

8/1/2020: Patternmaking from the Body

Demonstration Description:

In this workshop, participants will learn how to pattern a pair of elastic waist pants directly from their body. By tracing the body directly to the pattern paper, participants should feel free to experiment with styles and silhouettes and to engage fully with the process of patternmaking. The pants—ideal for dancing on the sidewalk, walking the dog, or snuggling up on a Saturday—can be made from many materials and are a great beginner project. Participants will have opportunities to consider how to expand and extend these techniques while patterning other garments beyond this demonstration.

This demonstration is geared towards tweens and teens (ages 10-15) though all are welcome, younger or older. This demonstration is open to all gender identities and body types.



About your Instructor:

Julia John is an artist and educator based in Brooklyn. She is a graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art where she studied Fiber. Her artwork utilizes dye, embroidery, weaving, and screenprinting, most often manifesting as garments. She is interested in the in-between space of art and fashion and her work plays with this line. Having recently completed an M.A. in Teaching, Julia has experience teaching art to K-12 students in a variety of settings and is excited about the moments when her love of textiles and love of teaching come together.

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Supply List for Patterning your Pants:

- Your body
- A buddy
- Scissors
- A pen or pencil
- A ruler or straight edge
- Paper: a piece large enough for you to lie down on (Sheets of newspaper or paper shopping bags cut open or recycled paper taped or pasted together works well)
- A piece of string a little bigger than your waist
- A French Curve (Print the image on the last page OR trace directly from your computer screen) OR pot lid

Pattern your Pants:

1. Locate your natural waist.

Imagine you are drawing a straight line from one side to the other through your belly button. This is your waist..it's usually the place where you naturally bend to the side.

2. Lie down on your piece of paper.

Lie flat on your back like a starfish with your legs shoulder width apart and your feet pointing out.

3. While lying down, put your hands on your waist.

4. Find a buddy.

You'll need a buddy only briefly. They will assist you by tracing your body onto a piece of paper. You will need their help for 5 minutes, max.

5. Have your buddy trace you.

Have your buddy start at one of your hands, which are at your waist, and trace around each leg, all the way around to your other hand.

6. Your body isn't flat, so let's adjust.

Your body is three-dimensional, so we need to add room to our pattern to make sure your pants will fit you. Hold up your hands to the widest part of your lower body. This may be your hips or your waist or your calves or maybe something else. We're going to add this amount to one side of our pant pattern.

7. Using a piece of string, add the amount you measured in the previous step all the way down one leg.

8. This pair of pants will be the same front and back, made from one pattern piece that we cut from our fabric 4 times. So, let's find the center.

In this step, we'll be finding the center of our waistline. Lay a piece of string from one side of the waist to the other. Draw a line across where the string lies. Then, take your string and fold in half. This is a simple way to divide our waist by two. Mark the middle. This mark is called the "*center front*" and will likely line up with your belly button again.

9. From the center front, draw a straight line down toward the crotch.

10. Now, we'll create the crotch seam.

We need to add extra space in our pattern so that the pants can wrap between our legs. We do this by creating a curved seam. We're going to pattern the front and the back the same way, even though our bodies usually aren't the same front and back. You'll base your pattern on whichever side, front or back, is larger and requires more space in the pattern. If necessary, we can adjust so that there are two separate pattern pieces later.

First, let's give the crotch some ease. From your center front line, make a mark about two inches below the crotch that you traced onto your pattern paper.

Next, we'll use our string to measure from our waist down to the inseam of our pants. The *inseam* is the place where the inner seams on your pants meet. You'll want to do this on the side of your body that is larger.

When you have your measurement, lay the string down on your pattern paper, keeping the string straight on the center front line, and then curving out about three or four inches from where your inseam will start.

Using your french curve or a pot lid, trace this curve to make it smooth.

11. You have completed the hardest patterning step!

Take a deep breath and admire your work!

