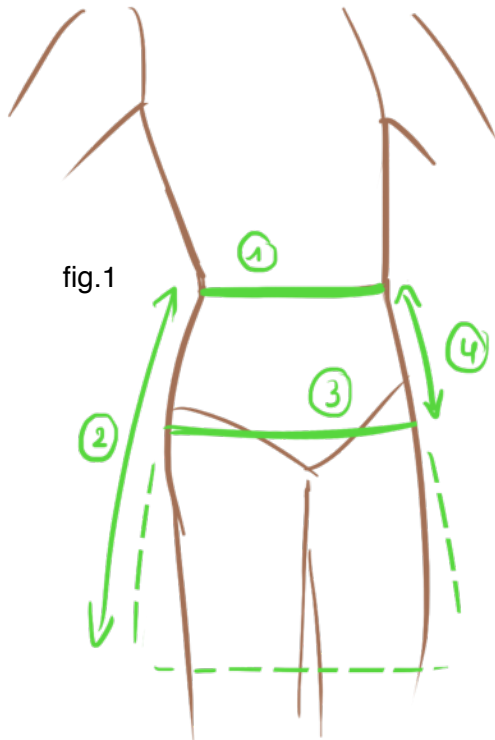
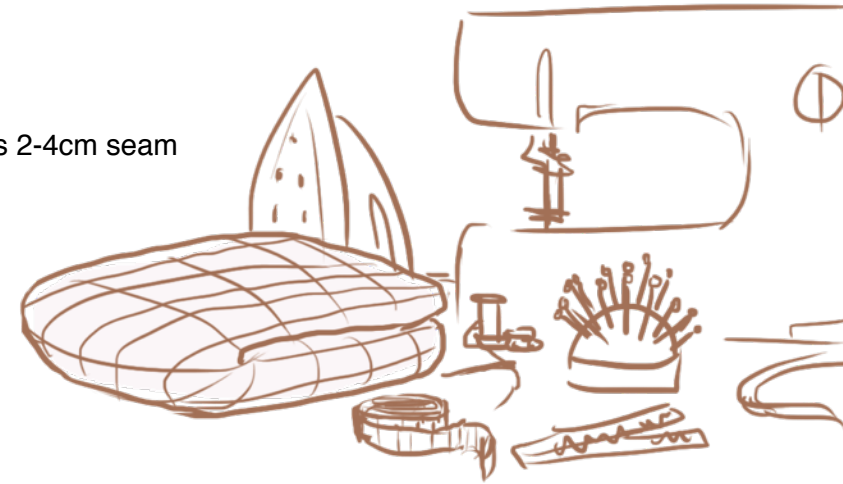


INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING A PLEATED SKIRT by Ren Zoller (@dkettchen)

Things you'll need:

- non-stretchy fabric of your choice (enough to fit all the pieces based on your measurements plus 2-4cm seam allowance as explained below, plus some extra length just in case)
- a ca 18 cm zipper
- a sewing machine (it's probably possible to do it all by hand, but it'd take *forever*)
- some thread (in a colour that matches your fabric)
- A LOT of pinning needles & one of those lil pillowy thingies to stick them in
- a sewing needle
- an iron
- a measuring tape
- a calculator



Measurements (of the prospective skirt-wearer) you'll need: (see fig.1)

- waist circumference (smallest part or wherever you want the skirt's waistband to sit)
- distance between waist and where you want the skirt to end (length of skirt) (mine was ca 40 cm)
- hip circumference (biggest part of the hip/butt area, should generally be bigger than the waist circ.)
- distance between waist and hip

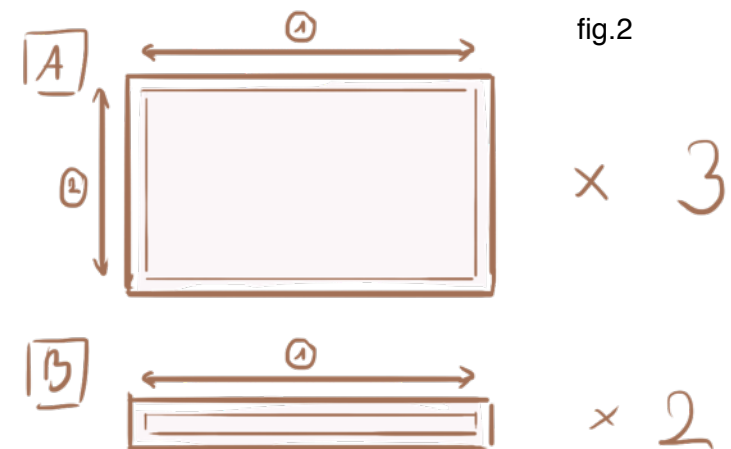
Constructing your pieces: (see fig.2)

Generally try and cut your pieces so they're in line with the grain (direction of the threads) of your fabric, because the fabric can distort itself otherwise and we don't want that for this project.

