

Guide for Creating a Photo Tool

for creating your custom skirt block

Drawing on flat photos of a body can be *suuuuper* helpful for understanding what the specific body's contours will look like when transferred onto paper.

Creating this tool for yourself is optional. I will happily do it for you, if you share your photos with me! I've created literally hundreds of these over the years for my students. (*I love this kinda stuff.*)

Or you can totally skip it- especially if you feel confident in your number data and/or enjoy slowly learning through trial and error experimentation.

Since *visual data* can be just as informative as *number data* (or often even more), consider taking your time and having fun with this lesson (and/or reaching out to me through this chapter's Checkpoint #2).

Especially if you are a "visual learner", this photo tool can help us collect and/or tweak the number data as you measure your body. It can also be a really helpful guide while drafting and fitting your block. A lot can be double checked and revised by observing the lines drawn on your photos!

Tips for Preparing your Reference/Elastics Photos:

I'm a pencil and paper gal, so I like to print out the photos and use my rulers and pens/pencils to draw on them by hand. If you like to draw digitally, *give that a try!*

Ideally your photos will be level and in line with each other. I hold my clear ruler up to my computer screen to level the photos and line up their hiplines and waistlines before printing. Give it a try, or I can do it for you. (*See Checkpoint #1*)

That said, this tool and exercise can still be valuable without getting the photos level or in line. *Do what you can!*

Drawing on your Reference/Elastics Photos:

Drawing the box

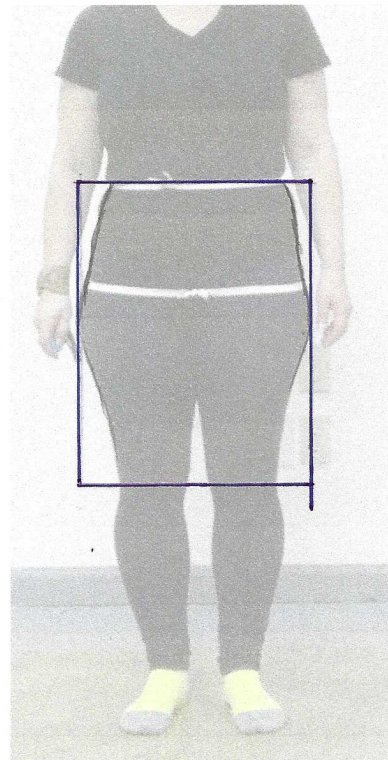
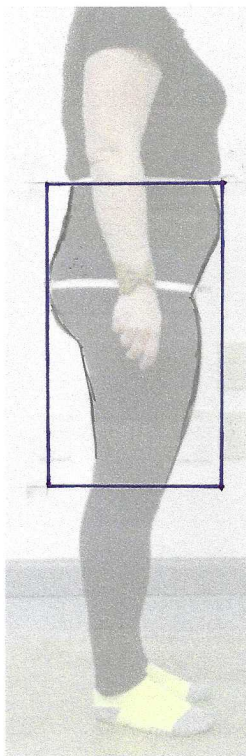
First draw your custom cylinder/rectangles around the volume of your lower body. This box represents your Cylinder.

The box will ideally have:

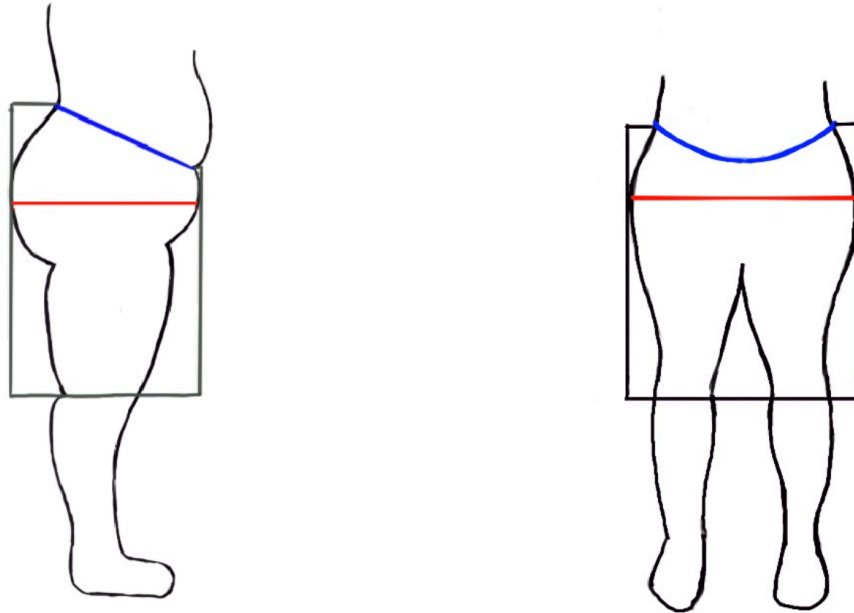
- a lower line parallel to the floor at the knee
- two vertical lines that just touch the most protruding parts of your body- reaching up from the kneeline to the level of the waistline elastics
- a upper line that follows the elastics- then continues straight out to the verticals

