Vital Tested: The Ailey Extension

Our tester bellies up to a different kind of bar for the night.

The Absolute Beginner Ballet Class from The Ailey Extension seems like a safe bet for our tester who hasn't donned a tutu since she was about six.

"Do I need ballet slippers?" she wants to know.

"Socks are fine for first-timers," according to the receptionist.

The class of 30 or so students is a motley crew of women in pink tights, men in scrubs (and spandex--eek!), and our tester in her usual workout duds. Led by bona fide ballet teacher Finis Jhung, our tester is instructed to stand up straight, drop her shoulders, point her toes. The series of movements seems basic at first, but they manage to work her legs, arms and core. And when Jhung asks the class to try balancing while not using the bar, our tester is reminded that she's a beginner.

Our tester may not be ready for Swan Lake, but she did walk out feeling more graceful--bar none!

Check out the schedule of classes, which includes hip hop, samba, street jazz, and more. New students pay $25 for their first two classes.

The Ailey Extension, 405 W. 55th St., (212) 405-9000, MAP