

# Dart Measuring Guide

## for creating your custom skirt block

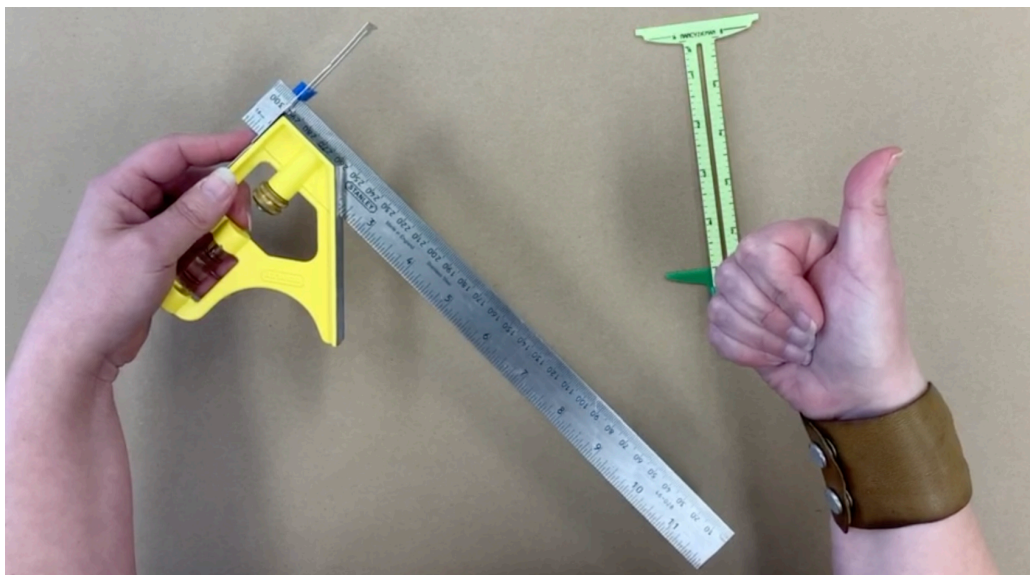
Like the triangles on the photos, a little creative measuring can tell us the length of each of our custom darts and how much fabric to “take in” with each of them.

### Setting up your measuring tools:

To measure our Dart Intakes and Lengths we will use a Combo Square with a Level and a Hem Gauge.

On the Combo Square, you’ll find a ruler that can be adjusted up and down, and a flat part with a level. To set up this tool, adjust the ruler so that there is 1/2” or 1 cm above the flat plane with the level.

Hook your Hem Gauge onto the top of your level tool. Have the zero end and smaller numbers be closest to the metal ruler with its numbers getting larger as it gets closer to the level.



Tip: Move the slider of the hem gauge out of the way.

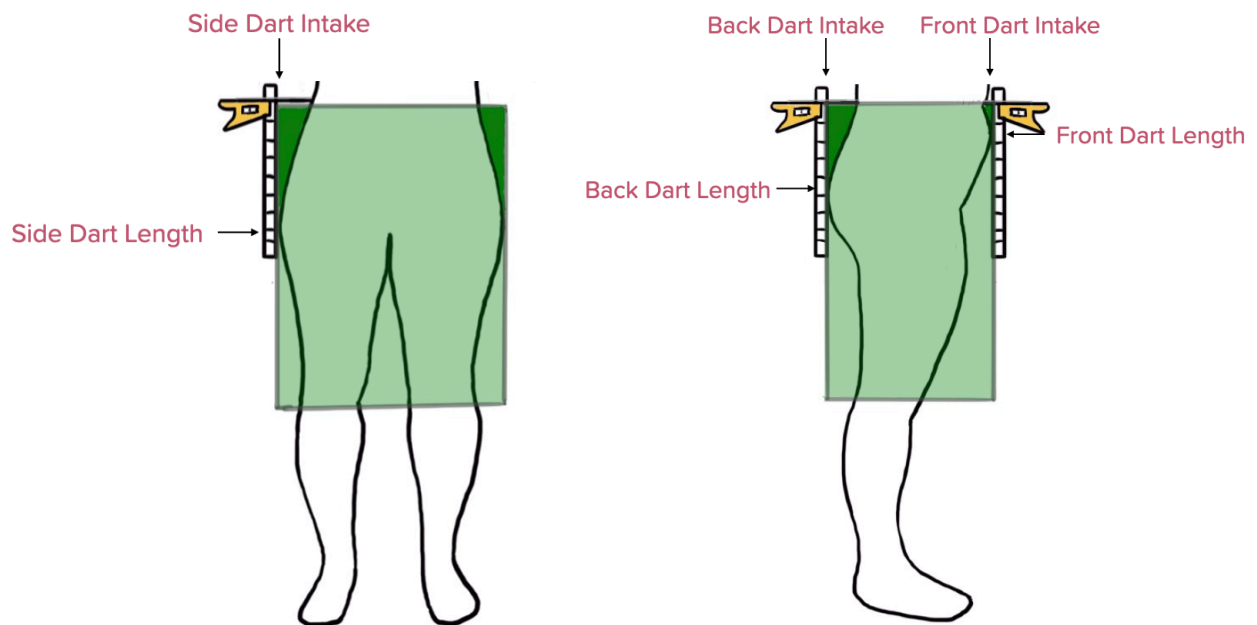
## Dart Lengths & Intakes:

