

How to Participate in the Skirt Skills Facebook Group with Maximum Privacy

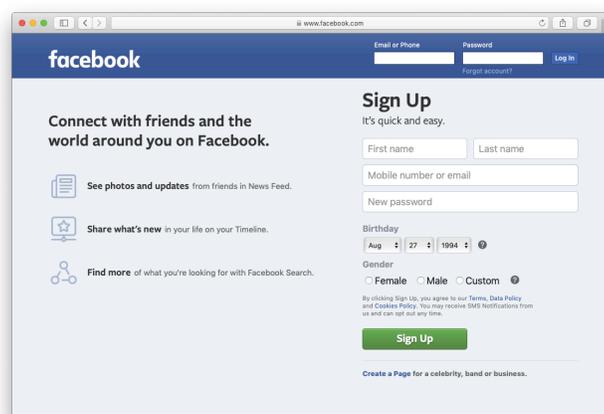
By **Najah Carroll**, *Skirt Skills Alum*

It can be fun and effective to engage in the *Skirt Skills* eCourse is through its group discussion forum hosted on Facebook. Some of us don't have Facebook accounts or choose not to login to anymore — likely because of concerns about privacy, advertising, or data collection. I have all of those concerns, but have figured out ways to ease them. One of these methods may work for you:

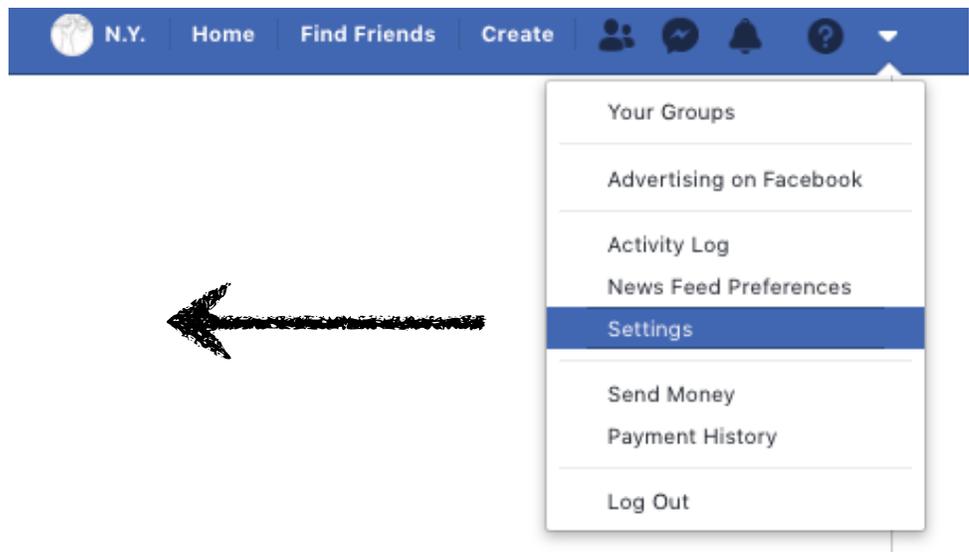
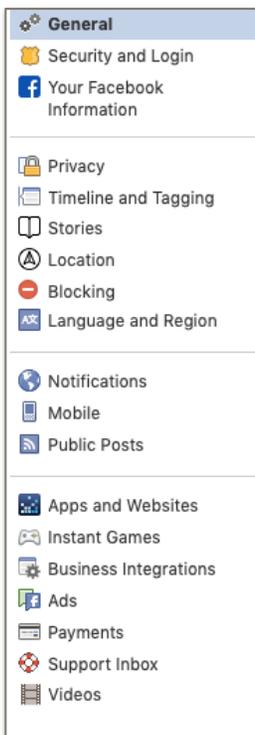
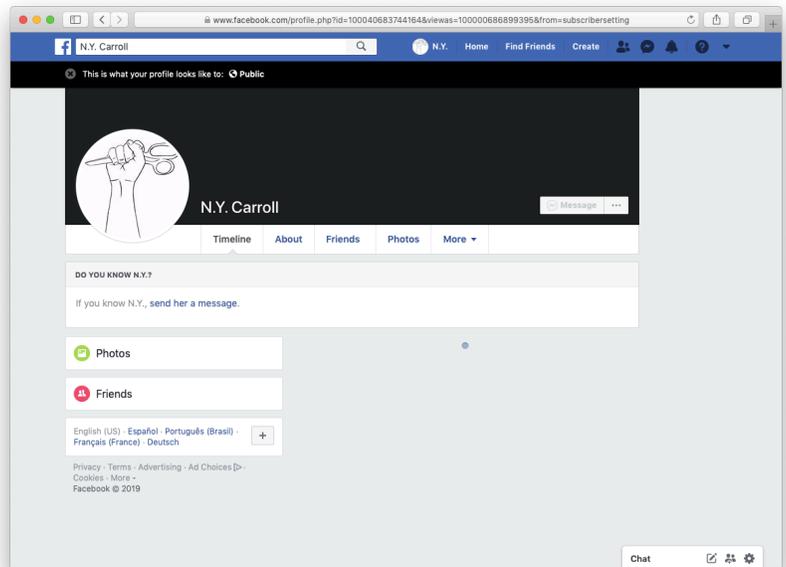
1. Open a new, **low-profile account** to use in Facebook Groups only.
2. Update the settings of your existing account to **increase privacy**.
3. Share **edited photos** in the private group.

