

Young Dancer Program Dress Code 2024-25

At eXit SPACE, we enforce a strict dress code for Combo and level 1-6 dancers. As teachers and educators, our goal is to focus on your dancer's training and progression while minimizing clothing-related distractions. Having a dress code enables teachers to best see dancers' alignment in order to give corrections that maximize safety and learning. Proper attire is also a matter of etiquette in dance, maximizing uniformity such that dancers feel like part of a group. Teamwork, camaraderie, and performance increase throughout the season as students remain in a mindset of learning. We also hope our dress code decreases your stress as parents/guardians; you will know exactly what to purchase and your dancer will know what to bring every week without a reminder!

Hygiene for all classes: Dance is a social, aerobic, and often high-contact activity, so it is critical that dancers come to class in clean clothes, recently showered, and with clean bare feet or indoor-only shoes. Given the diversity of our offerings, many of our students spend much of their class time lying on and touching the floor; dirty feet and shoes are a genuine health hazard for these dancers. Dancers who fail to come to class meeting these hygienic standards will be thoughtfully and privately asked to return ready to uphold our hygiene safety standards. Additionally, any student over the age of 11 is expected to wear deodorant, and all students are expected to attend classes smelling only of themselves. Dancers must refrain from wearing fragranced products such as perfume/cologne, essential oils, and other heavy shampoos, etc. to class as these can cause reactions for dancers with scent-sensitivities and be distracting to the learning of all dancers closely sharing space. No body lotion is allowed as it makes our floors slippery and harms the marley floors.

Jewelry, nails, and hair accessories for all classes: Dancers are not permitted to wear dangling jewelry to class; dangly earrings in particular can catch on clothes and other dancers, which is a safety hazard. We also heavily advise against claw clips for ballet/jazz/hip hop class updos as they are both bulky and hazardous in the case they fly out; claw clips are not permitted in any modern, contemporary, conditioning, or floor flow classes as they impede floor work. Older dancers who enjoy acrylic nails are asked to be hyper-conscious of their length and durability. Long, pointed nails can be dangerous and cause harm to oneself and others, particularly in partnering, so please keep them at a reasonable length.

Creative Movement

- Tops & Bottoms
 - Option A: Leotard of any color/pattern with pink/brown full-length tights (should match dancer's skin tone) OR
 - Option B: Black leggings with a white fitted t-shirt or leotard
- Skirts/tutus (optional): Skirts and tutus are optional but we ask that dancers do not come with wrap skirts that require tying – elastic waistbands only
- Shoes: Ballet slippers (pink with pink tights, brown with nude/bronze tights, black with black leggings) & black tap shoes with velcro or elastic ties (please label)
- Hair: Long hair pulled back into a clean ponytail, braids, or a bun. Hair too short for a ponytail half up/half down, clipped back, or secured with a plain white/black/brown elastic headband.

Combo

- Tops & Bottoms
 - Option A: Solid color white leotard with pink/bronze/brown *convertible* tights (color must match dancer's skin tone) OR
 - Option B: Black leggings with a white fitted t-shirt
- Skirts/tutus: Not permitted
- Shoes: Ballet slippers (pink with pink tights, brown with nude/bronze tights, black with black leggings) & black tap shoes with velcro or elastic ties (please label)
- Hair: Long hair pulled back into a clean ponytail, braids, or a bun. Hair too short for a ponytail half up/half down, clipped back, or secured with a plain white/black/brown elastic headband.

Ballet 1-6, Pre-Pointe & Pointe

- Tops & Bottoms
 - Option A: Solid color black leotard with pink/bronze/brown full coverage tights (color must match dancer's skin tone) OR
 - Option B: Black leggings with a solid color white, gray, or black fitted t-shirt
- Skirts/tutus: Not permitted
- Shoes: Ballet slippers (pink with pink tights, brown with nude/bronze tights, black with black leggings); pointe shoes for pointe dancers with instructor permission and guidance
- Hair: Long hair pulled back and secured to the head into a clean bun, french twist, braided twist/bun, etc. Hair too short for a ponytail half up/half down, clipped back, or secured with a plain white/black/brown elastic headband.