Skirt pieces: (fig.2 [A])

(waist circ.) x (length of skirt)

-> You'll need 3 of these and if you're working with tartan or similar you can try and match the pattern all the way around.



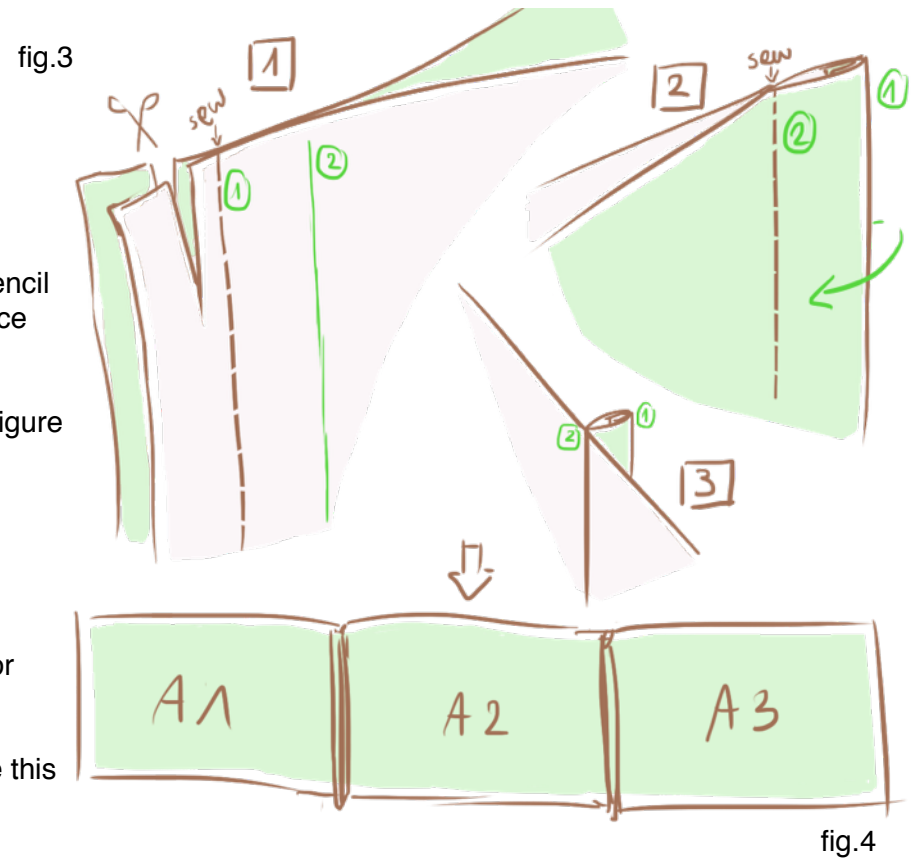
Waistband pieces: (fig.2 [B])
 (waist circ.) x ca 5 cm (or whatever width you want your waistband to be)
 -> You'll need 2 of these, one for the inside, and one for outside.

Trace the measurements of these pieces on your fabric with some tailor's chalk or a pencil (depending on how dark/light the fabric is) and cut them out with 2-4 cm seam allowance around each piece on all sides (DO NOT FORGET OR SKIMP ON THE SEAM ALLOWANCE YOU WILL NEED IT)
 If you're using a tartan or plaid fabric you can use the stripes/square lines to help you figure out where to put your lines :)

Sewing:

Pin the three big skirt pieces together via 2 seams (leave the future back seam open for now). If you're trying to match the pattern, make sure they're lining up correctly.

