
Like any line of work that requires professional equipment, dancers need quality shoes. There are many brands, many styles, and many price points for dance shoes. While budget is a driving factor for every dancer, it's important to keep in mind that in dance shoes, you get what you pay for. If that \$10 shoe seems too good to be true, IT PROBABLY IS.

Ballet Shoes

Ballet shoes are typically the least expensive shoe you'll need. We recommend sticking with a brand name shoe to help ensure quality, but in a pinch just about any ballet shoe will serve its purpose. Ballet shoes come in leather or canvas. Leather shoes are typically more expensive, harder to break in, and often, less comfortable than a canvas shoe. The material from which a ballet shoe is made is really a personal choice. We would recommend buying a cheaper ballet shoe and putting your budget into your character or tap shoes. Trusted brands of ballet shoes include Capezio, Bloch, and Sancha. Ballet shoes run between \$7 and \$30 per pair. There is no need to spend more than about \$15-\$20 on a pair of canvas ballet shoes. We also recommend a split sole shoe (which means there is a gap in the sole that spans the arch of the foot giving you maximum flexibility in the foot).

[Capezio](#)

[Bloch](#)

[Sancha](#)

Jazz Shoes

There are many styles of jazz shoes from slip-ons to lace-up, to boots.

Character Shoes

Jazz and ballet shoes are relatively inexpensive because they are cheaply made with fewer materials. In essence, these shoes are little more than coverings for your foot to prevent blistering or skinning your feet. Character shoes, however, are more like a street shoe that add support and substance that jazz and ballet shoes do not.

When it comes to character shoes, you should consider investing in a good pair of shoes. You want a nice leather shoe built to last. A quality shoe will have a sole that is stitched to the upper of the shoe. Cheaper shoes are often made of plastic or vinyl and glued together making for weak seams and shoes that will fall apart easily. Character shoes are considerably more expensive than jazz or ballet shoes. For a decent pair of character shoes, you can expect to pay between \$80 - \$300. Character shoes will be a workhorse in your dance wardrobe. While spending money on a quality shoe costs more, in the long run it will likely be cheaper because well-made shoes are built to last.

Color

While ultimately a dancer wants to have shoes in multiple colors, the most versatile shoe for women and those who identify as women would be a skin tone shoe. The reason is it blends in with the rest of your leg making the leg look longer. Some shoe brands have finally started to carry shoes in a variety of skin tones which offer greater options for dancers of color.

For men and those who identify as men, however, black is the most versatile color. Men rarely, if ever, wear character shoes without trousers or jeans. The classic black dress shoe goes a long way for men when it comes to character shoes pairing

! The Alexis, Elizabeth, Teresa, Leanne, and Rachelle styles are soft sole shoes designed for advanced dancers with very strong feet and ankles. These shoes lend very little arch support and are not safe for dancers who are new to dancing in heels.

T a h e f m

