

Beginner Ballet Skills Set

All classes learn and work at these beginning skills. These are the foundation for core strength, body control, and for building more difficult dance steps. When an adequate level of these skills is reached, students will be assigned to classes that introduce more difficult skills to build their movement vocabulary.

For illustrated definitions, refer to "Step-by-Step Ballet Class" book from our dance studio. Cost \$15

Pull Up/Posture: Straight body, shoulders relaxed, bottom and tummy tucked in, collar-bone open to front. A dancer must always think about the way he or she is standing, for nothing will work correctly unless the body is held upright with the weight over the feet and without a sagging or arching in the spine. It takes a long time to achieve this correct posture and so, although it will not always be mentioned in each exercise, you must always think about it during class or when practicing alone. (page 24)

Turn-Out: Turning out from the hip for proper feet position. Holding hips and knees parallel. Heels looking at each other. The essential position of the feet and legs for ballet.

AT THE BARRE:

Degagé: [deh-gah-JAY] To lift the foot away from the body and slightly off the floor, brushing the floor while lifting. Can be done front, side, from first.

Demi-Plié: [deh-MEE plee-AY] Small bend of the knee. A movement fundamental to ballet that calls for the knees to bend in alignment over the toes without casing the heels of the feet to lift off the floor and keeping spine straight. Will perform in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions. (page 26)

Port de Bras: [por-deh-BRAH] Passing the arms through various positions. *Carriage of the arms.* Also done center floor.

Preparation: To prepare; a term that usually describes a movement before a particular exercise and usually involves both hands and feet. Each instructor's "preparation" may be taught differently.

Relevé: [rel-ah-VAY] Also called *rise*. To rise from the whole foot to a demi-pointe (onto the ball of the foot). (page 64)

Ronds de jambe à terre: [rahn-de-JAHM a tare] Start as if doing tendu front then circle turned out leg to the side and back. Legs will not cross over each other. Also done from back to front. (page 76-77) At this level, just pointe front, side, back, side.

Tendu: [tahn-DOO] A basic ballet movement where the leg is extended straight out from the supporting leg with the foot fully pointed, it can be done front, side or back. The toes do not leave the floor, but rather slide from one position to another. Point and close. (pages 56-57)

CENTER FLOOR:

Ballet Walk: To walk with straight spine, leading with pointed toes (not landing on the heel first), keeping feet stretched and hips staying even. (page 27 "walking with stretched feet")

Bounces: Keeping your feet side by side, bounce up and down like a rubber ball, bending knees for a soft landing. The more you stretch your legs and feet, the higher you'll go. Try to bounce in time with music. (page 27)

Bourrée: [boo-RAY] From 5th, step, close, step, close on demi-pointe (ball of the foot) directly under the body.

Bourrée Turn: turning in a circle using the bourrée step.

Box Step: crossing one foot in front of other, then bringing crossed-over foot around and crossing over first foot, then bring first foot back to parallel position, followed by 2nd foot (finish in 2nd).

Chassé [shah-SAY] / **Gallops – Sideways and Forward:** With pointed toes, stretch and hop with leading leg to side; close your second foot to the first with a spring in the air, toes well pointed. Come down on 2nd foot with 1st ready to step out side again. A traveling move. (page 35)

Curtsey: Start with feet in 1st position, holding skirt in both hands. Step to the side nearest your teacher first. Close other foot behind the leg upon which you are standing with toes on floor and heel raised. Bend supporting leg, keeping back and head poised. (page 38 "Reverence")

Grapevine

Marching, adding arms later in season

Pivot turn

Push Turn: Step out to side, push off to move body in circle keeping inside leg stationary (moving into ball of foot to allow body to spin on inside leg). If pushing off with R.

Révérance: [RAY-vay-rahns] Also known as a curtsy or bow, it also refers to the dancer bending forward over an extended foot en pointe brushing the back of the opposite hand from opposing shoulder down the body over the foot, finishing by raising the body with the extended arm.

Rhythm Exercises

Sauté: [soh-TAY] to jump; a jump off the floor with either one or both feet. (page 34)

Skipping

Soutenu Turn: [soot-NEW] Cross one foot over the other, turning in the same direction in demi-pointe (balls of feet)

Step-Hop: Preparation for Sauté (below) Step forward with one leg then immediately hop up on that leg, leaving the other leg straight behind.

Swaying: Changing of weight from side to side standing in second position. (page 32)

3-step Turn: Step out to side, spotting to side, bring opposing leg around front to end in 2nd, body turns to back, still spotting side, then first leg comes around front to turn body back to front, head spinning to re-spot at side.

3 Foot Positions: (pages 22-23)

First: Feet turned out, heels together

Second: Feet turned out and apart about 1-2 foot lengths, weight evenly distributed.

Third: Feet turned out, heel of front foot at the middle of the back foot, weight equal.

6 Arm Positions: (pages 19-20 – note 4th position is illustrated with an optional position and is different than defined)

Bras bah: [brah bah] The arms form a circle in front of the body with the palm facing each other and the little fingers almost touching the thighs (elbows never touch).

First: Arms rounded and open slightly below shoulder level (like holding a beach ball)

Second: Arms rounded and open to sides, just below shoulder level (blow the ball up)

Third: Arms rounded, one stays out in 2nd the other above the head but visible without tilting head back.

Fourth: Arms (beginning from 3rd) bring bottom arm in 1st position arm, leaving top arm overhead in 3rd.

Fifth: Arms both above head, fingers not touching, should be able to see them without tilting head back.