Sew these two seams with your sewing machine. I used french seams, which work like this (fig.3):



[1] You pin the fabric together so the right sides are on the outside and the wrong sides are on the inside (as you'd want it to end up later)
 You sew a seam a bit further out on your seam allowance than you want the final seam to be.
 You then trim any leftover seam allowance on the other side of that to avoid bulk and turn it over. Make sure the distance between this first seam and where you want the final seam to go is enough to cover any leftover seam allowance.

[2] You sew the next seam where you want your final seam to be.

[3] When you turn it back this bit will be on the inside without any raw edges of your fabric sticking out anymore and you'll have a nice clean seam on the outside. (fig.4)

You can iron it down to one side after you're done.

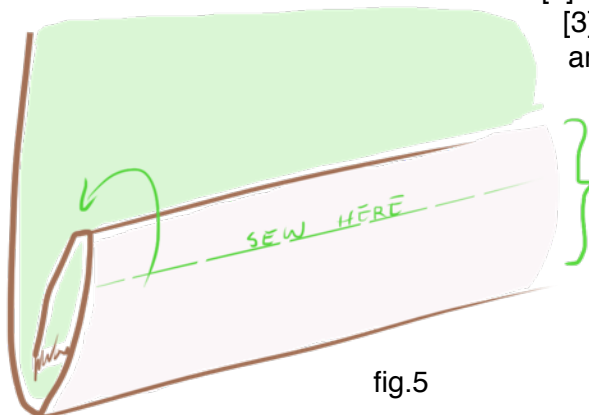
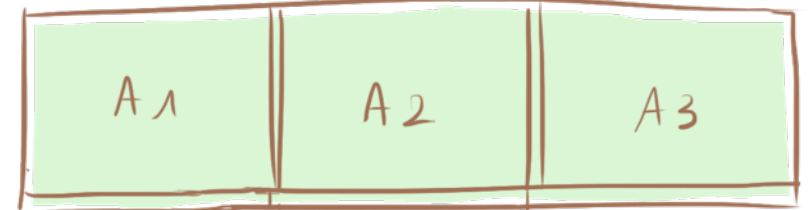


fig.5

Next you'll pin the bottom seam by folding your seam allowance in half and then up (as to hide the raw edge inside), iron it down if you like, and sew that down across the entire length of the skirt piece. (fig.5 & 6) Watch out for your thicc seams from before.

fig.6



Now we'll get to the pleats.

Decide roughly how wide you want your pleats to be. Divide your waist measurement by that number.

If you get a whole number then congrats that's how many pleats you'll get.

If you get a number with decimals, round it up or down to an even number and divide your waist measurement by that number (which is now your number of pleats), the result will be the new width of those pleats.

I ended up going with 4 cm pleats.

On the top (still raw) edge of your long 3-piece skirt fabric strip, you now mark (width of pleats) wide spaces (3 x no of pleats) times until you reach the end. Make sure they line up with the end of your piece (minus seam allowances) and are the correct number, because you'll need it to be exact enough to be able to properly pleat it all the way around.

