

Ballet is Fun!

Welcome to Wayne's ballet classes at the Ballet Conservatory of Asheville! I'm delighted you're here. Ballet class is filled with wonderful music, excellent dance training, and a long and rich history. In fact, it's been around since the late 1400s. And while it's not the easiest dance form to master, it's certainly one of the most rewarding. That's why if you're in ballet class, consider yourself someone special.

Ballet is built on traditions, which is one of the big reasons it's survived so long. But those traditions have to be upheld. And the only way to do that is with clear defined roadmap that we all agree upon. And no matter why you're in ballet class, this roadmap applies. And if you stick to it, I promise your ballet experience will be second-to-none.

Wayne Burritt

Dress the Part in Ballet Class

One of my teachers used to say, "If you dress sloppy, you dance sloppy!" And while that's a good reason to dress the part in ballet class, there's a more practical reason: Only by seeing the clear lines of the body can dancers really learn the details of ballet. So, when you come to class make sure to follow a couple of rules:

For Girls:

1. Royal Blue leotard Eurotard 10527 for girls in Wayne's 10-12 classes and Black leotard Eurotard 10527 for girls in his13+/adult classes.
2. Pink convertible tights Capezio #1816 BPK worn over the entire foot. No tan, black or other colors.
3. Clean pink ballet and pointe shoes with properly sewn elastics and ribbons. The Capezio Pink Canvas is recommended for ballet shoes.
4. Hair pulled back firmly in a bun, secured by pins, hairspray, and a hairnet. (See below for instructions on how to make a ballet bun.)
5. No sports bras, regular bras, or panties. Dance bras with nude or clear straps are permissible.
6. No skirts, leg warmers, or other extras.

For Boys:

1. White Tee Shirt with black tights or pants without embellishments or decorations.
2. Black or white ballet shoes with white socks.
3. Hair groomed neatly away from the face.

Special note for adults: Adult dancers -- dancers out of high school -- are encouraged, but not required, to follow the above dress code.

You can find all the right dancer wear for Wayne's classes at A Dancers Place, 14 Patton Ave., Asheville, NC, 28801. Call 828-253-1434.

Act Like a Ballet Dancer in Class

While ballet can be fun, it requires a ton of concentration right off the bat. That's why it's important to act like a ballet dancer in class: Focused, quiet, and hard-working.

1. Time permitting, arrive early to class to warm up.
2. When arriving for class, make sure your ballet attire and hair are properly done. Enter class quietly with a clear focus on ballet class.
3. Don't talk in class. If you're waiting for your turn to dance, stand to the side of the room and study what your fellow students are doing. Don't lean on the bars or sit in class.
4. Work hard in class. Don't allow yourself to get distracted. Focus on picking up the exercises quickly and don't allow mistakes to keep happening.

5. Understand that taking just one or two ballet classes a week -- and really working hard at them -- can improve your technique in your other classes.
6. We all have lots of questions. But most of the time if you're patient your question will be answered without having to ask it.

Experience Ballet Outside of Class

There's tons more wonderful things about ballet than what you'll get in class. So, here are a couple of helpful hints.

1. Go to ballet performances as much as possible.
2. Get ballet books and DVDs from the library or the book store. Study them.
3. Go online and check out the tons of information on ballet: Here's just a sample:
 - a. New York City Ballet: <http://www.nycballet.com/nycb/home/>
 - b. American Ballet Theatre: <http://abt.org/>
 - c. Ballet Online Dictionary: <http://www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html>
 - d. YouTube Anaheim Ballet: <http://www.youtube.com/user/AnaheimBallet>
 - e. Gaynor Minden: <http://www.dancer.com/>
 - f. North Carolina School of the Arts: <http://www.ncarts.edu/dance/>

How to Make a Ballet Bun

Things you'll need: Hairspray, hair elastic, hair pins, comb/brush, hairnet.

1. Brush/comb hair into a high ponytail at the crown of the head. Hold ponytail in place with one hand.
2. Brush/comb out any bumps in the ponytail.
3. Fasten ponytail tightly in place with a hair elastic. Shake your head back and forth a few times to make sure the ponytail will stay in place.
4. Twirl free hair in one direction, forming a tight coil, and slowly wrap the coil around the base of the ponytail to begin forming the bun.
5. As you wrap, secure the coil to the base of the ponytail with hair pins, pinning along the outer-most edge of the coil.
6. Take a hairnet that matches your hair color and wrap it around the bun until the hairnet is tight.
7. Spray the styled hair with another mist of hairspray and use hair pins to tuck in any stray pieces of hair.

For a great video by Anaheim Ballet on how to make a ballet bun:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ywgUDBpnX0>