Open a Low-Profile Account

- Sign up for a new account at [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and enter an **abbreviated version of your name** (or an alias) and a **fake birthday**. My name is *Najah Carroll*, but my low-profile account is *N.Y. Carroll*. Be sure to let Brooks Ann know if you use an alias, as she will only allow those enrolled in the course to join the Facebook group.
- Enter an email address you are comfortable providing. If you don't want to use your personal email account, try a free app like [TempMail](https://tempmail.org) which acts as a **disposable email** service that allows you to you receive email at a temporary address that self-destructs after a certain time elapses.



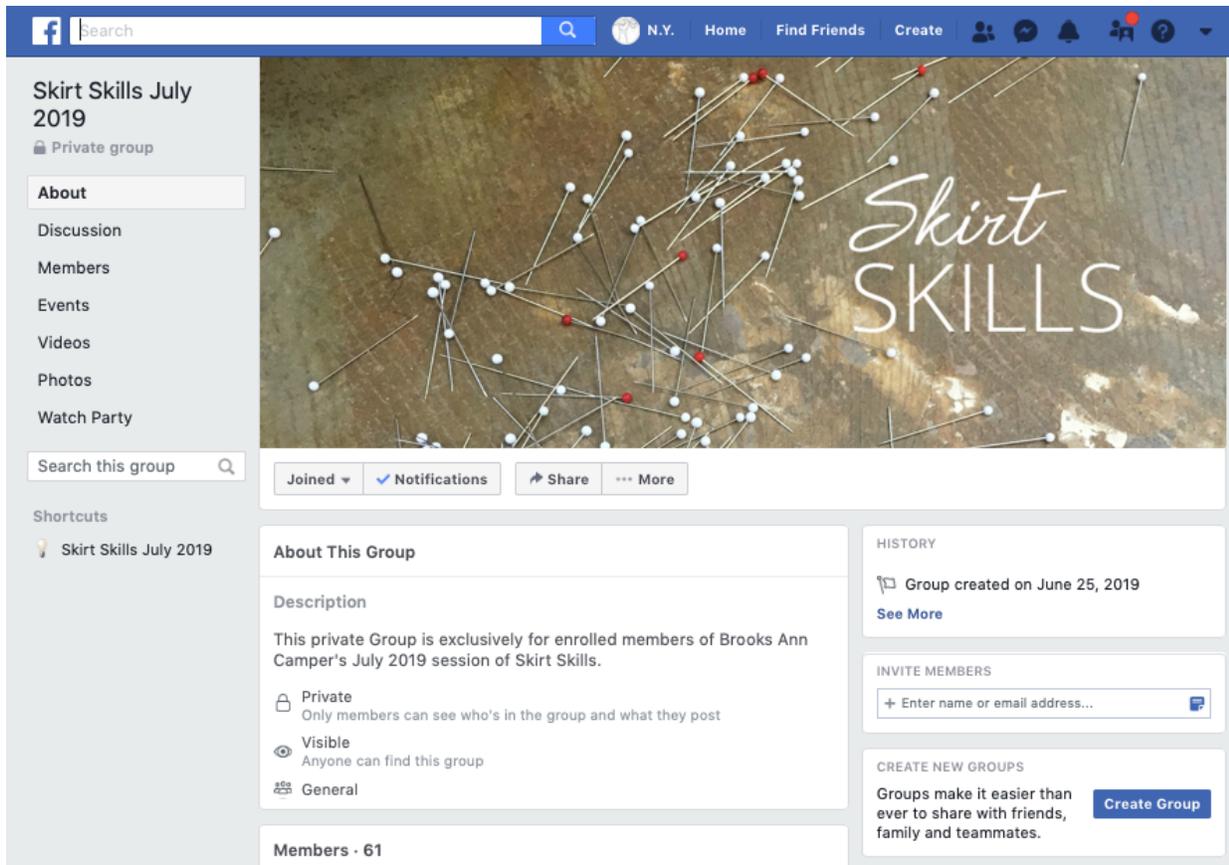
- This account doesn't have to exist forever. You can always **delete your account** when you are done participating in the group.
- To stay as incognito as possible on Facebook, don't provide any additional detail about who you are and **choose a profile picture that is NOT an image of your face**. Perhaps an illustration, icon, or picture from nature. On the right is a view of the empty profile page of my "low-profile" account. The only thing shared in the "Public" view is my avatar and abbreviated name. To see what your profile looks like to public followers, click the link at the bottom of the *Public Posts* settings page.
- You can access Facebook settings from the from the far right menu. Familiarize yourself with the options on the **Settings** page and walk through each one to disable or opt out of features that don't meet your standards for privacy.



- Use your new, *low-profile* Facebook account to access the Skirt Skills Facebook group linked in your email from Brooks Ann. She will accept your membership and you can join the conversation and share as much or as little personal details as you'd like in the Private group environment. A [techy article](#) on the subject of Facebook privacy gives a helpful reminder:

