



GARMENT DRAWING MINI COURSE



You don't need to know how to draw to understand how to make garments for yourself. But you can get a whole lot clearer on your path to creating that ideal new addition to your wardrobe by having a sketch to start with. **Think of this drawing as a map to better understand the way to get to where you're going.**

Being able to sketch out our desired garment doesn't require advanced drawing skills. *It does require patience and a little bit of training the eye to see how fabric moves.* When I studied clothing design in college, I spent a lot of time with tracing paper and magazines, tracing the garments, the way the fabrics fold, the way the edges curled or ruffled or hugged the body tight.

Here's some tips on getting more familiar with the garment drawing process:

training the eye

The best way to train your eyes to see fabrics is to practice! Some ideas:

- Use tracing paper over photographs of garments with lots of folds
- Hang your favorite garments up and practice drawing the lines and folds of pieces you already own - this also helps familiarize you with easily seeing 'clothes that fit' just by looking at them!
- Draw over photos of clothing - pics of magazine pages, images pulled from the internet, clothing on you, or on the hanger - with the mark-up tool on a cell phone or tablet (as a digital method that doesn't waste any paper)

sketching

Some thoughts for clear and easy to read sketches:

- Lightly draw out general shapes before committing to any heavy, hard to erase lines
- Play around with different styles - with a figure, without a figure, as though the garment was floating in the wind, or ruffled in a pile on the ground
- Don't get caught up in small details on the figure - gestural hands and facial features are often more successful
- Remember: the goal is to make CLOTHING, not totally perfect drawings! Our sketches are simply an anchor to know where to go!

honoring YOUR form

The key to creating clothing that honors our bodies (instead of fighting with them) is understanding our shape. There will often be cuts of clothing that we just love, but they just don't fit our figure. The more we focus on making clothes that we KNOW will look good on us, the more successful our clothing will be!

My favorite way to approach designing new clothing is a closet love visit. I go to my closet, pull out what I'm most drawn to, and explore the cut of these pieces. I put them on, see how they interact with my body, why I love to wear them and why they make me feel fabulous.

the FIT

Every drawing starts with the body. So that you can draw garments that look good on YOU, and not that look good on some preconceived notion of what a figure should look like, we should be drawing based on a replica of our body, our own personal Croquis.

CROQUIS - this is the term for the body sketch that designers use to draw garments on top of. Since we're designing for ourselves, our croquis should reflect our size and shape.

There's a really amazing company called My Body Model where you enter your measurements to get a customizable template for you to draw your clothes on top of! You can also try taking a photo in slim-fitting clothes and tracing that with a bold marker to use as your croquis.

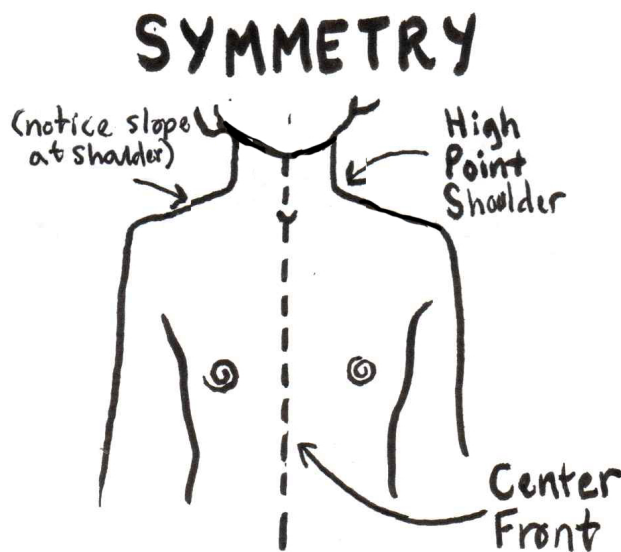
CROQUIS



measurements

If you're using My Body Model to create your croquis, you'll need to input your measurements. I've also included a "measurements" chart for you to easily reference these numbers when creating your designs. Taking measurements is gathering information - don't attach anything else to the numbers. Remember, making clothes is an exercise of kindness to ourselves.

So when it comes to clothes, you wanna know the widest parts, the narrowest parts, and how far these places are from one another. Record these measurements in one place (like the included Measurements Chart), and do it in PENCIL. This is part of honoring our bodies, understanding that our form may shift and change, and making room in our garment making practice for this shifting and changing.



Our bodies are, for the most part, symmetrical. Even if our left shoulder is bit more muscular than our right, we'll still draw and sew clothes based on symmetrical proportions (unless you've got a very distinct difference in proportion, in which case - build YOUR clothes for YOUR body!).

Using the center line of the drawing as a guide, you can draw one half of the garment, then fold the paper on this center line and trace it onto the other half. Or just eyeball the distance from the center line.

CENTER FRONT / CENTER BACK

This is the imaginary line that runs from our chin, down our sternum, through the bellybutton and to the pelvic bone (or down the spine for Center Back). This line is always indicated on the pattern, even for asymmetrical designs. Sketching this lightly before I start drawing my garment helps me properly balance my drawing.

SHOULDER SLOPE

When you look in the mirror, does the slope of your shoulder (from neckline to upper arm) seem gently angled, or - for more muscular folks - it might be almost straight. Drawing your designs with a slope similar to your own will give you a better idea of how the garment will look when you put it on.

