exercises
Continued*

The following exercises are included in lesson plans but are not listed in the Exercise Manual because they are discussed in detail in the Assessment Section of this program.

- 4 Part pointe and flex
- Single leg élevé – parallel
- Single leg élevé – turned out
- Side plank
- Flat back to round over
- Pushing up

The following exercises are the same as presented in “Pre Pointe – A Year Long Training Guide” (with the exception of wearing pointe shoes instead of pre pointe shoes) and are not repeated here:

- Ankle Circles
- Rollover
- Rollover with Pilé
- Tendu Pushup
- Tendu Rollover

The exercises performed in bare feet are slowed down by 50% to allow for a better view of the movement.

The exercises in pointe shoes are shown at actual speed and slowed down by 50%. This allows you to see both the finer details and what the actual exercise will look like.

Exercises 4 Part Pointe

Exercise in Motion – VC6 – 4 Part Pointe

Starting Position

Standing facing the barre and holding onto the barre with 2 hands
Legs and feet in second position, no wider than heels under sits bones

Movement Sequence

Shift the weight slightly onto the supporting side to allow the gesture leg to move. Lift the heel to $\frac{1}{4}$ height. (1)

Continue to lift the heel to $\frac{1}{2}$ height. (2)

Continue to lift the heel to $\frac{3}{4}$ height. (3)

Stretch through the ankle and toes to fully pointe the foot without shifting weight onto the gesture foot. Some dancers may need to bend their knees at this stage to achieve the tip of the toes position. (4)

Reverse the action to return to the starting position.



Starting Position



1



2



4



5

Progressions

2 hands on the barre (facing the barre)
1 hand on the barre (facing sideways to the barre)
Center floor
Repeat all of the progressions in pointe shoes

Pace – Similar to moderate tendu.

Exercises Smooth Elevé

Exercise in Motion – VC8 – Smooth Elevé

Starting Position

Standing with the feet in the indicated position
Posture pulled up, neutral pelvis and spine
Weight evenly placed on both feet

Movement Sequence

Maintain good postural alignment and straight legs, as the heels lift off of the floor. Encourage the dancer to press the balls of her feet into the floor create the movement. In turned out positions, cue the dancers to actively maintain her turnout from the top of the thigh in the hip socket throughout the exercise. The alignment of the ankles and feet should remain neutral throughout the movement. Watch for and correct any rolling in / out that occurs. The weight needs to be evenly distributed across the full platform. (1)

The dancer remains as tall and pulled up through the legs as possible as she resists the movement of lowering the heels back down to the floor. Encourage the dancer to feel a lifting movement to transition up and over the edge of the platform onto the pleats. It is important that the weight return to the even distribution between the base of all toes and heels. (2)



1



2



1



2

Progressions

2 hands on the barre – all positions
1 hand on the barre – all positions
Center floor – all positions

Pace

Similar tempo as would be used for medium or moderate tendus.

Exercises Smooth Elev 

Exercise in Motion – VC8 – Smooth Elev 

Starting Position

Standing with the feet in the indicated position
Posture pulled up, neutral pelvis and spine
Weight evenly placed on both feet

Movement Sequence

Maintain good postural alignment and straight legs, as the heels lift off of the floor. Encourage the dancer to press the balls of her feet into the floor create the movement. In turned out positions, cue the dancers to actively maintain her turnout from the top of the thigh in the hip socket throughout the exercise. The alignment of the ankles and feet should remain neutral throughout the movement. Watch for and correct any rolling in / out that occurs. The weight needs to be evenly distributed across the full platform. (1)

The dancer remains as tall and pulled up through the legs as possible as she resists the movement of lowering the heels back down to the floor. Encourage the dancer to feel a lifting movement to transition up and over the edge of the platform onto the pleats. It is important that the weight return to the even distribution between the base of all toes and heels. (2)



1



2



1



2

Progressions

2 hands on the barre – all positions
1 hand on the barre – all positions
Center floor – all positions

Pace

Similar tempo as would be used for medium or moderate tendus.

Exercises

Reverse Forced Arch Series

Exercise in Motion- VC11 – Reverse Forced Arch Series

Starting Position

Standing with the feet in the indicated position
Posture pulled up, neutral pelvis and spine
Weight evenly placed on both feet

Movement Sequence

Press up to elev e in the indicated position, maintaining alignment, turnout and posture. (1)

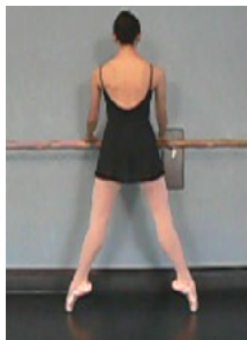
Pli  into forced arch. Watch for the students lowering too far over their boxes. Cue the dancers to maintain the same amount of turnout throughout the exercise. Often dancers will tilt their pelvis forward during this movement thinking that they are increasing the depth of the pli , watch for changes of body alignment and cue the dancer to drop her tailbone if the shifting occurs. (2)

Maintain the depth of the pli  and lower the heels to the floor. Pay special attention to keeping the pelvis neutral here. The dancers will have to lift up slightly to roll off of their platforms. (3)

Stretch the legs to return to the starting position. Cue the dancers to lengthen the back of their legs or press their heels into the floor to straighten the legs. The body's natural tendency during this movement is to lose turnout, encourage the students to actively maintain their turnout without gripping. (4)



Start Position



1



2



3



4

Progressions

2 hands on the barre
1 hand on the barre

Pace

Speed appropriate for moderate tendu.