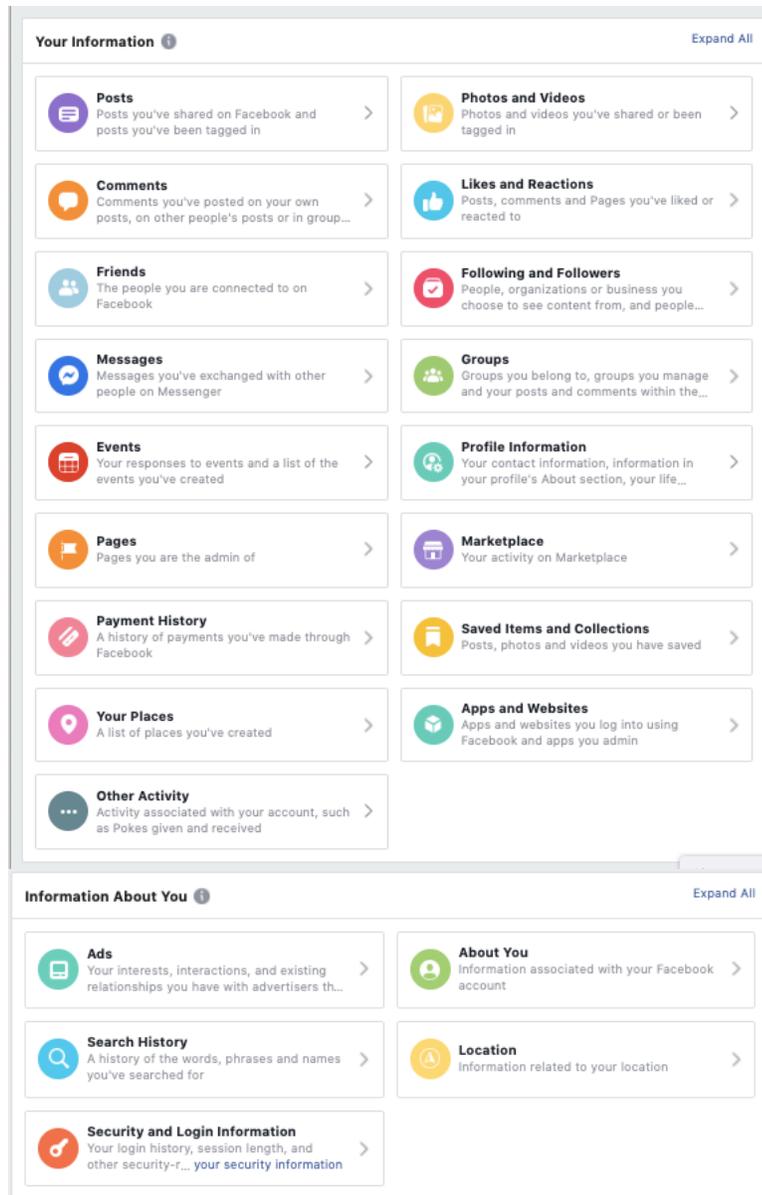
All of us who sign up for Facebook should know that every friend we make, event we accept, and picture we view is logged and tracked by the company. However, there are steps we can take when creating a new profile that can severely limit the information Facebook has access to. In fact, other than your activity on the site, Facebook won't see any of your personal data.

- When you use a low-profile Facebook account and only participate in *Private groups*, your logged activity and personal data is very much limited.



Update the Settings of your Existing Account

- If you already have a Facebook account and would like to maximize your privacy before joining the Private Group, access the settings menu called **Your Facebook Information** (see menu screenshot on Page 2) This page will take you to a handy view of your account information categories with options to manage and download your data or delete your account.



- Check out the following information categories to review the who, what, and where behind your account: **Following and Followers**, **Profile Information**, **About You**, and **Location**. If you're curious about controlling how advertising shows up, look through the options in the **Ads** category, too. Be aware that customizing your ad preferences ("I don't want to see that") is still a way to inform Facebook's marketing.

Share Edited Photos in the Forum

- Now that you have your *low profile* or privacy-enhanced Facebook account, start posting your questions, feedback, and experiences in the forum. When it's time to share pictures of your work (mockups, measurement guidelines, or finished garments), just pretend it's still the early days of the Internet when anonymity was the norm and **crop your head** from your photos while framing the shot or before uploading. Brooks Ann and your fellow classmates can still give constructive feedback on your custom sewing work if your photos are headless. ;-)



See you in the Group!

Every time I take or re-take a course from Brooks Ann, I participate in the Private Facebook Group (which often carries on after the course officially ends). I hardly spend time in any other area of Facebook. Here are my favorite aspects of using Facebook's private forums:

- All of the features of Facebook I'm least impressed with are out of my view while I'm in the group.
- The conversation threads are easy to follow and search.
- Photos uploaded to individual posts are also viewable in a handy side bar, so you can see what's new in the forum at-a-glance.
- Replies to my posts and those I participate in are tracked in the Notifications list so I don't miss a comment.

Whether you open a low-profile account (and delete it later), scrub the information of your existing one, or simply choose to hide your head, you can take control of your privacy and comfortably participate in the Skirt Skills Private Facebook Group.