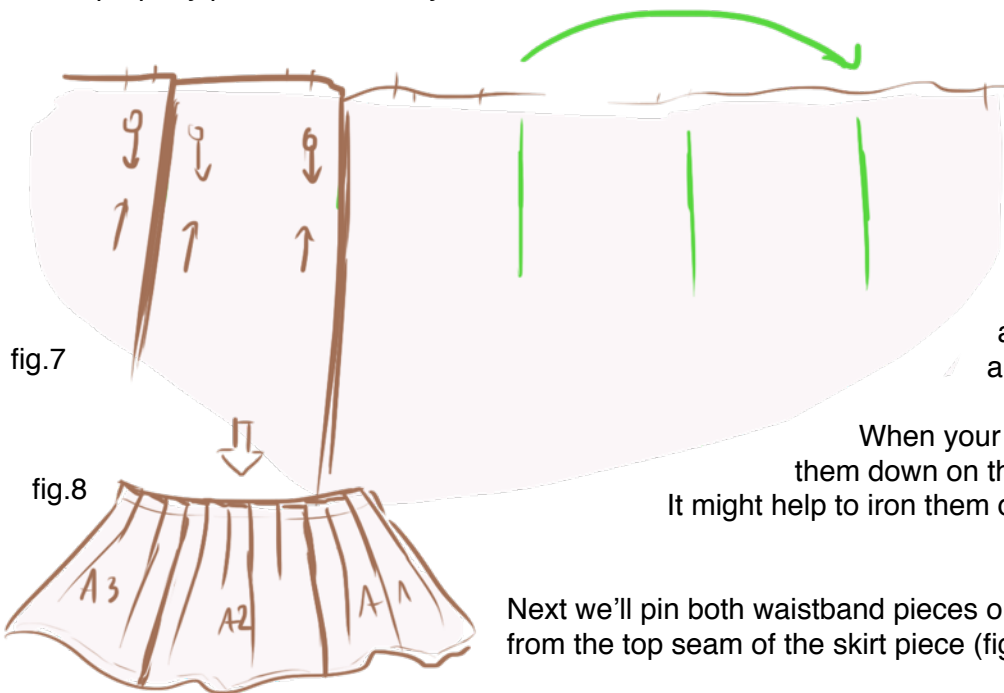
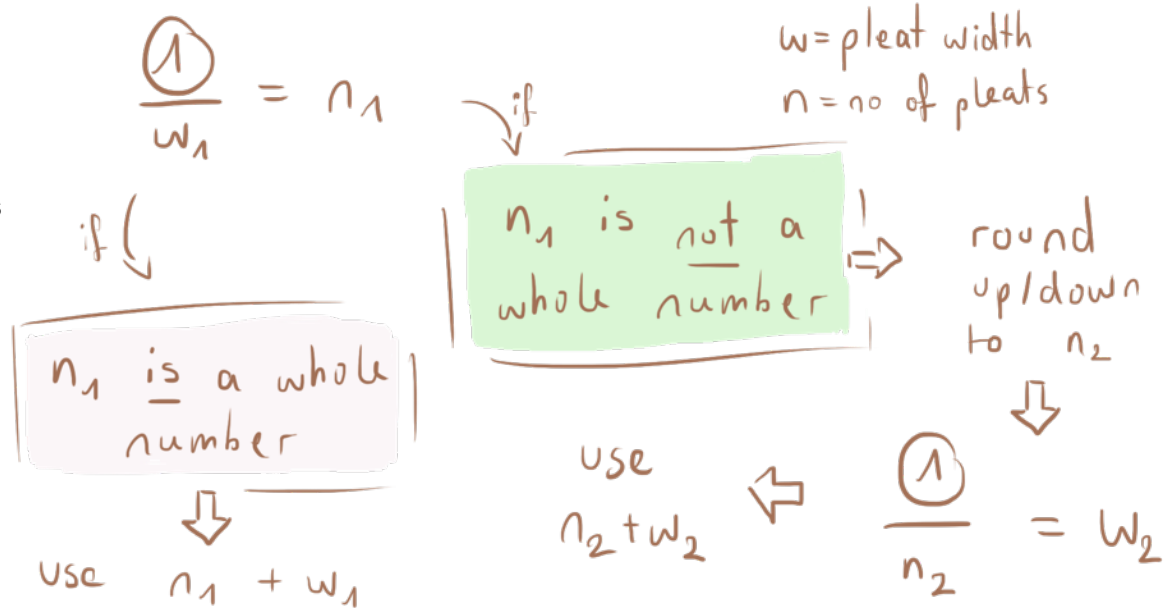


fig.7

fig.8

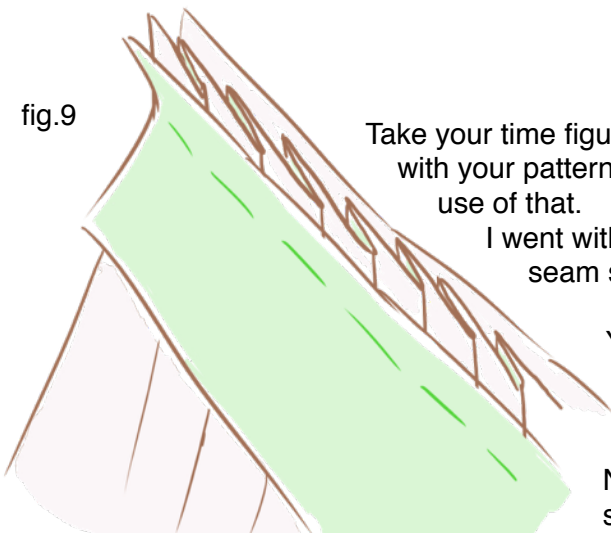
For each of these marks you take one of them, move it over by two of them, and pin it down so it stays there. This is your first pleat. (Make sure it's nice and lining up with itself horizontally.) Then you take the next marking over and do the same for your second pleat (fig.7). When you've done this all the way around, your entire fabric should have 3 layers (with all the pleats neighboring each other) and the correct amount of pleats, as well as match the waist circ., and still have the seam allowances at each end.