Pointe Shoe Resources

Bloch

www.blochworld.com

Pointe Shoes

Alpha
Amelie Soft
Aspiration
Axiom
Axis
B Morph
Balance
Balance – European
Heritage
Jetsream
Serenade, Serenade MKII, TMT Serenade
Serene
Signature Performance and Rehearsal
Sonata, Sonata MKII, TMT Sonata
Suprema and Suprema MKII
Synergy, Synergy $\frac{3}{4}$, Synergy MKII

Capezio

www.capeziodance.com

Pointe Shoes

Aerial
Aria and Aria ES
Contempora
Elan
Glissé, Glissé ES, Glissé Pro and Glissé ES Pro
Pavlowa
Plié I and Plié II
Tendu I and Tendu II
Tiffany

Capulet

www.capuletworld.com

Pointe Shoes

D-30 Evolution

Lesson Plan 12

Music Suggestions

My Favorite Ballet Class – Lisa Harris (Band = track name)

Exercise 1 – Rollover with Plié – Center (*Band – I Can't Make You Love Me – 1 band per side*)

4x each position alternating feet each rollover – 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th

Exercise 2 – Tendu Rollover – Center (*Band – Angel of Music – 1 band per side*)

4x en croix from 1st position – 1 measure per movement– tendu, rollover, return to tendu, close 1st

Exercise 3 – Prances – Center (*Band – New York State of Mind – 1 band for full exercise*)

4 sets each parallel and turned out – 4 counts per prance

Exercise 4 – Tendu Push Up with Ronds de Jambe – Center (*Band – Stranger in the Night– 1 band for full exercise*)

1 set per side – Tendu out, lower to ball of foot and back to tendu 4x, quick ronds de jambe to side, repeat, quick open to the back and repeat, open to the side and repeat, transfer the weight to that leg through 2nd and take the

Exercise 5 – Plié on Relevé – 1 hand on the barre (*Band – Chess– 1 band per side with extra music*)

1 set in parallel 1st, 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th positions

Elevé in 1st on the intro, plié on relevé 3x (2 measures each direction), roll down, change position, elevé and repeat through all positions. At the end of 5th position return to 1st.

Exercise 6 – Battement Soutenu - Side – 2 hands facing the barre (*Band – Theme and Variations– 1 band for the whole exercise*)

8x side – 1 measure tendu in plié, 1 measure pull up to to sus-sous, 2 measures to lower with straight legs.

Exercise 7 – 4 Part Elevé -2 hands facing the barre, (*Band – Skylark – 2 ½ bands for the full exercise*)

2x in parallel 1st, 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th position

Exercise 8 – Battement Soutenu – Front – 1 hand on the barre (*Band – Theme and Variations– 1 band for the whole exercise*)

8x to the front on each leg – 2 counts tendu in plié, 2 counts pull up to sus-sous, 4 counts lower with straight legs

Exercise 9 – Plié, Relevé – 2 hands on the barre (*Band – Memory – 1 ½ bands for full exercise*)

1 set in each position in parallel 1st, 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th position – repeat all on 2nd side

Plié, relevé 3x and change position

Exercise 10 – Battement Soutenu – Back – 1 hand on the barre (*Band – Theme and Variations– 1 band for the whole exercise*)

8x to the back on each leg – 2 counts tendu in plié, 2 counts pull up to sus-sous, 4 counts lower with straight legs

Exercise 11 – Forced Arch Series – 1 hand on the barre (*Band – Karen's Theme – 1 band per side*)

4x 1st position, 2nd, 4th and 5th position

Exercise 12 – Pas Marché – Across the floor (*Band – 60 Years On*)

Pas Marché using relevé to $\frac{3}{4}$ height for the step and then lower to plié with the coupé.

Exercise 13 – Reversed Forced Arch Series - 1 hand on the barre (*Band – Karen's Theme – 1 band per side*)

4x 1st position, 2nd, 4th and 5th position

Lesson Plan 12 – continued

Exercise 14 – Échappé 5th to 4th – 2 hands facing the barre (*Band – Fiddler on the Roof – 1 band for whole exercise*)

4x – demi plié 5th position, échappé to 4th position on relevé, close 5th position demi plié, stretch knees

Exercise 15 – Bourrée 1st – Across the floor (*Band – S'Wonderful*)

1x straight across the room to the right and to the left

Exercise 16 – Relevé Replacing – 2 hands facing the barre (*Band – Pachelbel's Canon- 1 band per side*)

4x 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th position, plié, relevé with replace, plié, stretch

Exercise 17 – Pas de Bourrée Under - simple – 2 hands facing the barre (*Band – Supercalifragilistic – 1 band for the whole exercise*)

8x alternating feet

Exercise 18 – Pas de Bourrée Over- simple – 2 hands facing the barre (*Band – Supercalifragilistic – 1 band for the whole exercise*)

8x alternating feet

Exercise 19 – Bourrée 5th Preparation – Flexing – 2 hands facing the barre (*Band – Coda – 1 band for the whole exercise*)

8x alternating feet with the right foot in front. On the 8th one, close the foot from back to front to prepare for the 2nd side.

Exercise 20 – Bourrée 5th Preparation – Flicks – 2 hands facing the barre - (*Band – Coda – 1 band for the whole exercise*)

16x alternating feet with the right foot in front. On the last one, close the front foot from back to the front to prepare for the 2nd side