12. Now, decide how wide your pant legs will be.

Will you make super wide leg pants for dancing or will the pant legs stay close to your body? This is up to you. Using a ruler or a straight edge, draw two straight lines, one for your inseam and one for your outer seam, making sure that these lines stay outside the lines your buddy drew around your body.

13. All our major pattern lines are in place.

Our pattern exists! This pattern, completely unique to you, will serve as a template when we cut our fabric that we'll sew into pants. When we sew, we don't stitch directly on the edge. Instead, we sew about half an inch away from the edge so that our stitches won't pull out as easily. This extra space we add is called *seam allowance* and we'll add it all the way around our pants pattern.

14. Add seam allowance.

Add half an inch, or the length of your thumbnail, to the inseam, the outer seam, and the crotch seam of your pants.

15. Add hem allowance.

The *hem* is the bottom edge of your pants. We add more space at the hem than at the seams so that we can completely conceal the raw edge of our fabric. Add two inches along the bottom of your pant leg, or the length of your whole thumb.

16. The waist!

We are making pants with an elastic waist, meaning that we will gather the waist so it stretches over the widest parts of your body, but fits snugly at the waist. We'll be sewing the elastic into a casing, meaning we'll need a little extra fabric at the waist. We'll add 4 inches to the top of your pants, across the waistline, or the width of your hand.

17. Cut out your pattern piece.

Hold your pattern up to your body. Does the pattern wrap around your body with enough room so that all parts of you could fit inside? If your answer is yes, you are ready to cut your fabric and sew. If your answer is no, you can add to your pattern by attaching another sheet of paper and adding room where you need it.

Think-about Questions:

- Where could you take this method of patternmaking next? What other garments could you pattern by tracing directly from your body?
- What can we gain by allowing our process of making to be looser and more playful, focusing less on precise measurements and more on discovery?
- When we pattern our own clothes, what control do we have over the way we express ourselves in the world?

8/1/2020: Sewing your Pants

Supply List for Sewing your Pants:

- Fabric: A woven material, which is a material without stretch, allowing enough space to cut your pattern piece 4 times
- Needle and thread OR a sewing machine
- Elastic: enough to wrap once around your waist
- 1 safety pin

Sew your pants:

1. Fold your fabric in half and then in half again.

What you'll need is four of the same pieces, two that face one direction, and two that face the other. Lay your pattern piece on top of the fabric. Pin your pattern piece down to the fabric or weight with cans or rocks. Cut around your pattern pieces.

2. Lay out your pant legs.

With the right sides of the fabric facing inward, lay out your two pant legs. The two legs should be mirror images of each other.

3. Sew the outer seam and the inner seam of your two pant legs.

Make sure that you are sewing on the wrong side of your fabric. You can use a sewing machine or you can use a hand sewing stitch such as the backstitch.

4. Sew the crotch seam.

With the right sides of the fabric together, sew the crotch seam, which will join the two legs to each other. Before you stitch, pin the inseams of each leg together so they line up.

5. Try on.

Do the pants fit you? Keep in mind that they should be long at the bottom and tall at the waist. Be sure that your pants fit over the widest part of your body before you move on to your hem and waistband.

6. Hem.

Turn your pants inside out. Fold the bottom of each pant leg up one inch, then fold it up again. Stitch around the hemline to secure.

7. Create a waistband.

With your pants inside out, fold the waistband down two inches, then fold it down again. Stitch ALMOST all the way around your waistline, leaving a few inches unstitched so that you can thread your elastic through.

8. Attach a safety pin to the end of your elastic and thread it through the waistband.

Your elastic should be cut to be the size of your waist. Using the safety pin, guide the elastic through the waistband with your fingers. Your fabric will begin to gather as you go. Pull your elastic all the way through your waistband, taking care that the other end stays outside the waistband.

9. Sew the two ends of your elastic together.

10. Stitch the rest of your waistband shut.

11. Snip your threads and go rock your new pair of pants!

