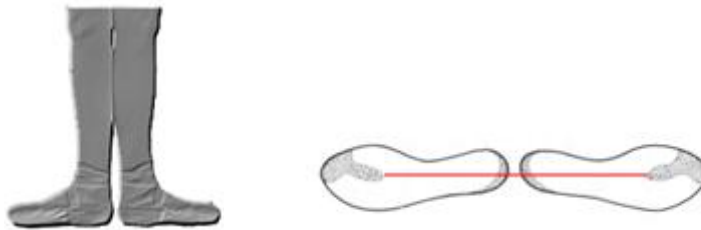


# Ballet - Basic Positions

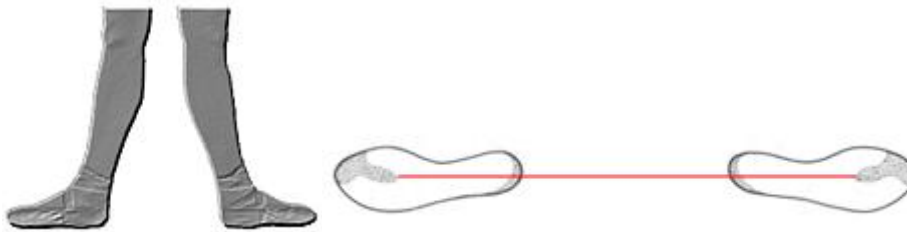
## Foot Positions

There are five basic foot positions in ballet, which are common to all teaching methods. Note that all of these are based on the 'turn-out', ie. with the feet pointing in opposing directions either in a straight line, or offset with one foot in front of the other. All steps and movements in Ballet pass through these positions.



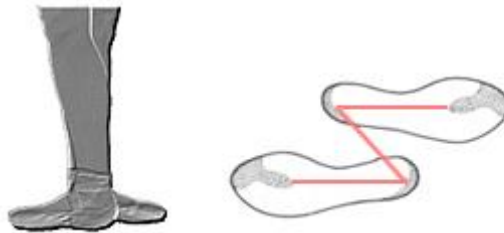
**First Position:** Feet together, in line, heel to heel.

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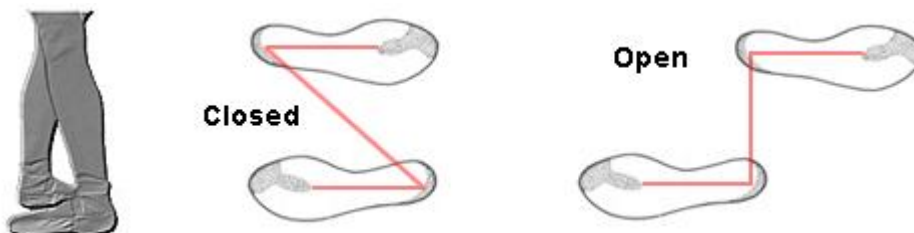
**Second Position:** Feet apart, in line, heels opposed.

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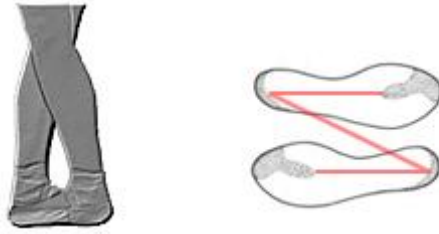
**Third Position:** Feet together, front and behind, overlapping by about a half foot length.

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**Fourth Position:** Feet apart, front and behind. Feet may be a) closed - fully overlapping (fourth opposite fifth), or b) open - no overlap (fourth opposite first).

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**Fifth Position:** Feet together, front and behind, fully overlapping.

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## Arm Positions

Unlike the foot positions, the positions of the arms are not standard with different teaching methods each having their own numbered set of arm positions. The following illustrate the basic set of arm positions commonly taught in ballet. Note that the arms are never held straight but are always gently curved, also the gap between your hands in bras bas, first and fifth position should be the same width as your head. Fingers should be 'grouped' in all positions, whereby the thumb and the middle finger are touching and the rest of the fingers group round them. Furthermore, it is the positions of the arms and legs in combination that give the overall character to the pose. Note also that the tilt of the head and the facial expression can be used to enhance or radically alter the character of the position (see 5).



**Preparatory Position:** Arms lowered, hands a little in front of the thighs (bras bas - "arms low"). This is the ballet dancer's equivalent of 'stand at ease'.



**First Position:** Arms forward (held curved and apart as though embracing a large object). This position is known as the gateway position since it is the mid point of transition between other positions.



**Second Position:** Arms held out to the side, curving slightly forward.



**Fifth Position:** Arms held aloft slightly in front of head



**Third Position:** One arm extended to the side, other held curved in front.



**Fourth Position:** One arm raised overhead, other held curved in front. There are a number of fourth position variations such as 'grecque' and 'attitude'.

When placing into any of these positions it is also important to remember your posture. Shoulders should be pulled back, rib-cage lifted, neck stretched and bums and bellies tucked in. The dancer's back should also be as near to straight as possible.