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## My First Pointe Shoe Fitting

My personal narrative is about my first pointe-shoe-fitting, last September. It is quite an extensive process, but it is also very exciting! Getting your first pair of pointe shoes is the beginning of a pre-professional career in ballet, and takes years of training to prepare for.

The story starts on Registration Day at my dance studio. My teacher, Ms. Monica, was going over which classes I would need to take the following year with my mother and I. Then she told us that I was ready to begin Pointe work!

We had to make an appointment with the local pointe-shoe-fitter, Ms. Snooki. Because she is always extremely busy, it took us over a month to schedule an appointment.

But finally, the day of the fitting arrived. Ms. Monica picked me up from my house and we headed towards the shop. We had to drive through to another town to reach it.

The first thing Ms. Snooki did was scrutinize my feet to figure out my foot type. She put gel toe pads over my toes and we began the long process of finding my perfect shoe. The very first pair of shoes would not even stay on my foot. The second pair were Grishko 2007's. Ms. Snooki fastened them over my heel and then asked me to go onto releve (over the box, or toe of the shoe).

It felt very weird to be en pointe like that, even though the shoes only made me a few inches taller. It felt like I was on stilts! I do, however, remember that I immediately felt a sharp pain on my big toe. Ms. Snooki then complimented the way I had placed my ankles while standing in the shoes.

We tried on several pairs of shoes with this same routine: Grishkos, Blochs, and Capezios, before eventually settling on that second pair of Grishko 2007's. They were a size 5 XXX M (size, strength, and width of the shoe), performed with me faithfully for a solid nine months.

They finally "died" (the dancer slang for falling apart) while was dancing *on stage* at the May recital, and I still had another performance to struggle through after that! The shank (inner sole, the part of the shoe that the arch of the foot is supported by) of my right shoe had cracked entirely in half, so that my poor toes were all I had to support twice my body weight with.

I am currently on my second pair of shoes, now a size 5 ½. I think that my favorite part of the fitting was going up en pointe for the very first time (although it took me several weeks of training to get completely over the box).

Getting your first pair of pointe shoes is a wonderful experience, but every student must wait patiently for their instructor's permission to begin pointe work. I am so happy that I have been able to have this experience!