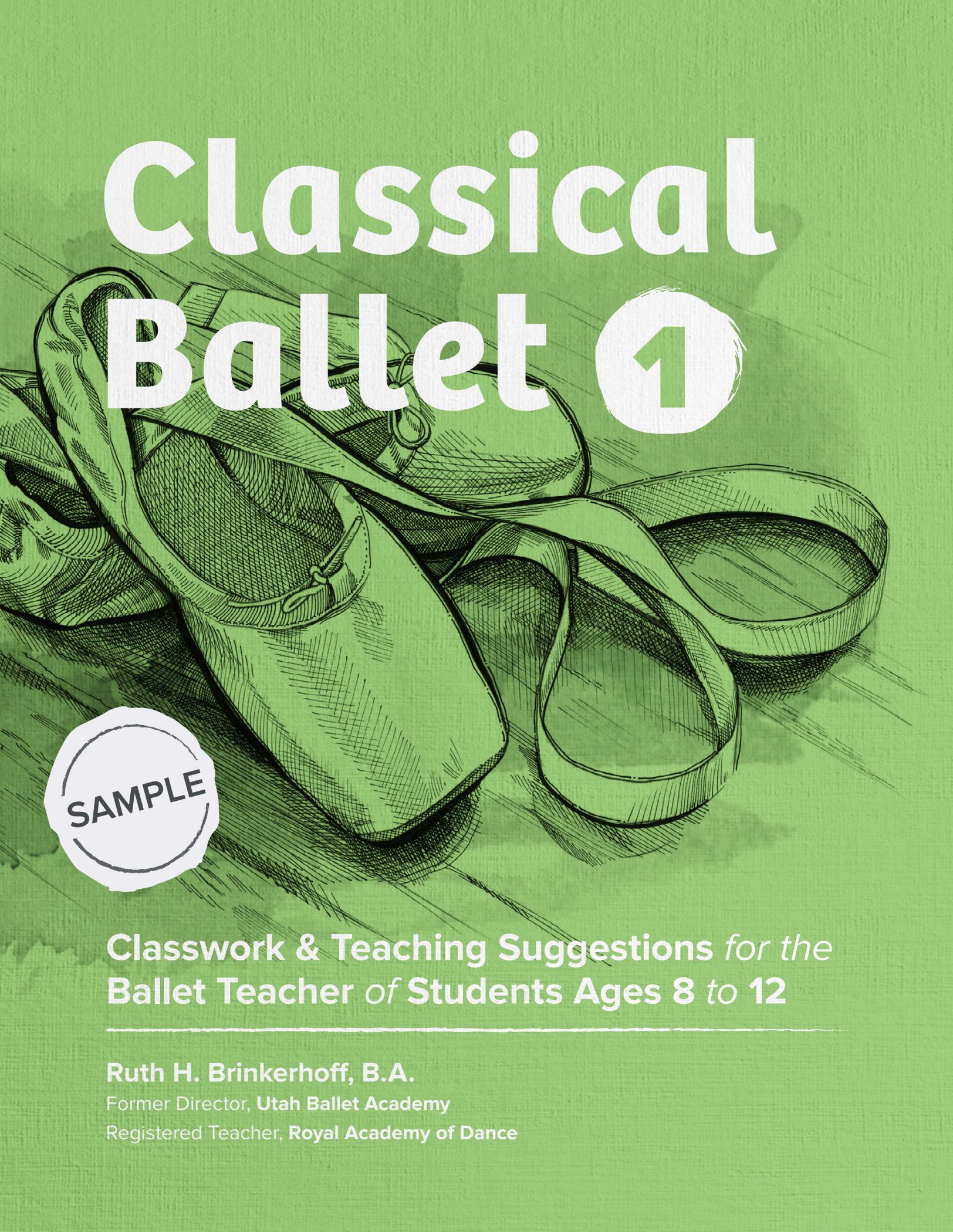


Classical Ballet 1



SAMPLE

**Classwork & Teaching Suggestions *for the*
Ballet Teacher *of* Students Ages 8 to 12**

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Former Director, **Utah Ballet Academy**

Registered Teacher, **Royal Academy of Dance**

Classical Ballet 1:

Classwork and Teaching Helps for the Ballet Teacher of Students age 8 to 12

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The Teacher Must Decide

The Ballet Arts series of manuals provides information, activities and suggestions for the teaching of ballet to children. The materials in these books have worked well for the author, and for other teachers of her acquaintance. However, the author cannot know what approach or which physical activities will be appropriate and safe for any particular teacher, class, or student. It is the responsibility of each ballet teacher to use his or her best judgment in applying the information and teaching suggestions contained herein, and in using the activities, enchainements, dances and teaching materials contained in the Ballet Arts series from The Ballet Source.

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Suggestions For Teachers

Students ready to begin Classical Ballet 1 should be able to do a Ballet Arts for Young Children: Level 4 class without difficulty. If any of the students have difficulty with natural movements or pre-ballet skills, include that work in the Ballet I class for as long as it is needed.

During the first few lessons, observe which students seem to have problems, and with which skills. Make a list to use in planning future lessons.

Movements that should be fairly easy for them to learn include:

- Steps that move forward: ballet walks, parallel retiré walks, the ballet run, skipping, marching with arms swinging naturally in opposition, forward gallops, changing feet with every fourth gallop.
- Steps that move sideways: side gallops, step, close, step, point in front.
- Movements done in place: point forward and close, heel forward and close, swaying, tip toe turns, sautés in parallel position, spring points to the front, quarter turn jumps with spotting.
- Floor work: flexing and extending feet, turning legs in and out, lifting and lowering legs a few inches; curling and stretching the body

(Turtles), using hands and arms to show expression, and for miming simple story ideas.