Modern 1-6, Contemporary, Conditioning, Inversions & Floor Flow

- Tops & Bottoms: Solid color leotard, t-shirt, or athletic top (any color/style) with black leggings (any length/style) or shorts
- Shoes: None! Dancers in levels 5-6 may wear cotton socks at the instructor's discretion
- Hair: Long hair pulled back into a clean ponytail, braids, or a bun. Hair too short for a ponytail half up/half down, clipped back, or secured with a plain white/black/brown elastic headband.

Jazz 1-6, Leaps & Turns

- Tops & Bottoms: Solid color leotard, t-shirt, or athletic top (any color/style) with black leggings (any length/style) or shorts
- Shoes: Black jazz shoes
- Hair: Long hair pulled back into a clean ponytail, braids, or a bun. Hair too short for a ponytail half up/half down, clipped back, or secured with a plain white/black/brown elastic headband.

Hip Hop 1-6

- Tops & Bottoms: T-shirt, long-sleeve shirt, or tank top (any color/style), with shorts, loose fitting pants or leggings (no jeans)
- Shoes: Clean indoor-only tennis shoes with little to no tread (e.g. Vans, Converse, Puma)
- Hair: Long hair pulled back into a clean ponytail, braids, or a bun. Hair too short for a ponytail half up/half down, clipped back, or secured with a plain white/black/brown elastic headband.

Classical Ballet Bun Instructions

Watch: The Houston Ballet Academy tutorial for making ballet buns on three different textures of hair:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUC3WzQrT6s>

For straight and/or gently curly/slightly frizzy hair (Read on for afro-textured hair)

What a ballet bun should look like: A ballet bun generally sits centered, high on the back (crown) of the head and is just visible from the front. Low buns sit at the nape of the neck. *Classical ballet buns are always flat to the head, even, and circular in shape without bumps or fly-aways.*



What ballet buns should **NOT** look like: Ballet buns should not be made with “doughnuts,” protrude unevenly from the head, or be centered at the back of the head in a position that is neither high nor low.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Hair brush
- Comb
- Hair elastic (matching hair color)
- Hairspray
- Hair gel (optional)
- Hair net (“invisible” style, matching hair color – not thick, knitted)

- Hair pins (matching hair color)
- Bobby pins (matching hair color)

Choosing the right pins: The most effective pins for securing a bun are hairpins. Hairpins have several crimps (waves) in the middle of each prong, which help the pin grip the hair. The thicker, less flexible pins provide the strongest hold. Bobby pins are best used to hold down flyaway hairs or fringes and to secure curls or plaits.

Step 1: Make a ponytail

Brush all the hair towards the center of the crown of the head. Gather the hair into a tight ponytail and secure it with an elastic band, ensuring that there are no bumps. Squirt some water around your ponytail to wet the hair and make it easier to smooth out and make tighter. Squirt some gel onto your hands and use your smoothing brush to brush back any bumps towards the base of the hairband. *Note: Children with very curly, thick, or fine hair may need their hair gelled or sprayed before securing into a ponytail.*



Step 2: Smooth out the ponytail

At this point, sliding out the first ponytail and re-brushing can best eliminate bumps under the bun; keep one hand wrapped around the hair where the hair band is and use the other hand to carefully slide out the hair bands. Take your smoothing brush again and brush back the bumps by the ponytail while making sure you keep tightly holding the ponytail in place. Now take your hair band and wrap it around as tight as possible at the crown of your head again.

Step 3: Wrap the hair into a bun

To make the bun shape, hold the ponytail at the end and twist it firmly until it is all twisted into a rope. Then coil the ponytail into a flat circle (keeping your hand on top) around the hair elastic, continuing the coil in the same direction as the twist in the ponytail. This will stop the ponytail unraveling. Tuck the ends of the ponytail under the bun. Then place 3-4 hairpins around the bun to secure it, without taking your hands off the bun.

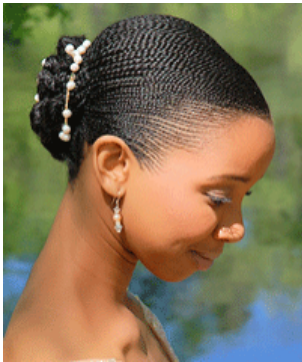
Instructions for inserting hairpins: Hold the pin at the closed end, with the prongs facing the center of the coil. Insert the prongs a little way into the edge of the bun, catching a small amount of the bun edge. Then turn the prongs in and back outwards to catch some of the hair outside the bun. Lastly, turn the prongs inwards again and push into the center of the coil.