I use the parallel to the floor hipline, the paper's edges, and the guidelines on my clear ruler to kinda square things up.

See how the box just touches my backside and my belly in my side-facing view, and just touches the fullest area of my sides in the front-facing view?



If you have a tilted waistline, the top of your box will have a staggered appearance. Follow the waistline tilt in the middle, then square off the box out to meet the verticals.



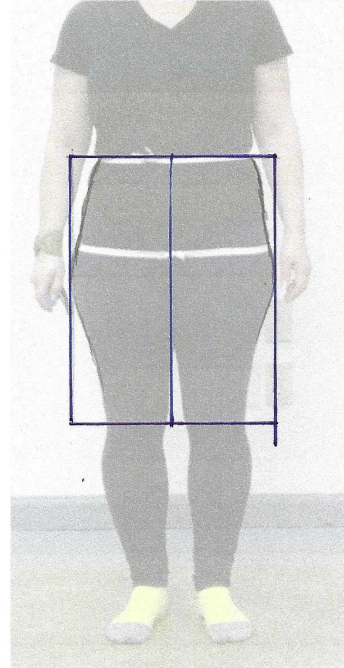
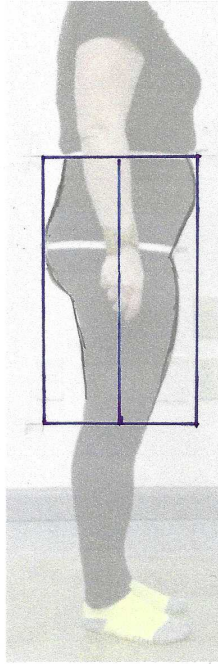
(Remember: You can create line drawings of your photos, if you prefer.)

If your body is fuller just above the waistline elastic, do not include that extra volume into your Cylinder.

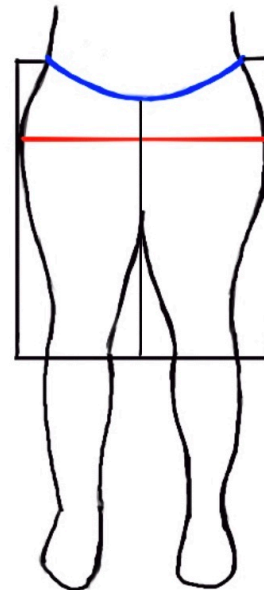
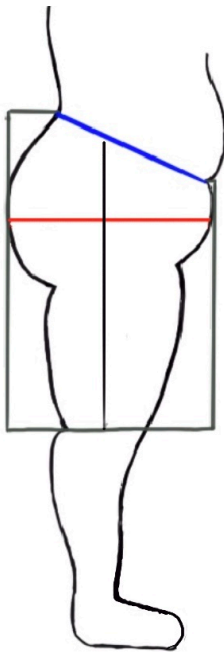
Drawing your Side Seam and Center Front:

Measure the width of each box to find the center. Draw a line straight up the center of each box, dividing it in half. On most bodies, this will be the ideal placement for your block's Side Seam and Center Front.

If your body has left/right asymmetry, you may find that the center of your Cylinder may not be in line with your belly button. *Excellent discovery!* Consider trying this exercise with a back-facing view also. You may discover that your Center Back is not in line with your spine. *Very helpful information!*



