

How to Create a Perfect Evening Skirt

The Way Leonardo da Vinci Would

What does ANY skirt have to do with this renowned renaissance artist?

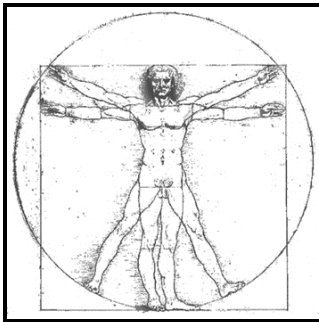


Figure 1: Vitruvian Man by
Leonardo da Vinci

Three of the many, *many* things for which [Leonardo da Vinci](#) (Leo d'Vin for short in this article) is remembered are that:

- Body height is equal to approximately 8 head lengths,
- Height is equal to the measurement of fingers tip to tip with hands out-stretched,
- *Research* into anatomy and proportion was *ongoing*.

Leo d'Vin even thought that these "perfect" proportions (known as the [golden ratio](#)) appeared in all of nature up to and including, the entire universe!

Though it may sound unlikely, others have found instances of the golden ratio from the smallest plant to the galaxy; but for now, consider the 8 head figure as he would have.

1. Measure from top of your forehead to your chin.

This is the most important measurement for this evening skirt project and it will be called simply *head* or *heads* when referring to measuring.

Interpret body portions as *heads* the way that artists have done since even before Leo d'Vin, and many still do today (but, *he* is probably still the most renowned).

2. Choose fabric approximately $3 \frac{1}{2}$ *heads* wide (hip measurement plus seam allowances). Allow extra width for more ease or another style if you wish.
(Ease is the amount of extra fabric added for basic movement and/or style.)
3. Cut a length of fabric $5 \frac{1}{2}$ *heads* long to cover both the measurement from waist to floor, plus enough to include an elastic casing at the top and a hem at the bottom.

If you are thinking "nobody is shaped like that" (CADterns Croquis [aka fashion figure] far right), then you are absolutely right; but, this abstract figure makes it easier to recognize and apply these masterful concepts.

Leo d'Vin didn't do things only once, but studied, compared and experimented always. Let this inspire you to experiment with different fabrics, findings and finishes so that like Leo d'Vin, you can design and re-design this skirt over and over, and over...

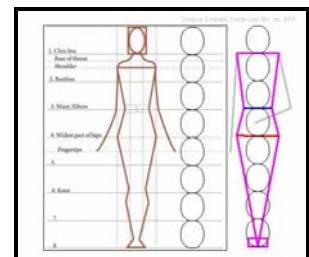


Figure 2 Illustration figure
(croquis)* 8 heads tall
Threads - 8 heads - CADterns

What Makes This Evening Skirt *PERFECT*?

The word *perfect* means different things to different people, so I can tell you only what the perfect long skirt for *me* would be. By my definition, this project would have to be quick, easy, affordable, attractive, easy to wash, easy to wear and versatile.

Let me explain:

- QUICK:
 - The skirt can be cut, sewn and finished in a single afternoon.
- EASY:
 - No special details are required for cutting, sewing or handling.
 - Fabric, thread and elastic are all that is *needed* to complete it.
- AFFORDABLE:
 - Use fabric that I already have
 - Use notions that I always keep around
 - No need for a shopping trip.
- ATTRACTIVE
 - It would be suitable for my figure and a range of activities.
- EASY TO WASH
 - It can be thrown into both the washer and the drier without concern - no need for any special handling like specific soaps or rinses.
- EASY TO WEAR
 - I must be able to comfortably make all of the movements that would be needed for this and other occasions:
 - ✧ Standing, sitting and reaching,
 - ✧ Serving food or beverages,
 - ✧ Dancing and other social activities
- VERSATILE
 - It should be useful for other occasions, other times and other locations.

Decorative details could be added and/or changed after the skirt is complete - if desired. This could keep the skirt feeling new each time you update it.

Be sure to incorporate details that would make this skirt perfect for *you* (but you are welcome to use mine if you wish :)).

What Fabric Should I Use for My Perfect Evening Skirt?

What kind of fabric would you use for a skirt that you plan to wear any time and any place? This is not always predictable - listen to your "ah-hah" moments.

One of my all-time favorite summer garments is the one made from coordinated bed sheets divided into squares. I can't even remember my reason for making this dress at the time. What I DO remember is how this dress lasted *forever*. I wore it and wore it, and wore it...

This dress was finally and reluctantly retired when stitching no longer held it together; stitching lines just created new ripping lines. It had taken almost abusive wear and tear activities and less than perfect storage but still, it never even wrinkled.

(Looking back, *of course* the dress wouldn't wrinkle - that's the beauty of sheets. They get used and abused, changed and laundered regularly and still last for many years.)

Theatre projects taught me to be open-minded about the fabrics and notions or other findings to use. For example, another time I might use lightweight drapery or upholstery fabric and little decorative findings from the hardware store. If the fiber content of the fabric was mainly polyester, it would probably even be washable too.