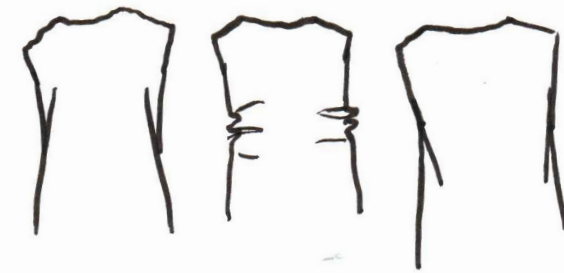
HIGH POINT SHOULDER

This is the point where the vertical line of the neck meets the sloping muscles of the shoulder. If you're wearing a classic fitting T-shirt, the neck opening is usually right on the High Point Shoulder. If you're wearing a boat neck, HPS is not covered, and is kind of an imaginary place that floats gently above the garment.

the FABRIC

ARMHOLES - I usually draw a little squiggle to show the area where the fabric folds down at the arm. You can develop your own style for this area by studying how the folds of a garment look when you're wearing them.

STYLES OF SKETCHING



FOLDS + RUMPLES - Even if a garment is straight fitting and simple, it still tends to naturally fold around the body, especially at the waist. Studying and tracing images of you or other people wearing clothes can help you understand these folds.

I love a little squiggle to indicate where fabric gathers or collects, for instance the waistline of a slim fitting knit top.

FABRIC DRAPE - Imagine, standing side by side, a canvas work jacket and a flowing silk dress. We can immediately understand that the canvas is stiff, keeping its shape, and does not "drape"; while the flowing silk dress has many folds and lays close next to the body.

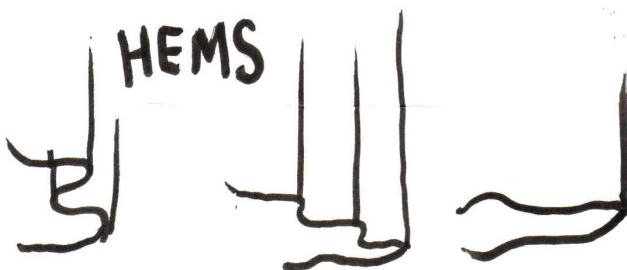
When we draw, keeping in mind the actual fabric is so important - I like to take a piece of the fabric (or the whole thing) and pin up one corner, seeing how its folds form.

You can also use this skill in reverse when shopping for fabric - if the fabric you're looking at doesn't fold like the drawing you've made, it's not the right fit for the garment you want to make!

CHIFFON

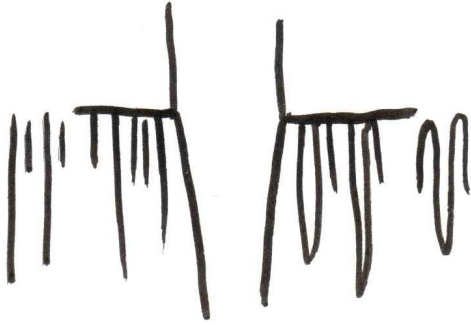


CANVAS



HEMS / OPENINGS - Unless your hem is wildly sculptural, it's mostly going to be a horizontal line. If it's got a little bit of drape, this line can waver slightly; if there's a lot of gathers and it's got a lot of drape, it will be a lot more wiggles; but for the most part.. these lines are horizontal.

Practice creating folds with horizontal lines, with smooth vertical curves (for slightly drapery fabrics) or sharp vertical curves (for voluminous drapery fabrics).



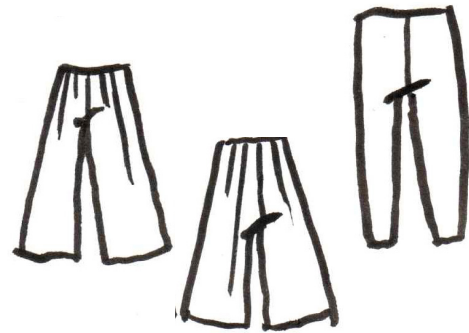
GATHERS / SHIRRING

You can draw these with a series of straight lines hitting the seam where there's a gather, like on the left, or - my favorite - a big tall squiggle. It can help to practice your tall and narrow style squiggles before trying this on the final drawing.

This is different from the squiggle we practiced on drawing hems - this is mostly vertical, with sharp horizontal curves.

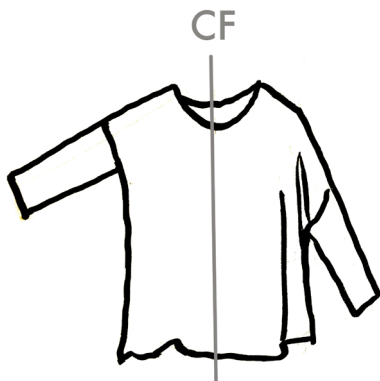
INDICATING CROTCH ON PANTS

To show the exact spot where the crotch ends on a pair of pants (so where it splits into the two legs) I like to add a little dash. This is great for full volume pants, like the ones we make in this course, where you can't exactly see this spot on a sketch (some of my pants look like skirts!)



THE SKETCH PROCESS

Now we put all of these concepts together, using tracing paper or cheap, see-through copy paper laid on top of our croquis.



- Starting at the top, sketch in the garments neck shape or waistline lightly to begin.

- continue sketching down one side of the body, considering the fabric you'd like to use, and how it would drape.

- when you've got one side drawn to your liking, you can either fold the drawing on Center Front (CF) and trace the other side, or draw what the garment would look like with one arm lifted (this helps describe the shape better for voluminous styles)

- once you've got a drawing you love, you can go over the lines in pen; if you're afraid of "ruining" your drawing, take a photo of the sketch before going in with pen!

- color in with watercolor, marker, or use a digital tool to color a photo of the sketch.

- make sure to HAVE FUN with the process! Remember... the goal is making CLOTHES, not perfect illustrations!