

How to Draft a Custom Circle Skirt

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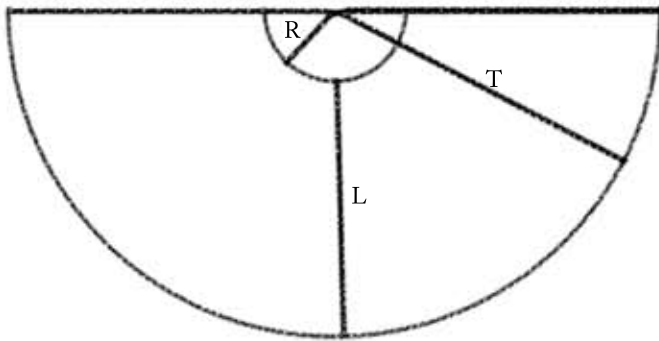
Draft your own custom circle skirt! This is so much easier than dealing with ungainly pattern pieces or manipulating other patterns via flat pattern drafting. It does require some calculation, spatial thinking and knowledge of geometry, but it's still pretty easy and worth the work. Fast too! Be aware that this project drafts the pattern straight onto the fabric!

Materials needed:

Measuring tape	Pencil
Calculator	Scissors
Chalk	String/Ribbon

First, you'll need to do some measuring. Use the worksheet below to record and calculate your skirt measurements. Refer to Illustration 1 to see how these measurements will work together in the pattern.

Illustration 1.



Desired skirt length = _____ (L)
remember to add seam allowance for both the top and bottom of the skirt

Waist + 2" = _____ (W)
The extra 2" allows for some ease and seam allowance.

$W \div \pi =$ _____ (D)
 $\pi = 3.14159265$, or just 3.14 if you want. This will determine the diameter of the circle that will make up your waistline

$D \div 2 =$ _____ (R)
D was the diameter of the circle that will make up your waistline. This skirt is made up of two halves of a circle, so we need to divide D in half to get the radius.

$R + L =$ _____ (T)
T will become the radius of the circle that you will mark on your fabric!

There is no real great way of determining yardage for skirts like these. Fabric widths, skirt lengths and waist measurements all throw off any simple calculations. If you want to be very safe, buy enough fabric so that you can fit your T measurement on it four times plus a little bit. However, I've found that on many fabric with many skirt lengths, you can put once circle on each selvage and butt the circles up next to each other. The best way to figure this out is to play around with measurements on the fabric itself.

To start marking out your skirt, lay out your fabric smoothly on a flat surface. I personally like floors, but being young and limber might have something to do with that. Take your chalk and tie one end of the string or ribbon around it securely. Measure out the length of the string, marking T with a knot.

Illustration 2.