Once you drop the list of usual supplies, many inspirations find their way into your list of alternatives. Use simple projects like this skirt to try something new and unexpected.

Important things to watch for when using unusual supplies:

- Ensure that you can identify both lengthwise and crosswise grain lines. If difficult to tell apart, pull a thread along the width, which means between the selvages, showing the crosswise grain more distinctly; lengthwise grain should cross it at 90° (right angle or square).
- Use the lengthwise grain line for the length of your skirt because it will give you the best drape.
- To check if a fabric is safe to launder, wash it or a sample *before* you cut and sew.

A good fabric to choose if you're unsure of its washing ability is polyester, or a blend such as cotton and polyester.

Most polyester is washable but, always test a piece *before* cutting the fabric.

- If you add hardware for trim, coat it with clear nail polish to prevent it from rusting when you launder it.

Choose your fabric to fit your function.

Dare to be frivolous when it's for recreation!

Have fun



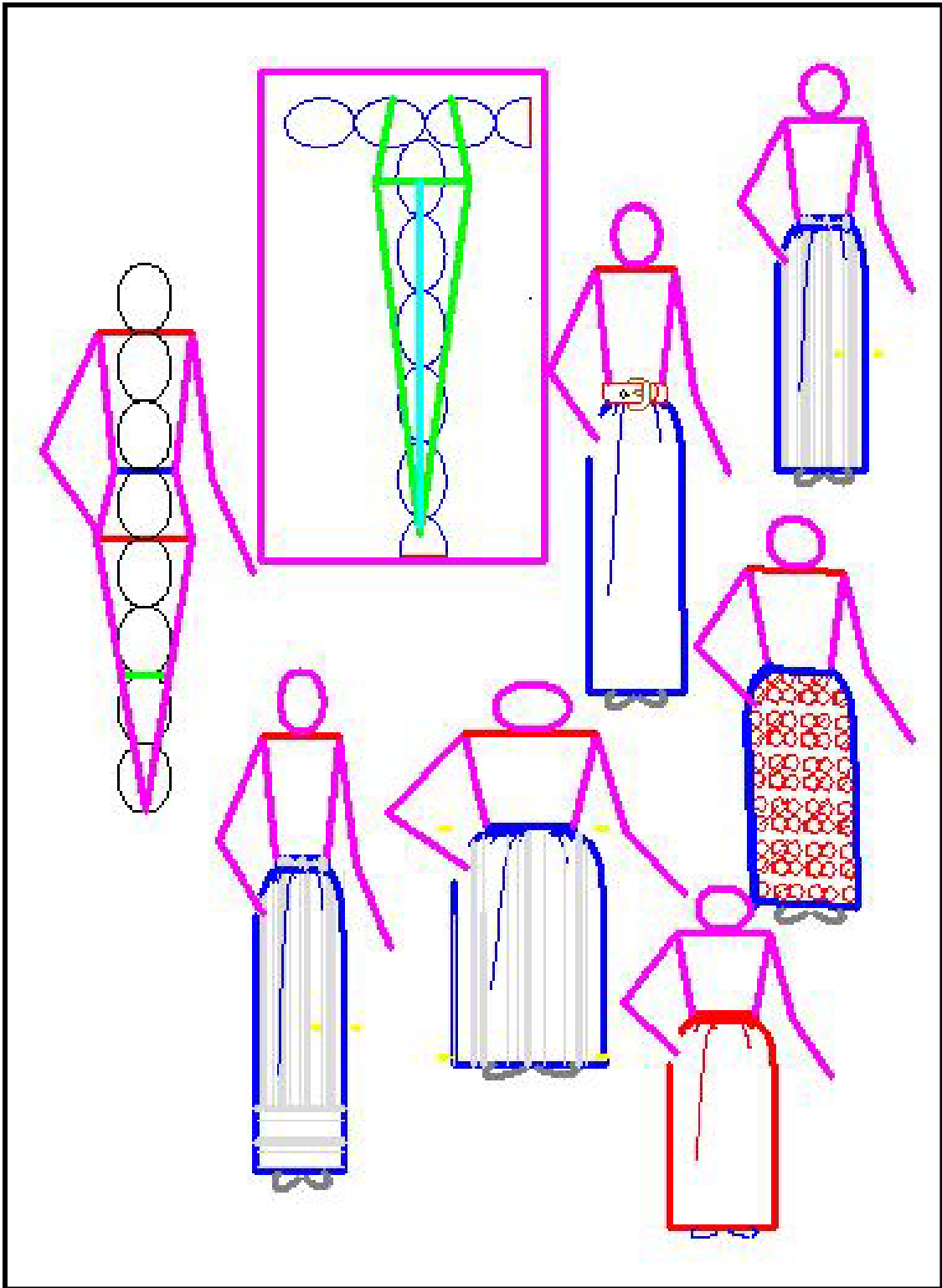


Figure 3: Different Figures - Same Proportions