Step 4: Secure a hairnet, flatten the bun, and add hairspray

Next, place a hairnet over the bun. At this stage, you can make any adjustments to the shape of the bun. A finished bun should be round and even in shape, and sit smoothly, *flat against the head*. After the hairnet is in, insert as many pins as you need to all around the edges of the bun, until it feels secure. Loose hairs can be gelled or sprayed to help them stay put.

For afro-textured hair, natural & with braids/locs

What a ballet bun should look like: A ballet bun generally sits centered, high on the back (crown) of the head and is just visible from the front. Low buns sit at the nape of the neck. *Classical ballet buns are always as flat to the head as possible, even, and circular in shape without bumps or fly-aways.*



What ballet buns should **NOT** look like: Ballet buns should not be made with “doughnuts,” protrude unevenly from the head, or be centered at the back of the head in a position that is neither high nor low.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Hydrating leave in conditioner
- Coconut oil or castor oil
- Hair cream
- Water spritzer
- Wide tooth comb
- Boar smoothing brush
- Hair elastic (matching hair color)

- Hair gel or Olive Oil Smooth-N-Hold Pudding
- Edge control product
- Hair net (“invisible” style, matching hair color – not thick, knitted)
- Hairspray
- Hair pins or bobby pins (matching hair color)

Choosing the right pins: The most effective pins for securing a bun are hairpins. Hairpins have several crimps (waves) in the middle of each prong, which help the pin grip the hair. The thicker, less flexible pins provide the strongest hold. Bobby pins are best used to hold down flyaway hairs or fringes and to secure curls or plaits.

Step 1: Moisturize

Start by moisturizing the hair with your usual routine. This might look by applying a leave-in conditioner, coconut or castor oil, and a hair cream. Prepare to make a bun by spraying the hair with water so that it can be most easily brushed back into a ponytail.

Step 2: Make a ponytail

Continuing to use water and adding either hair gel or Olive Oil Smooth-N-Hold Pudding, use a boar smoothing brush to brush the hair back into a ponytail, either at the nape of the neck or the crown of the head. Use the brush to get all the way to the roots of the hair in order to smooth it to the head as much as possible and secure the hair with a hairband.



Step 3: Smooth out the ponytail

Apply an edge control product to the dancer's hair and use hands to brush/smooth hair back towards the ponytail. Follow this by using a boar smoothing brush to smooth the hair back.

Step 4: Wrap the hair into a bun



Fold the hair away from the center of the ponytail and use a few pins in order to secure the hair down in a rounded shape.

Instructions for inserting hairpins: Hold the pin at the closed end, with the prongs facing the center of the coil. Insert the prongs a little way into the edge of the bun, catching a small amount of the bun edge. Then turn the prongs in and back outwards to catch some of the hair outside the bun. Lastly, turn the prongs inwards again and push into the center of the coil.

Step 5: Secure a hairnet, flatten the bun, and add hairspray

Next, place a hairnet over the bun. At this stage, you can make any adjustments to the shape of the bun. A finished bun should be round and even in shape, and sit smoothly, *as flat against the head as possible*. After the hairnet is in, insert as many pins as you need to all around the edges of the bun, until it feels secure. Loose hairs can be gelled or hair sprayed to help them stay put.



For braided hair/locs:

As cleanly as possible, secure the styled hair back into a ponytail at the nape of the neck or crown of the head. To make the bun shape, hold the ponytail at the end and twist the locs firmly. Then coil the twisted ponytail into a flat circle (keeping your hand on top) around the hair elastic, continuing the coil in the same direction as the twist in the ponytail. This will stop the ponytail unraveling. Tuck the ends of the ponytail under the bun. Then place 3-4 hair pins around the bun to secure it, without taking your hands off the bun. Next, place a hairnet over the bun. At this stage, you can make any adjustments to the shape of the bun; a finished bun should be round and even in shape, and sit smoothly, *as flat against the head as possible*. After the hairnet is in, insert as many pins as you need to all around the edges of the bun, until it feels secure. Loose hairs can be gelled or hair sprayed to help them stay put.

Additional Video Examples for Afro-Textured Hair:

- Learn how to make a high bun with braids from Niyah Pratt, former Dancewear Center Ambassador, on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CpO6pgesFer/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D>
- Watch the Houston Ballet Academy tutorial for making ballet buns on textured natural hair (starting at 7:22): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUC3WzQrT6s>