Remember the “twelve week rule”. It works for all ages, all levels. **It takes about twelve weeks to learn a new skill, or to break a bad habit.**

It also takes about twelve weeks for a bad habit to become permanent! So, don't feel that every mistake needs to be corrected on every exercise. It works better to pick one main thing to fix per class, and make it a class lesson.

In a week or two, when that item is coming along nicely, add the next improvement. In this way, students will not become overwhelmed with too much information at once. They will be far more likely to understand, remember, and accomplish their technical improvement.

About coordination: Just because a student is eight or older, is no guarantee that their natural coordination development is at the expected level!

Some students may still need to work on skills from the pre-ballet grades. Work these items into the Ballet I class in slightly more complicated formats so that it does not seem like “baby work” to these older students.

For example, practice for skipping could be set in this way: 8 skips

forward around the circle, 8 walks forward, grab hands and face into the circle for 8 side gallops to the right, drop hands and do 4 jumps turning right 1/2 turn to face other direction. Wait 4 counts, then go the other direction around the circle.

Use the review of basic movement skills as a warmup for class, or as a diversion halfway through the class. Since you are after the improvement of natural coordination, you will not want to “correct” these exercises. Just get the students coordinating with each other, with the music, and the choreography. These activities can be done with partners.

Anything done to improve coordination needs to be fun, and non-technical. Best results occur when the student is not concerned very much with the movements being practiced, but is performing spontaneously, and concentrating on the fun of working together with classmates, and on the challenge of the choreographic setting.

Ballet I is where the barre is introduced. All exercises done at the barre should face the barre for at least the first semester. Second term students can try a few things standing sideways to the barre, so long as their posture does not become unbalanced .

If your barre has a mirror behind it, this lets the students see you in the mirror, and you can guide them in their performance. If not, you might want to do new things with backs

to the barre, and arms stretched out along the barre, so they can see your signals and gain confidence as they are learning. Another solution is to use a portable barre. Or, learn the exercise in the center, then try it at the barre.

Demonstrate facing them, in mirror image. Demonstrate with the amount of turnout you want them to use, 90°, not what your personal best turnout is. They will copy!

Ballet I students are pretty smart. They will learn an exercise pretty quick if they know you expect this of them, and it is presented clearly in a setting within their ability, and they are given the opportunity to practice it in class.

They will not usually put forth the effort to learn and remember things if they know they don't really need to, that they will always be able to follow the teacher, or a demonstrator.

Starting at age eight, students are capable of taking some responsibility for their own learning. It is the teacher's job to present, to guide, to help with improvements. It is the student's job to learn what is presented, and to work on improving it.

Make it clear that they will be expected to respond with that learning both as a class, and as individuals. This is why they need to have a memorized barre, and some memorized items in the center. Otherwise, why learn it if it will be all different next week anyway?

When the setting of the pliés or tendus

is always different, the students must focus their attention on the setting, the choreography. This leaves no room in their concentration to work on improving the movements themselves. Technical improvement is what you want. Teach in a way that makes it possible and probable.

If there is always someone to follow, the students will, by necessity, focus on following, not on learning, or remembering, or improving. An assistant can help while they are learning, but you need to let the class do it on their own as soon as possible. Then, the assistant can help you watch for those who need assistance, and give individual help.

Put the burden of learning on the students. Have confidence in them. Present a movement. Let them try it. Compliment their efforts. Repeat.

When they have the general idea (not perfection!) of the exercise, let them try it. If you make improvements, make only one, and let them immediately do it again, working for the improvement. Compliment their efforts.

Many of the physical limitations given for younger ages are now changed. But not all. These kids are still growing, and still need to not have their joints and muscles over stressed. Pain should be avoided.

Be sure feet are lined up correctly with knees. Correct skeletal alignment in natural movement makes correct

alignment for ballet possible.

Correct alignment for ballet makes correct muscle use happen. Correct muscle use is what constitutes correct technique, at all levels of study. In beginners, something can be right,

and actually look wrong. Damage is caused when it looks “right for ballet,” but is wrong in terms of skeletal alignment or muscle use.

Keep the exercises fairly short. Change legs often, change types of movements frequently to give moments of rest to various muscle groups.

Long exercises requiring concentration on technical effort result in the muscles getting too tired to do their best work.

Short exercises, within their ability to concentrate and use the muscular control needed for technical correctness will result in faster technical progress over time.

Longer exercises that are appropriate for beginning students will improve their coordination: skips, gallops, polkas, etc. This helps their aerobic development and, it strengthens the base of natural movement which is necessary for success in ballet.

There is no need to worry about “muscle endurance” at this stage. Endurance will come, gradually, year by year. Working specifically for muscle endurance during the middle childhood years will quite likely

enlarge the muscles unnecessarily, and slow down the development of artistry and technique.

Get an understanding of the basic elements of ballet into them first. This will take about four years!

I used to think my first year ballet students looked awful. Then I saw some pictures of first year students in a book about the Russian ballet schools. Their beginners looked even worse! Everyone's beginners look bad when compared to the more advanced classes.

Learn to see the beginnings of correct effort, the technique in embryo. Keep the work within their abilities, and your beginners will look wonderful! They will look good for where they are on that road to learning ballet. They will improve year by year.

Seven Classical Ballet Principles For The Ballet 1 Class

I. First Principle: Stance, or posture, as is correct for beginners of this age.

Begin with the best alignment the student can do easily, without stress. Strength will come. Avoid straining and overusing muscles: Give them time to strengthen.