We will be taking two measurements to create each of our custom darts for the first draft of our blocks: the Length and the Intake.

The **Dart Length** is *how long* the dart reaches vertically down the body. The Dart Length will end at the point where shaping of the Cylinder is no longer needed.

The **Dart Intake** is the amount of fabric that will be folded into the dart in order to allow the cylinder to follow the shape of your body. You can remember it because the intake is the amount you want to *take in*.

We will measure the Dart Lengths with the ruler part of the Combo Square and the Dart Intakes with the numbers on the Hem Gauge.



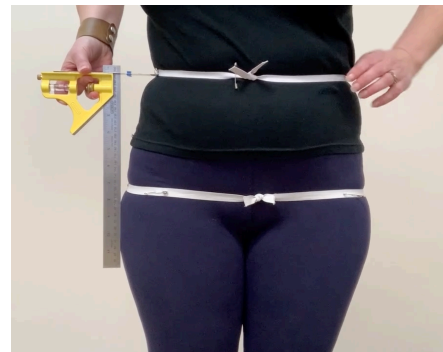
## Measuring your Dart Lengths & Intakes:

When drafting, we won't use every number you are about to record. Some are only for reference. That said, we *will* use both the Side Dart Length and Intake.

### Measuring your Side Dart:

Allow the vertical ruler of the Combo Square to just touch the most protruding part of the side of your lower body. This may be near your hipline elastic, but it also may be lower or higher. *(On me, it's slightly lower.)*

While noticing the level and keeping the bubble between the lines (as best you can), adjust the hem gauge until it hits your waistline elastic. Try to relax and stand as naturally as possible. Take your time making small adjustments while looking in the mirror, until you've got a level 90 degree angle out from the side waist and down to the side fullness.



Note the number on the Hem Gauge that meets the inner edge of the ruler as your *Side Dart Intake*. Note the number on the vertical ruler of the Combo Square where it touches the fullest part of your side. This is your *Side Dart Length*.

### Front and Back Dart Intakes vs. Front and Back Waist Arcs:

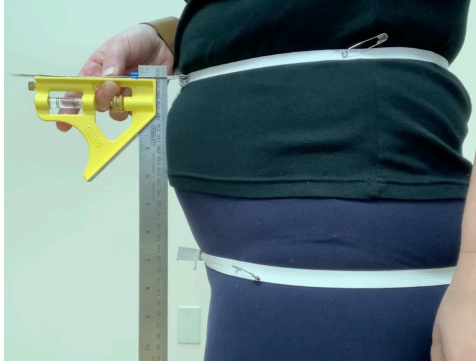
**The Front and Back Dart Intakes and the Front and Back Waist Arcs are related to each other- telling us the same information in opposite ways.** The Dart Intakes tell us how much fabric to *remove* to match the shaping of the waist. The Waist Arcs tell us how much fabric to *include* to match the shaping of the waist.

Since we definitely want to *include* enough fabric for our waists- and *darts are made for play-* **when drafting, we will focus more on our Front and Back Waist Arcs** than on our *Front and Back Dart intakes* as measured.

Feel free to focus more on the *Lengths* and less on the *Intakes* as you measure your Front and Back Darts. That said, these Intakes could offer excellent data to double check your Waist Arcs- which are more important. *(More on this at the end of this Guide.)*

### Measuring your Front Dart:

Allow the vertical ruler of the Combo Square to just touch the most protruding part of the front of your lower body.