If any of these are not the case, repin until they are. (Don't make my mistakes and end up with a longer piece of fabric than you planned for and have to cut off a pleat worth of it and then not have enough seam allowance later on T^T)

When your pleats are all nicely spaced and securely pinned in place, you can carefully sew them down on the machine (fig.8). Make sure the pleats stay in place and don't get tangled up. It might help to iron them down before you do this to ensure they're even.

Next we'll pin both waistband pieces on either side of the pleats, wrong side out on both sides and facing downwards from the top seam of the skirt piece (fig.9). We'll fold them up later.

fig.9



Take your time figuring out where exactly you want these to attach, if they'll line up nice with your pattern, how much your seam allowance was and how much you want to use of that.

I went with a lil bit under where I sewed the pleats down, as to avoid that seam sticking out and looking weird.

You'll wanna sew this down by hand, because there's a lot of layers at this point and sewing machines can only hand so much. I used a backstitch.

Now trim off the excess seam allowance above the seam you just sewed. Fold the two waistband pieces up (right sides should be facing out now), fold their upper seam allowances in and pin them together for the top seam (sewn from the outside) (fig.10). You can sew this one on the machine again.



fig.10

(cross section)

You could skip to closing the back now and have this as a finished skirt, but I wanted a skirt with the pleats that are sewn down until the hips and make the Nice Shape™.

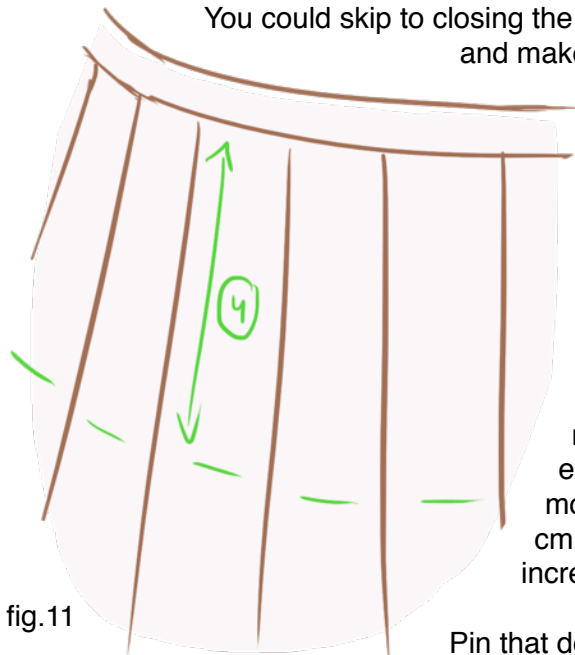


fig.11

Take the hip circ. and divide it by your number of pleats. This is our hip pleat width now.

Iron your pleats straight down so they are even for at least the top bit.

Mark the distance between waist and hip down from the waistband (fig.11). This is the height where we'll now take each pleat and widen it. I kept the outer edge of each pleat as the straight ironed in line and moved it over until it matched my hip pleat width (5.2 cm instead of 4 cms in my case, so a 1.2 cm increase per pleat for me) (fig.12).

Pin that down and repeat it all the way around. For whichever side's last pleat has its outer edge on the opposite side as the unfinished seam, you might want to keep that soon-to-be seam