Work from the feet up. Weight is evenly distributed over the triangle of the foot.

Achilles tendon should be perpendicular to the floor: feet are not pronated, rolled, or sickled.

Hip bones remain horizontal, and facing squarely to the front.

Back is lengthened, as to student's ability.

Shoulders are centered above hips, not twisted, not pulled back. Shoulders should be relaxed, down at their lowest comfortable position.

Head is lifted, centered above and between shoulders. Neck is stretched upward.

II. Second Principle: Correct use of demi plié.

Students must gain the strength needed to use the demi plié correctly at this level.

When knees bend, the rules for feet still apply. Feet must be in alignment with knees.

Demi plié is a movement, not a position.

The movement should fill the music.

Posture must not change during the plié.

III. Third Principle: Correct understanding and use of turnout.

Legs turn out. Feet come along for the ride! Legs turn out equally, especially in 3rd, 4th, and 5th positions. Whether on the floor or in the air, equal turnout from the hip socket is the rule.

When feet or legs extend forward or back, they are in line with that hip joint and do not cross the center of the body. Use an open fourth in all movements for beginners.

IV. Fourth Principle: Correct and complete use of the joints and muscles in the feet.

The feet should be used completely, while in contact with the floor, whenever the foot moves out and in from first, whether in a battement tendu or as part of another movement.

When moving out from first position, the arch stretches as the foot moves outward in a straight line. The toes remain relaxed until the ball of the foot is about to leave the floor. From there, the metatarsal

joint extends the toes showing a fully pointed foot at the end of the movement.

The same movements are reversed as the foot returns to first position.

V. Fifth Principle: Classical styling of the arms in positions and during port de bras.

Arms always go through first position, or a low first, on their way to other positions.

The path of a port de bras is up in front, down at the sides.

Hands never cross the center line of the body in the standard classical positions.

VI. Sixth Principle: Head and eyes complete the classical style.

Head lifts and moves, independent of the neck; eyes look where head is facing.

Movements of the head do not involve the shoulders.

VII. Seventh Principle: Musicality.

Students must learn to listen to the accompaniment, and to follow it.

Nearly all children old enough for technical ballet are able to distinguish musical introductions, and can learn to start on the main music.

Insist that all classwork begin and end with the dancer showing proper respect for the music. If they have trouble hearing the beats, teach them to “sing” the movements with the melody as they perform the exercises.

Using the Principles In Class

A Locomotor Warmup Helps Them Dance!

It warms up their bodies by a gentle use of all muscles; increases circulation; “wakes them up” with a feeling of fun; gives a chance for interaction with classmates, and contributes greatly to the improvement of coordination.

Example: 2 gallops on the right, two on the left, 4 skips, repeated around the circle. Can do as partners, outside partner crossing over in front on the skips each time.

Demi Plié

Don't collapse or sit, keep posture lifted; maintain consistent turnout.

Battement Tendu

Hip placement perfect: hips horizontal, not tilted forward or back, not tucked under, facing squarely to the front. Then turn legs out to ability, not beyond.

Tendus forward or back go directly forward of the position they start in.

Tendus from first are to the open fourth.

In later grades, tendus from third are between the open and crossed fourth, in a “closed” or Cecchetti fourth. Tendus from fifth go to the crossed fourth.

Grand Battement Devant

Backs are stable, body quiet; leg moves alone, weight is centered on standing leg.

Legs off the floor are always in the open fourth, or in 2nd; never in a crossed fourth.

Making Corrections That Last

Avoid correcting students during the music, it prevents them from listening to it.

Correct only one item or idea per exercise, give it as an improvement, not a criticism.

Repeat the exercise after the improvement, to give them a chance to try the improvement. Compliment their efforts, even though they are not perfect! Perfection is a process, not a place.

A Way to Help the Arms

Teach students the placement of first and second positions while lying on the floor on their backs. The control needed from the upper back in first position can be felt better in this position.

Also, the keeping of the arms forward of the body in second is easier to understand. Elbows don't touch the floor in second position.

Can do fifth here, too, and feel whether the shoulders stay in place as they should; can see fingers. From fifth, draw rainbows to second.

Allegro

Calf muscles throw you into the air, shin muscles catch you when you land. BOTH must be strong and flexible. Exercises using flexed feet help strengthen the landing muscles for soft graceful allegro.

A sense of the centering of balance and of a controlled transferring of weight is need in jumps just as much as it is in those steps done on the ground.

Hops in Attitude Devant

Stretch the underneath leg and foot. Lifted foot must not cross center line of body.

Learning this movement starts them on controlling the legs during grand allegro.

Polkas, Skips, Gallops

All gallops, skips, polkas begin with a hop.

In the forward polka, legs and feet should stretch underneath and nearly meet in an extended third position at the top of each hop. When turning the polka, spot the turn. Tuck the lifted foot on the calf with knee turned out. The half turn happens on the hop.

Grand Allegro

The athletic shoes that students wear

every day give wonderful protection to the feet. Then, when they put on ballet shoes, the feet are no longer protected, and are more vulnerable to injury than in previous generations.

Approach any grand allegro type movement with caution until sufficient strength has been built in the feet and legs. Beginning students do enjoy the running and leaping, but be aware that it should be done gently, naturally, not too high, and without technical details.

Free Or Unset Enchainements

Once the class has learned some steps, an occasional free enchainement will sharpen their quickness in learning, and give a more interesting practice of the steps.

Keep it simple, easy, fun. Such as: one or two technical steps then a short run and curtsey, or skips finishing with a ballet pose.

Second semester, Give them one in class each week. Keep these within the students' ability to do well on the third time through.