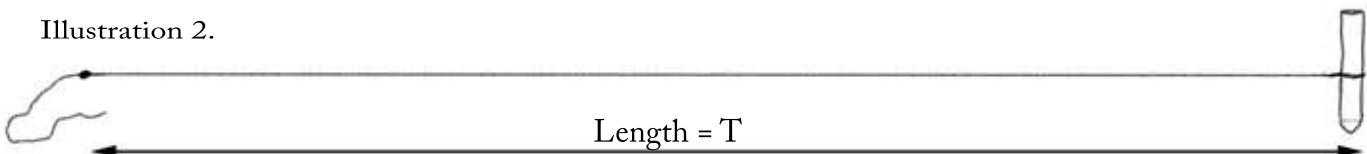
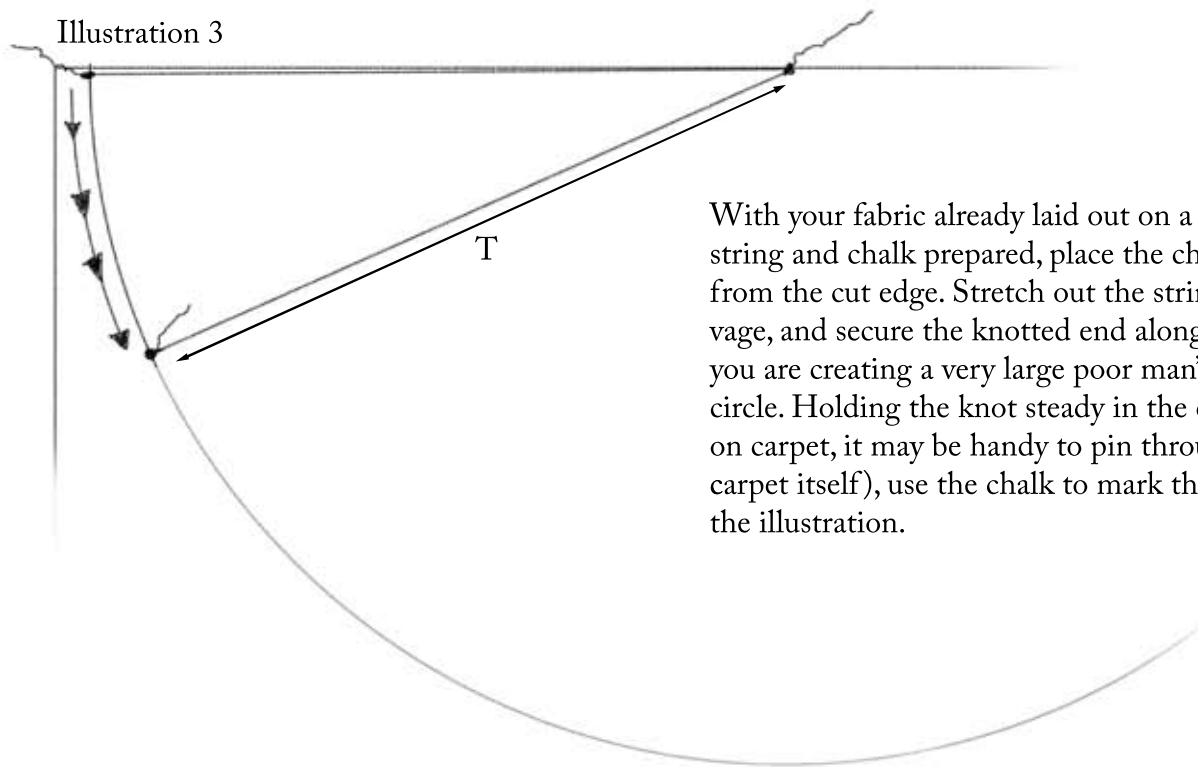
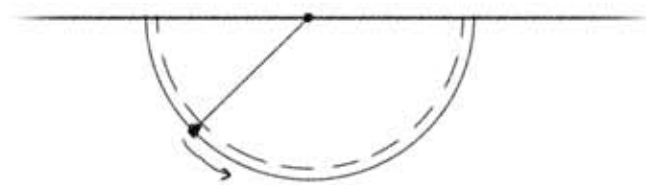


Illustration 3



With your fabric already laid out on a flat surface, and your string and chalk prepared, place the chalk on the selvage, 1" from the cut edge. Stretch out the string out along the selvage, and secure the knotted end along the selvage. In effect, you are creating a very large poor man's compass to scribe a circle. Holding the knot steady in the center of the circle (if on carpet, it may be handy to pin through the knot into the carpet itself), use the chalk to mark the circle, as shown in the illustration.

Illustration 4.



Repeat this process for the small inner semicircle that will form the waist of the skirt, using R instead of T as your radius. I find it easiest to mark my seam allowances after I sketch the initial semi circle (which will be my sewing line) but before cutting. See Illustration 4

Before you repeat this process on the other circle, make sure your string hasn't stretched by checking it against your measuring tape. It may take a bit of playing around with placement to determine how best to squeeze your skirt into the fabric, so don't cut anything out until you have BOTH half circles drawn.

Cutting out is fairly simple. Make sure you added the seam allowance on the smaller inner circle and allowed for a hem on the outer circle.

Construct as you would any other skirt - sew up the sides, ease in the waist to a waistband or the bottom of a dress bodice. Be warned, though, that these instructions construct a skirt for a side closure only. If you desire a back closure you will need to cut two quarter circles with added seam allowance for the back. When hemming the dress, you may find it useful to let the assembled skirt hang for 12 hours, to let it stretch out on the bias. Some fabrics are less sable than others and will stretch more aggressively in some areas than others. If that is the case, you may need to level the hem before hemming.

As far as actually hemming goes, circle skirts are decidedly tricky. An easy solution is to simply bind the bottom edge in bias tape. Otherwise, you can try using lots of pins, ironing with lots of steam or running an easing stitch around the edge of the skirt to pull up the excess. OR you can do as I often do and just give up. Not many people will be on their hands and knees examining your hem!