While noticing the level and keeping the bubble between the lines (as best you can), adjust the hem gauge until it hits your waist elastic. Try to relax and stand as naturally as possible. Take your time making small adjustments while looking in the mirror, until you've got a level 90 degree angle out from the front waist and down to the front fullness. **Feel free to move the tool along the front elastic, looking for intake.**

Note the number on the Hem Gauge that meets the inner edge of the ruler as your *Front Dart Intake*. Note the number on the vertical ruler of the combo square where it touches the fullest part of your side. This is your *Front Dart Length*.

### Measuring your Back Dart:

Allow the vertical ruler of the Combo Square to just touch the most protruding part of your backside.

While noticing the level and keeping the bubble between the lines (as best you can), adjust the hem gauge until it hits your waist elastic. Try to relax and stand as naturally as possible. *(I know, it's not easy!)* Take your time making small adjustments while looking in the mirror, until you've got a level 90 degree angle out from the back waist and down to the back fullness. This does not need to be placed at the Center Back. **Anywhere along the cheek is a great place for this measurement.**



Note the number on the Hem Gauge that meets the inner edge of the ruler as your *Back Dart Intake*. Note the number on the vertical ruler of the Combo Square where it touches the fullest part of your side. This is your *Back Dart Length*.



## Tips for taking **any** measurement:

Before using your tools to record the number data from your body onto your measurement sheet:

- Make sure your elastics are in place (*see placement lesson and Guide*).
- Stand in front of a mirror in your neutral relaxed posture.
- The nearest 1/2" or cm is perfect. Resist the urge to get more specific.
- Err on the side of too roomy/long over too tight/short.
- Try each measurement a couple of times to double check your best guess.
- **Do your best**, knowing you'll have **future opportunities to review, revise and refine** the data.

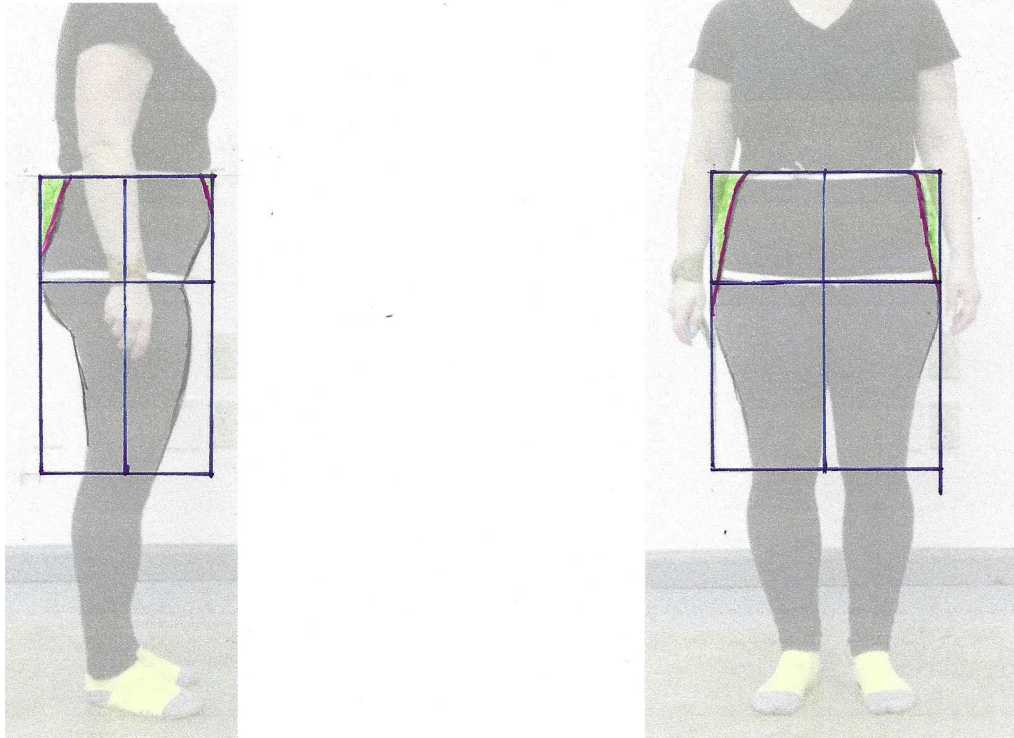
## General Dart Measuring Tips:

- **Is lack of body shaping keeping you from measuring a dart somewhere?**  
You might be able to find your elusive dart by moving the tool across the body. Can you measure a dart (*even if it is teeny tiny*) anywhere else along the waist elastic in the area in question?  
If not, consider drafting a small dart anyway (~1/2" intake and 3" length) which can later be tested and refined to your body during your fitting. Even if you don't have much shaping in the area in question, *a small dart could help keep your skirts comfortably anchored in place.*
- **If you have left/right asymmetry**, you may want to measure each Side Dart separately. Your Intakes and/or Lengths may differ side to side. And/or you may have a different curve to your Side Seam shaping left and right. *Good to know!*
- Make sure that you are **looking at the ruler starting with one at the top and the numbers going down**. The opposite side of the ruler is often the opposite.
- Remember when we set up the ruler of our Combo Square to sit a little higher- so that we could hook on the hem gauge? **Feel free to subtract 1/2" or 1 cm from each Dart Length.** To me, what you've noted is close enough- as every measurement has ~ 1/2" tolerance for accuracy. That said, if you think that it might work better for your body or your brain, *go ahead and subtract the extra!*

## Consider Double Checking your Number Data with your Visual Data:

Look at your Photo Tool to **observe the shape and proportions** of your Front, Back, and Side Darts. *Here's my example:*

This experiment lets me see (and measure) that my Front Dart has the smallest Intake. I can see that the Front Dart Length is short and ends about 1/3 of the way down to my hipline.



I can see that, in comparison, my Back Dart is much longer than my Front Dart, ending a little above my hipline. I can also see and measure that my back needs at least double the Intake as my body needs in the front. *Very cool!*

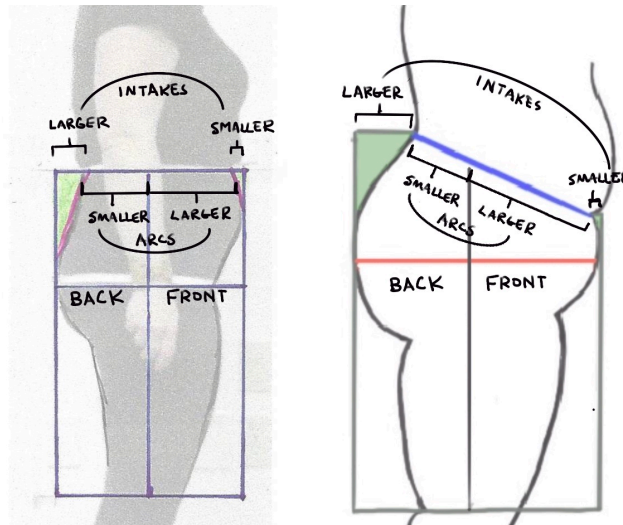
My Side Darts have longest length, ending even lower than my hipline elastic. I can also see and measure that my Side Darts require a similar amount of Intake as my back darts- likely needing just a little more on the Sides. *Very helpful!*

This info will let me fine tune my number data- and even start to predict how my body's shaping will translate to the paper. *Super nerdy!* **Sleuth for clues for potential tweaks while comparing your number data to your visual data!**

**Want to get extra extra nerdy?** Especially if your **Side Seam is balanced**, you can also use your Back and Front Dart Intakes (*which won't be used when drafting*) to double check your Back and Front Waist Arcs (*which will be used when drafting*).

Your Back and Front Dart Intakes coordinate with your Back and Front Waist Arcs to tell us the same information in opposite ways. The Dart Intakes tell us how much fabric to *remove* to match the waist. The Waist Arcs tell us how much fabric to *include* to match the waist. In theory, this means that **the larger the Dart Intake the smaller the corresponding Waist Arc** on a balanced Side Seam.

**If your Back Dart Intake is larger than your Front Dart Intake**, your Front Waist Arc will be larger than your Back Waist Arc - which is very common (*illustrated below*). If your body has the same amount of dart shaping in the Front and the Back, your Waist Arcs will be divided evenly by your balanced Side Seam.



**If your Waist Arcs don't seem to coordinate with the visual data of your Back and Front Dart Intake**, a little Waist Arc revision could offer you quicker success when working through the drafting steps. *Have fun sleuthing and tweaking!*

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I hope this Guide helps you gather your final bits of number data- and maybe even refine some of your first guesses before drafting. Reach out if you have questions or puzzles to solve. *Your first draft (which will also allow for revisions) will be next!*