Using The Open Fourth Position

Crossed fourth is opposite fifth, and open fourth is opposite first. Fifth position and the crossed fourth position actually prevent the best use of the muscles, those that rotate the leg outward, and produce turnout.

Therefore, should spend the first year moving in and out of first position, adding third position the second year,

and saving fifth position until the intermediate grades when the strength for turnout is secure.

It is very important to establish strong movement habits to the open fourth, because once the leg leaves the floor, it opens to the open fourth position, even when coming from fifth.

The crossed fourth is correct to use only when both feet are in contact with the floor, as in tendus from fifth, relevés in fourth, etc.

The original ballet fourth was an open fourth! The crossed fourth is a modern addition, to give a more centered appearance during performances, and to compliment the fifth position in pointe work.

Ballet Theory Is the Use of Terminology

Theory is the defining and naming of the steps, movements, and positions used in ballet. Students need to use the language of ballet. That means the teacher must use it consistently in order to set the right example.

In the pre-ballet classes I'm sure you did not hesitate to say "point, together", or "gallop, gallop, gallop" as they were doing these movements. As the students progress into "real" ballet, with more of the traditional French terms, it is even more important that you use the correct names of things as you present them, and as the students do them.

These words, like any other words they have ever learned, are not going to be learned without a lot of correct usage. They need to hear, see, do, and say.

Make sets of flash cards to use occasionally in class. Or wall charts. Handouts to take home help, but there does need to be something visual in the classroom as well.

Teaching Them To Be Musical

Many dance teachers find this difficult. Most do not teach it directly, but hope or assume the students will absorb it through the ballet work in class.

Idea: To make them aware of differences in blending dance with music, choose an exercise that is easy to do, and very well learned. Try it to different pieces of music, with different speeds and feelings, showing artistic differences which match the feel of the music.

Rather than searching for recorded music for something like this, find a music teacher or piano accompanist who will look at the ballet exercise, then find for you short selections from the classics with which to do the various tempos and feelings.

These can be recorded by the pianist ahead of time. A single piece of music can sometimes be played at varying speeds and with different dynamics.

Another Idea: Try doing an exercise with a metronome. It is not as easy as it sounds! We hear a great deal more

than just the beats in a piece of music. We depend on the total picture of sound that the music makes when we dance.

This should make the students aware of the relationship of music to dance, and of the multiple components in music.

Music is a very important partner in dance. Yet, most dance teachers have very little background in music, and what they do have seldom applies to the teaching of dance.

Find a piano accompanist or music teacher who can understand your needs, and help you to help your students blend their dancing with the music.

Hopefully, this discussion of beginning principles will be helpful to you in planning the year's work. May your classes be fun, and may they create wonderful dancers!

Teaching Placement For Ballet 1

Ballet Posture

Stand tall, reasonably straight, weight balanced correctly over feet: the first and most important lesson in ballet.

1. Stand evenly on the triangle of the foot, weight evenly distributed between the two feet. Two thirds of the weight is on the balls of the feet, one third on the heels.
2. Feet must be correctly aligned with the knees in all movements, with insteps lifted to form the arch.
3. Legs are turned out at the hip joints.
4. From the waist, pull tail downward, and stomach upward.
5. Pelvic bone held is level and square.
6. Shoulders are relaxed, shoulder blades flat against the back.
7. Arms are relaxed, slightly rounded.
8. Neck is stretched gently upward, and is vertical; head is lifted, and moves independently of the neck.
9. Eyes look ahead, with expression.
10. When the body is centered within the lines of gravity, it takes less effort to stand, and movement becomes easier.

For some, this new way of standing may take getting used to. But, the body

will adjust to it, and eventually feel at ease and alive when standing correctly for ballet.

“The total picture of a dancer: legs, arms, head, hands, feet, expression, can be compared to a chord on the piano, with all of the correct notes striking at the same time.”

—Alan Hooper

Feet

Feet must not roll or sickle; knees must point the same direction as toes.

This is taught with demi plié. Students must not turn feet out further than their knees (legs) can go.

The demi plié in second position is sometimes helpful in teaching use of the sartorius and outward rotators for turning out the legs. Those who find this concept difficult, can be helped with pliés and rises done in the parallel position.

Hips must be centered over the supporting legs, or leg.

This concept is taught with the “transfer of weight” exercise. Later, the concept of hips and shoulders making a rectangle which must have “square corners” and which must balance over the leg or legs being stood upon, may be explained.

Another help: stand facing the barre in

second position. Shift the weight over the right leg, pointing the left foot. Hips must center over the right leg, and be level. Shift to 2nd, then to the left leg, checking the centering of the hips in each of the three positions.

Knees are pulled up when straight.

This can be taught with leg lifts and rises, and used in battement tendus. Eventually it will be applied to sautés. They must not confuse the straightening of the knees with the incorrect throwing back of the knee joints.

Movements are isolated.

In grand battement devant only the leg moves. In sautés, the legs do the jumping, the rest of the body is quiet. In port de bras, the arms move independently from the shoulders.

Special Rule For Knees and Feet:

When the heels are off the ground, the knees are straight; when the knees are bent, the heels must be on the ground.

This enables the leg muscles to do their intended jobs during jumps. The calf muscles throw the dancer into the air for sautés; they do the work of lifting the heels and the weight of the body in rises and relevés.

The muscles on the front of the lower legs control the landing from sautés, and the coming down from rises and relevés. These “shin muscles” should be used during demi pliés, and when

landing from jumps. If heels pop up, they are not being used.

An exercise to help the shin muscles learn to work and strengthen:

- 1 Demi plié and stay down.
- 2 Lift toes off the floor, keeping everything else the same. You can feel the shin muscle tighten slightly.
- 3 Relax the toes to the floor.
- 4 Straighten from the plié.