fig.12

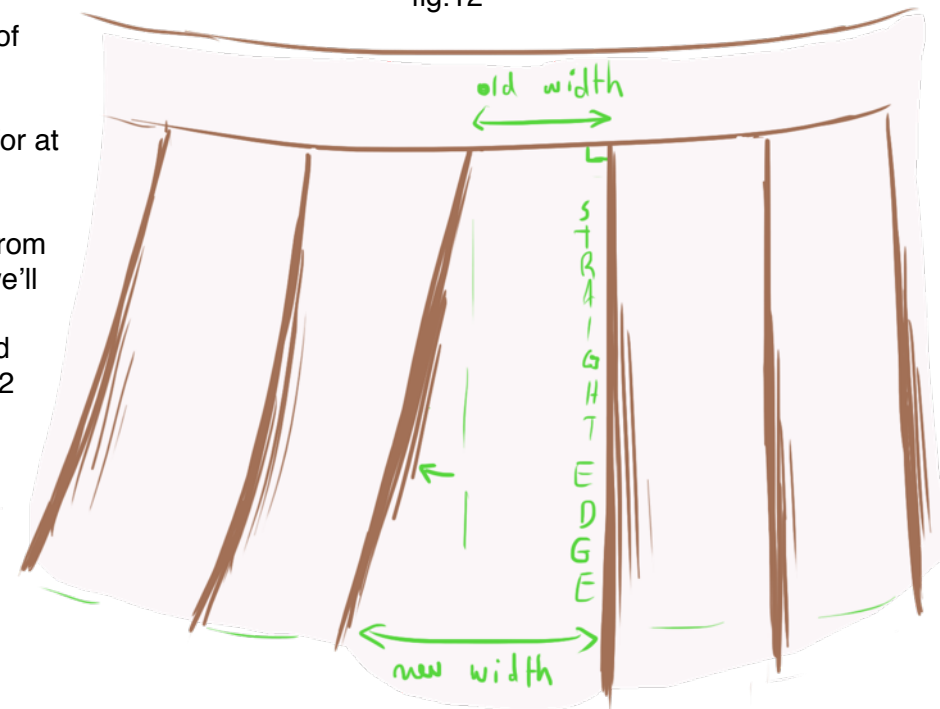
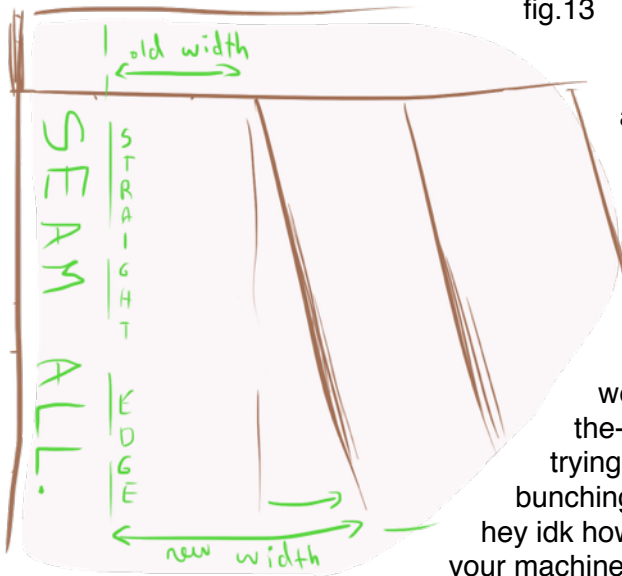


fig.13



as its straight edge rather than the outer one and widen it the other way around if that makes sense, for keeping your seam allowance's sake (fig.13).

Next we'll sew down each of the pleats (on their outer edge's side) down to the waist-hip distance mark (fig.14). This can be a bit tricky due to the amount of fabric we're working with and the middle-of-the-fabric location of the thing we're trying to sew, so you might get some bunching on the closed-off (usually right but hey idk how you use your machine lol) side of your machine while sewing.