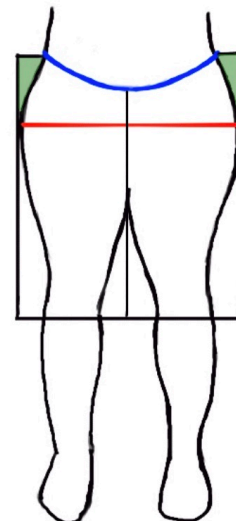
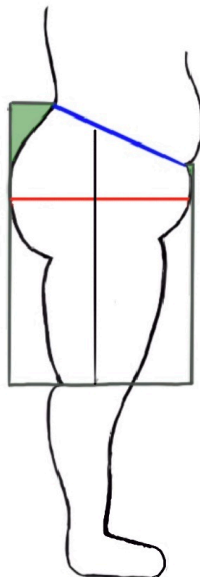
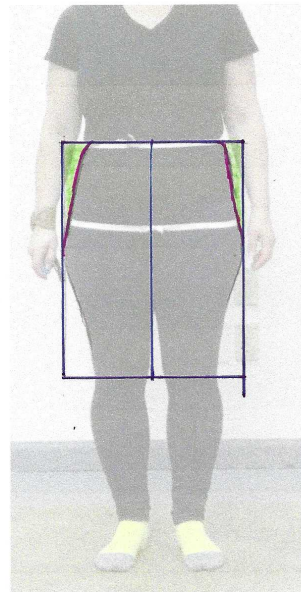
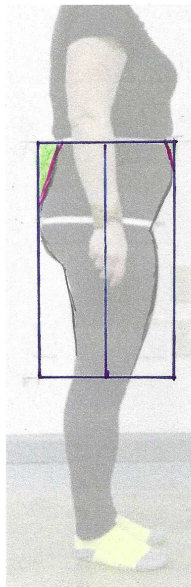
Dividing each box in half to reveal the Side Seam and Center Front Seam.



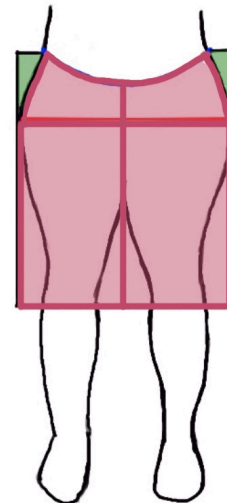
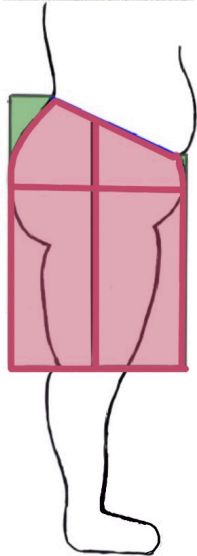
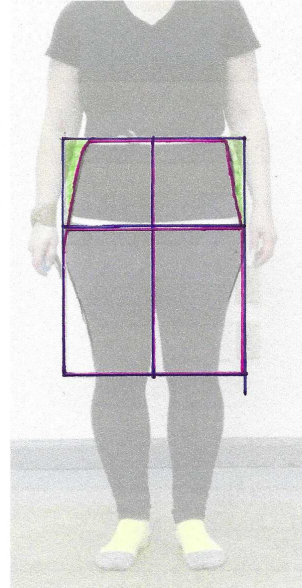
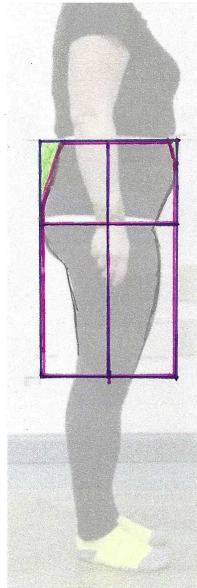
Drawing your Custom Darts:

The triangle-ish shapes at the top of your rectangles reveal your personal dart lengths and intakes. They might not be perfect triangles (*bodies don't have perfect angles*), but the empty bits between the rectangle and the body at the waistline show exactly where the Cylinder needs shaping and by how much.

The sides of the body will likely have a distinct curve to it. Follow the custom curve inside your side "darts" to observe your custom side seam shaping. For the front and back, don't get so specific. Try to use straight lines to draw triangles for your front and back darts.



The framework built with the bottom of each rectangle connected to the lines that follow the body above, reveal your goals for the fit of your custom skirt block. The triangle dart shapes show the amount of fabric that will be removed or manipulated to match your custom shaping.



The areas traced in pink show what our custom skirt blocks will look like on our bodies when they reach their blocky fit goals.

Pretty cool exercise, don't you think?

Inspired? Share your work with me and your classmates so we can all learn and help each other! The more bodies you are able to see, the more you'll begin to understand that everyone is different and that all shapes are beautiful.

Overwhelmed? Drawing on a photo of your body does not need to be a precision exercise- it will always be a *very rough* experiment. And you can successfully create a block by skipping the photo tool exercise. Might take a little longer- but in custom sewing, *slow and steady wins the race*.

And/or... Send me your photos and I can do all of this for you! **Check out this Chapter's Checkpoint** for extra goodies I can offer you. *I love drawing on bodies...*