Use of the shin muscles is taught with demi plié and rise. Be sure the two sets of leg muscles truly do take turns, and do not overlap their efforts.

This coordination of the two opposing sets of lower leg muscles produces good ballon in a dancer. If the above rule is followed in all adage and barre movements, it will help the allegro to be smoother and more graceful.

Hips must be parallel to the floor.

Hips are either perpendicular to or parallel to the barre; and must face squarely forward of the dancer without twisting or turning. To get correct advanced placement, the student must go through the absolutely square beginning placement for several years. This builds correct muscle use.

Port de bras is a good place to practice holding the body muscles correctly. It is important that posture be held correctly during battement tendus, as this exercise tends to train the muscles and to stabilize the basic placement.

A tiny movement of hips in tendus will lead to larger errors in larger movements, and to more difficulty with balance in the center.

When the leg lifts to the back, the hips will tilt to face the floor, but still remain absolutely parallel to the floor. In order for this to happen, the shoulders must move forward and lower, as the back assumes a curved position due to the tilt of the pelvis.

Beginners should exaggerate this forward motion of the body until it is well understood, and until the upper and middle back areas are strong enough to begin to help lift the leg.

Under no circumstances should a student try to remain in the basic upright posture while lifting the leg to the back.

It is not really the exact “position” that we are after in ballet, but the correct and most efficient use of the various muscle groups.

When this concept is understood, teachers do a much better job of preparing students for advanced work. They do not allow beginners to strain for an “advanced line” before their muscles are strong enough to do it correctly. It takes a few years for

the turnout muscles to strengthen sufficiently to actually do their share of the work in lifting the leg, for example, in an arabesque.

To require the student to lift the leg to their maximum ability before these muscles are fully trained causes other, stronger muscles to take over and do this work, leaving the turnout muscles to get continually weaker by comparison. Lifting too high too soon can prevent correct technique at more advanced levels.

Finding Their Best Posture

Have the student stand with feet parallel, two thirds of the weight on the front half of the feet, and one third on the heels.

Arms are relaxed, head is straight and level. They need to feel as tall and in balance as possible.

Now, lay your hand, flat, gently on top of the student’s head. Ask the student to not change her posture at all, but to try to keep her head in contact with your hand. Lift your hand very slowly, about a half inch, perhaps a little more, for as long as the student can pull up taller.

Can They Skip? Can They Do Spring Points?

Skipping requires balance, symmetry in muscle use, and natural coordination.

leg without losing balance, hands on waist.

12 Basic Pre-Skipping Skills

1. **Standing** evenly on two feet, feet matched.
2. **Walking** smoothly, steps of equal length; equal use of both legs.
3. **Running** smoothly, equal use of both legs, arms moving freely for balance.
4. **Crawling:** knees are picked up, not dragged, equal use of both sides of body; good sense of balance shown.
5. **Jumping on two feet:** equal use of both legs, correct knee action, weight equal, in place.
6. **Arms:** swing them forward and back, in unison or alternating; lift them sideways to the horizontal, showing symmetry.
7. **Head** is held upright and level.
8. **Feet:** flex and extend ankle joints, rise easily on two feet to the quarter or demi pointe.
9. **Marching:** lift knees to the horizontal, arms swinging freely in any pattern.
10. **Hopping on one leg:** 8-10 on each

11. **Forward Gallops:** able to use either foot in front, arms held in demi second position.

12. **Side Gallops:** able to go both directions, arms in natural second.

Watch to see which skills the “non-skippers” have difficulty with.

Work these basics into the activities for the entire class for a few weeks.



If these skills seem OK, and a student is still not skipping, try having them hold hands and skip with an assigned partner who is a strong skipper. Have everyone skip with assigned partners at this time; don't draw attention to what one or two children “can't do”.

Take several lessons to teach various skipping activities. Have them skip in trios, with the weak skipper in the middle, use the “skaters arms.” Ask them to “match feet” so all three of them are using the same foot.

Spring Points

Learning spring points might help with learning skips. It develops the strength needed to hop on one leg so essential

for smooth skipping.

Spring points are challenging to learn because it is always more difficult to do a step where the two legs do different things at the same time.

Practice to get the spring points strong and steady, up off the floor, and looking good.

When they can do spring points without wobbling, work on holding arms quietly in demi second all during the exercises.

Keep posture correct by keeping head level, and the spine vertical.

Spring points are seen in many classical ballets at the professional level, such as the original version of the Black Swan variation in Swan Lake, the variation in Paquita, etc.

Spring points can be done to 2nd position. Spring points both front and side are used in traditional Highland Dancing, such as in the Sword Dance where the dancer performs in the open spaces made by two crossed swords laid on the ground.

Sample exercises for Spring Points:

Example A.

- 1 Step to the R.
- 2 Point L foot devant, & fondu on R leg.
- 3 Hop on R leg, L leg and foot stretched.
- 4 Hop on R foot again.
- 5-8 Repeat, stepping to the left.

Example B.

- 1-4 Four spring points, R foot in front.
- 5-8 Repeat with the L leg.

Example C.

- 1-2 Two sautés in first position.
- 3-4 Two spring points with R foot in front.
- 5-6 Two sautés in first position.
- 7-8 Two spring points with L foot in front.

Example D.

- 1-4 4 skips.
- 5-6 Step R, point L.
- 7-8 2 spring points.
- 1-8 Repeat all starting with other foot.

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Ballet 1 Choreography for Classwork

Using the Choreography

These exercises are typical of what ballet students age 8-12 can learn. However, no class of this age could possibly learn all of this in one year! There is enough material here to last most classes two years or more. There are exercises and dances of varying difficulties, because some students will have had good pre ballet experience, and will need harder work. Select a reasonable number of things to teach this year. If you are familiar with the students, you will know which things they are ready to learn, and which things fit best with your current program.

For a class of new students, choose about fifteen of the easier items for their first class, and see how well they do with that. Some classes may need some remedial work to sharpen up their basic movement skills. Mix in a few exercises from previous grades for them.

Pre barre warmup suggestions are included, because modern research says that dancers do much better when they are “warmed up” before the barre begins. Warmups need to be of natural movements, and to involve the entire body. Idea: write a sequence of warm up movement on a chalk board or chart, or give it orally. Give them a few minutes to figure it out, then start the music. (ie: 8 claps, 8 marches forward, 8 claps, 8 marches backward.)

Having specific ways to start and finish the class adds to the disciplined and professional appearance of any ballet class. Students also need to know what is expected of them when: they arrive early, arrive late, need to leave early, are waiting for their ride, etc. To build rapport, recognize each student individually, in a positive way, at some point during the class—perhaps while taking roll, or assigning places to dance. No student should go home feeling the teacher doesn’t care about them, or notice their efforts.

Each teacher is unique in talent, experience, and teaching style. Each class is different in how they respond to ballet lessons. Teachers should feel free to make changes in the work that are appropriate for the class, and which blend with their personal teaching style.

The music was carefully arranged with the idea of helping students to become aware of musical rhythms, so they can blend their movements successfully with music. Some students take to music quite naturally, but many do not, and they need to have music that is easy to follow.

Counting methods listed for the various exercises are suggestions. Teachers should use whichever method of counting the music seems best to them: musical beats or dancers’ counts.

I. Warming Up

1. Marching, Clapping, Skipping

Marching traditionally starts with the left foot, but dancers start with the right foot. Natural marching on the whole foot, with arms swinging freely helps coordination. For best coordination development arms must move naturally, as they will, not in any particular pattern. In exercise (b), note that adding hops to marching steps creates skips!

CW = Clock Wise = the direction the hands of the clock move.

CCW = Counter Clock Wise = opposite the direction of the clock hands.

tr# 1
♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
4m intro, 32m
Met. 98

1.a. Marching

Intro: 1-8	Face CCW, feet parallel, arms relaxed, hold.
1-64	64 continuous marches, starting with the right foot.

tr# 1
♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
4m intro, 32m
Met. 98

1.b. Clapping, Marching, Skipping

Intro: 1-8	Facing CCW, feet parallel, arms relaxed, hold.
1-16	8 claps, 8 marches forward.
1-16	8 skips forward , 8 skips backward.
1-32	Repeat all

2. Skips & Gallops

tr# 2
♪ 6/8, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 32m
Met. 144

2.a. Skipping Forward and Back

Intro: 1-4	Facing CCW around the circle, feet parallel, arms relaxed, hold.
1-64	64 continuous skips; or, 16 forward skips, 16 backward skips, repeat.

tr# 2
♪ 6/8, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 32m
Met. 144

2.b. Galloping Forward

Intro: 1-4	Facing CCW around the circle, feet parallel, arms relaxed, hold.
1-4	4 gallops forward, R foot in front.
5-8	4 gallops forward, L foot in front.
9-64	Continue through the music.

3. Positions of the Feet

These exercises are done in the center, hands on waist to help hips to stay level. For memory, say the name of each position as it is shown.

tr# 3

♩ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 98

3.a. Three Positions of the Feet

Intro: 1-6	Start with feet parallel , arms open to demi 2nd, or place hands on waist.
1-6	Open toes to 1st, hold.
7-12	Step R to 2nd, hold.
1-6	Close R to 3rd, hold.
7-12	Put feet in parallel position.
1-24	Repeat, moving L foot.

tr# 3

♩ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 98

3.b. Five Positions of the Feet

You will need to replay the music to repeat this exercise with the L foot.

Intro: 1-6	Start with feet parallel, arms open to demi 2nd, or place hands on waist.
1-6	Open toes to 1st, hold.
7-12	Point R to 2nd, lower in 2nd.
1-6	Point R in 2nd, Close to 3rd.
7-12	Point R devant, Lower in 4th.
1-6	Point R devant, Close to 5th.
7-12	Lift arms to 5th.
1-6	Lower arms to 2nd, and point R foot to 2nd.
7-12	Close feet to 1st, arms to demi 2nd, or on waist, hold.

II. Exercises at the Barre

Spend about ten to fifteen minutes at the barre this year. Technique is best improved by learning a few exercises well, so the details can receive the dancer's attention. The barre is where the muscles learn to do the special movements of ballet. The center is where that training is used to dance beautifully. The teacher is a guide, but the student is the one who actually directs his or her muscles, and teaches them what to do. The barre is their time to teach their muscles to move beautifully and well. Demi pliés and rises (elevés) are important strengthening exercises.

Movements in natural or parallel alignment are important. Strengthening in the natural alignment gives more stability to the turned out positions later on. This encourages graceful movement, and helps prevent injuries later on.

tr# 4
 ♪ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
 2m intro, 32m
 Met. 80

4.a. Demi Pliés in Parallel and 1st Positions

Intro: 1-6	Facing the barre, feet parallel, place hands on the barre.
1-18	3 Demi pliés, parallel position, use 3 cts to bend knees, and 3 to straighten.
1-6	Turn feet out to 1st, adjust posture, feel the turnout.
1-18	3 demi pliés in 1st.
1-6	Close feet to parallel position with straight knees, good posture.
1-48	Repeat all. Lower arms to bras bas to finish.

tr# 4
 ♪ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
 2m intro, 32m
 Met. 80

4.b. Demi Pliés in 1st and 2nd Positions

Intro: 1-6	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-18	3 demi plies in 1st.
1-6	Hold with straight knees, good posture, feeling the turnout.
1-18	3 demi plies in 1st.
1-6	Point R foot to 2nd, lower heel, centering weight between feet.
1-48	Repeat all in 2nd position. Lower arms to bras bas to finish.

tr# 5
 ♪ 6/8, 2 cts/m,
 2m intro, 16m
 Met. 88

5. Rises (Elevés)

At first, use only half the music. Second term, introduce the rise in 2nd. Third term, do both positions in one exercise, changing positions during the last two measures (last 12 counts).

Intro: 1-2	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-2	Rise to quarter or demi point.
3-4	Lower heels in 1st.
5-12	Repeat twice, making three rises in all.
13-16	Wait, or demi plié and straighten, to rest legs.
1-16	Repeat all, then lower arms to bras bas.

6. Battement Tendu

Verbal cues for the movements: “stretch foot, stretch toes, relax toes, relax foot.” Saying cues in time with the music helps them to know when to do each part of the movement. Once learned, the exercise can be done twice as quickly, doing the exercise twice. Second position is learned first because it is easier to keep the turnout even, and it is easier to understand how to use the two parts of the foot in this position .

tr# 6

♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 60

6.a. Battement Tendu a la Seconde

Intro: 1-4	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-4	Slide R foot to 2nd, showing a modified demi pointe, then to a full point.
5-8	Return R foot to 1st, showing the demi pointe, then closing.
1-8	Repeat.
1-16	Repeat with L foot; lower arms to bras bas

tr# 6

♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 60

6.b. Battement Tendu Devant/Derriere

Teach devant and derriere separately at first. They will need to make an extra effort to stand tall, and keep hips absolutely still when moving the leg to the back. Keep the turnout even on both legs. There is a feeling of the foot being “underneath” you as it moves out to the back, then in. For some, there is a feeling of “folding” the foot at the ankle as they return to 1st.

Intro: 1-4	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-4	Slide R foot towards open 4th in front, showing demi pointe, then full point.
5-8	Slide back to 1st, showing the demi pointe, then closing.
1-8	Repeat derriere.
1-16	Repeat all with L foot; lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 7

♪ 6/8, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 52

7. Battement Tendu En Croix

This exercise replaces #6 when they are ready. Play the music a second time for the L foot.

Intro: 1-4	Facing the barre, feet in 1st or 3rd, place hands on the barre.
1-2	Slide R foot forward to open 4th, showing demi pointe, full point.

3-4	Slide in to 1st or 3rd, showing the demi pointe, then closing.
5-8	Repeat to 2nd.
1-4	Repeat to derriere.
5-8	Repeat to 2nd.
1-16	Repeat. To finish, lower arms to bras bas, look slightly to the R.

8. Retirés

Learn the petit retiré in all three positions, and the terms devant and derriere at the same time. (See page 55 for drawings of the different retirés.) Second term introduce the demi retiré. These two retiré heights are used in many allegro steps, and as parts of adage movements such as developpés.

tr# 8
 ♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
 2m intro, 16m
 Met. 64

8.a. Petit Retiré, at the side of the leg

Intro: 1-4	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1	Lift R foot to side of ankle, toes pointed, toes touching ankle bone, (or where shoe ribbons would be), with heel pulled away from the leg.
2	Hold, saying “petit retiré”.
3-4	Lower to 1st, hold.
5-8	Repeat.
9-16	Repeat with L foot.
1-16	Repeat all; lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 8
 ♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
 2m intro, 16m
 Met. 64

8.b. Petit Retiré Devant & Derriere

Intro: 1-4	Facing the barre, feet in 3rd, R foot front, place hands on the barre.
1-2	Lift R foot petit retiré devant, fully pointed, hold, say “devant is in front”.
3-4	Lower & hold.
5-8	Lift L foot petit retiré derriere, fully pointed, hold, say “derriere is in back”
9-16	Repeat, closing L foot front on the last 2 counts.
1-16	Repeat all. Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 9 9. Pirouette Exercise

♪ 2/4, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 84

When they seem ready, try the pirouette exercise. Emphasize an exact centering of the weight, especially on count 3. They must find a perfect balance on the whole foot and be able to hold it for the pirouette. When that is learned, add the quick rise on count 5.

Intro: 1-4	Facing barre, feet in 3rd, R front, place hands on barre.
1-2	Point R to 2nd, centering weight over L leg.
3-4	Close R to 3rd front, demi plié.
5-6	Quickly lift R foot to pirouette pos. (demi retiré devant), & straighten L leg.
7-8	Close R to 3rd back, in demi plié.
9-32	Repeat through the music, alternating feet. Lower arms to bras bas.

10. Learning Grand Battement

This is done with backs to the barre with arms stretched along the barre, or in the center with hands on waist. Doing it in the center helps the posture muscles to develop evenly. They can face the barre if a portable barre is used. When their posture is secure, they can try it sideways to the barre, with the free hand on the waist, fingers forward. Work towards a strong grand battement at 45° this first year. Strength built gradually at the lower heights will make the higher battements steadier and stronger.

tr# 10 10.a. Grand Battement Devant

♪ 4/4, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 120

Intro: 1-4	Place free hands on waist, or along the barre, or on the barre.
1-	Slide R foot to tendu devant position.
2-	Lift R leg a few inches, maintaining placement.
3-	Lower to tendu position.
4-	Close to 1st.
5-32	Repeat through the music, using alternate legs, or twice with each leg and repeat. Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 10
♩ 4/4, 2 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 120

10.b. Grand Battement to 2nd Position

This is harder. Only let them lift a few inches off the floor, because the muscles will not be strong enough to hold the turnout if they lift any higher. They should feel the lift from underneath the thigh. For learning turnout correctly the leg will have to be a bit forward of the tendu position until the turnout muscles strengthen.

Intro: 1-4 Facing the barre, in 1st, place hands on the barre.

1 Slide R foot to tendu devant position.

2 Lift R leg a few inches, maintaining placement.

3 Lower to tendu position.

4 Close to 1st

5-8 Repeat.

9-16 Repeat with L leg.

1-16 Repeat all. Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 11
♩ 4/4, 4 cts/m,
2m intro, 16m
Met. 108

11. Attitude Devant

To encourage turnout, tell them to imagine they are lifting a penny on the inside of the heel that is lifting to the attitude.

Intro: 1-8 Place free hands on waist, or along the barre, or on the barre.

1-2 Slide R foot to tendu devant position.

3-4 Lift R leg a few inches, bending knee at a right angle, maintaining placement.

5-6 Lower to tendu position.

7-8 Close to 1st

9-64 Repeat through the music, using alternate legs. Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 12
♩ 3/4, 1 ct/m,
2m intro, 32m
Met. 112

12. Learning Rond de Jambe a Terre

Some classes will be ready for this, others will need to wait another year. Battement tendus front and back to the open fourth need to be learned first. Learn en dehors only for several weeks before introducing en dedans. An alternative way of counting 3/4 music is shown.

Intro: 123-223	Facing the barre, in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1 2 3	Brush R foot from first to tendu devant position.
2 2 3	R to 2nd, with circular movement, stopping where best turnout is reached, or, straight across from the toes of the L foot.
3 2 3	Close R to 1st.
4 2 3	Hold.
5-16	Repeat through the music.
1-16	Repeat with L foot.

13. Learning Fondu

A fondu is a demi pli  on one leg. This is not the “battement fondu” done in more advanced classes, but the practice of keeping well placed while standing on and bending just one leg. This 6/8 music is slow enough to count all six beats in each measure. Two slow counts per measure is also correct.

tr# 13

♩ 6/8, 6 cts/m,
2m intro, 8m
Met. 72

13.a. Battement Tendu With Fondu

Intro: 1-6	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-3	Brush R to tendu devant position, hold.
4-6	Demi pli� on L leg—this is a fondu, make sure the L knee goes out over toes.
7-9	Straighten L leg.
10-12	Close R leg to 1st.
1-48	Repeat through the music, (R, L, R, L). Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 13

♩ 6/8, 6 cts/m,
2m intro, 8m
Met. 72

13.b. Step, Point With Fondu

Verbal cues for this exercise: “step, point front, point front, close.”

Intro: 1-6	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-3	Step R to side (sliding hands along the barre to stay in front of the dancer).
4-6	Point L foot to tendu devant position, and fondu on R leg.
7-9	Slightly lift L leg, then lower it again—it’s just a tap of the toes.
10-12	Close L foot to 1st, and straighten R knee.
1-48	Repeat through the music (R, L, R, L). Lower arms to bras bas.

tr# 14 14. Sautés, in “slow motion”

♩ 4/4, 2 cts/m,
1m intro, 12m
Met. 72

This exercise is short. It is for improving the landing from sautés. Holding the plié is hard on the knees, even for this short time. Watch that the knees do not fall forward during the demi pliés. Also practice in second position. Later in the year, practice in 3rd, to improve soubresauts and changements.

Intro: 1-4	Facing the barre, feet in 1st, place hands on the barre.
1-2	Demi plié & hold.
&3	Sauté and land in 1st, knees over toes, posture straight.
4	Hold the plié, pushing knees out a tiny bit further.
5-6	Straighten the knees
7-8	Wait.
9-24	Repeat through the music. Lower arms to bras bas.

15. Port de Bras at the Barre

This is their first exercise sideways to the barre. Since the feet are not moving, posture is more likely to remain stable. Emphasize that the posture must remain steady, and not change. Shoulders do not move, just the arms.

tr# 15 15.a. Port de Bras With Turn

♩ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
2m intro, 32m
Met. 112

Intro: 1-6	Sideways to the barre, feet in 1st, place L hand on the barre.
1-3	Lift R arm to 1st, looking at hand.
4-6	Open R arm to 2nd, looking towards hand.
7-9	Lower R arm to demi 2nd.
10-12	Lower to bras bas.
1-24	Repeat twice, making three times in all.
1-3	Lift arm to 1st.
4-6	Tip toe turn to face the barre, two hands on barre.
7-9	Tip toe turn to face other way, opening free arm to 2nd.
10-12	Lower arm to bras bas.
1-48	Repeat on the other side, turning back to the first side at the end.

tr# 15 15.b. Port de Bras And Bending Sideways

♪ 3/4, 3 cts/m,
2m intro, 32m
Met. 112

Intro: 1-6	Sideways to the barre, feet in 1st, place L hand on the barre.
1-6	Lift R arm sideways to high diagonal (open 5th), looking at hand.
7-12	Lower R arm to bras bas.
1-12	Repeat.
1-6	Lift R arm sideways to high diagonal (open 5th), looking at hand.
7-12	Bend sideways towards barre, turning arm overhead to 5th, look towards barre.
1-6	Straighten body and take arm to high diagonal.
7-12	Lower arm and quickly turn to other side.
1-48	Repeat the exercise on the other side, turning back to first side at the end.

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