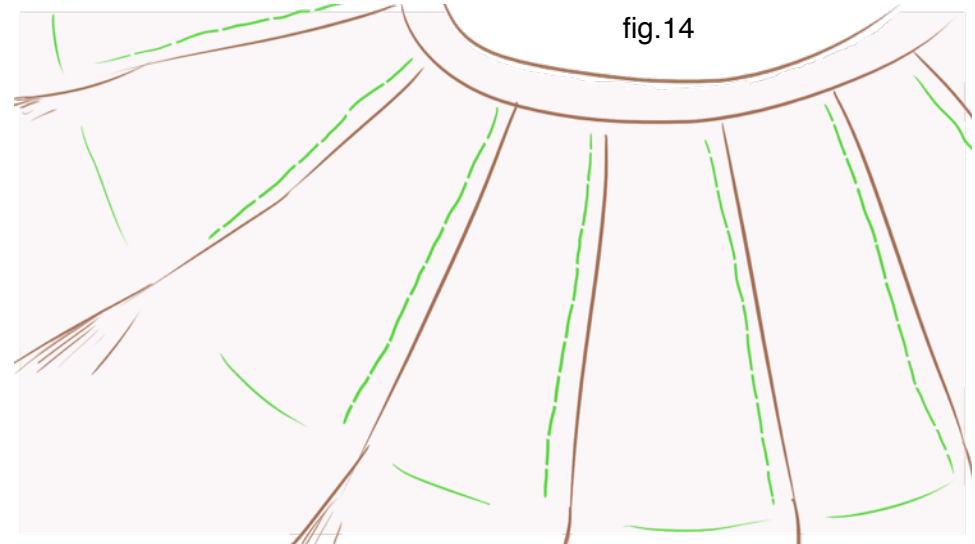


fig.14

Now we almost have a skirt! The only thing left to do is the back!

First we measure how what we have so far fits our skirt-wearer (fig.15). The lengths of things might've gotten altered a bit in the process so far so you should double check that it still matches their measurements (let's hope you have enough seam allowance left over after this!).

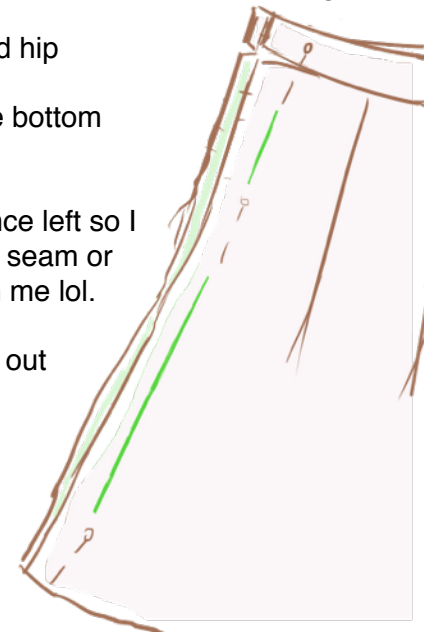
Pin where you'd need to connect the back seam to fit it correctly to the waist and hip (regardless of where the seam allowance was originally marked). Pin a straight-ish line between those two and another one between the hip and the bottom seam (where you marked the seam allowance) (fig.16).

Sew the seam between the hip and bottom seam. I didn't have much seam allowance left so I felled down the raw edges inside instead of tucking them under or doing a french seam or anything, but if you have more seam allowance left, feel free to do it neater than me lol.

Now you pin the zipper to the top bit of the back seam. Make sure you figure out how you need to turn it so it'll be the right way around later, and pin it so the zipper matches up with where you pinned your marks for the fitting (fig.17).

fig.15

fig.16



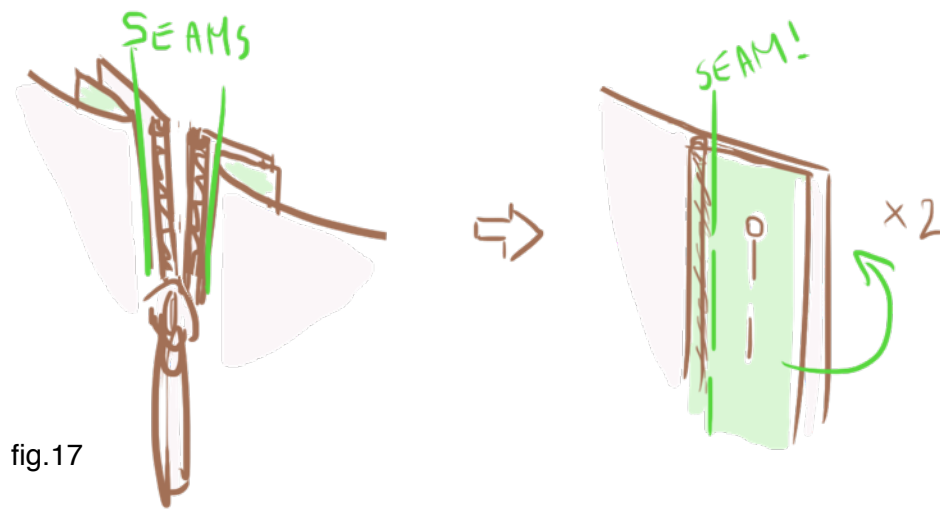
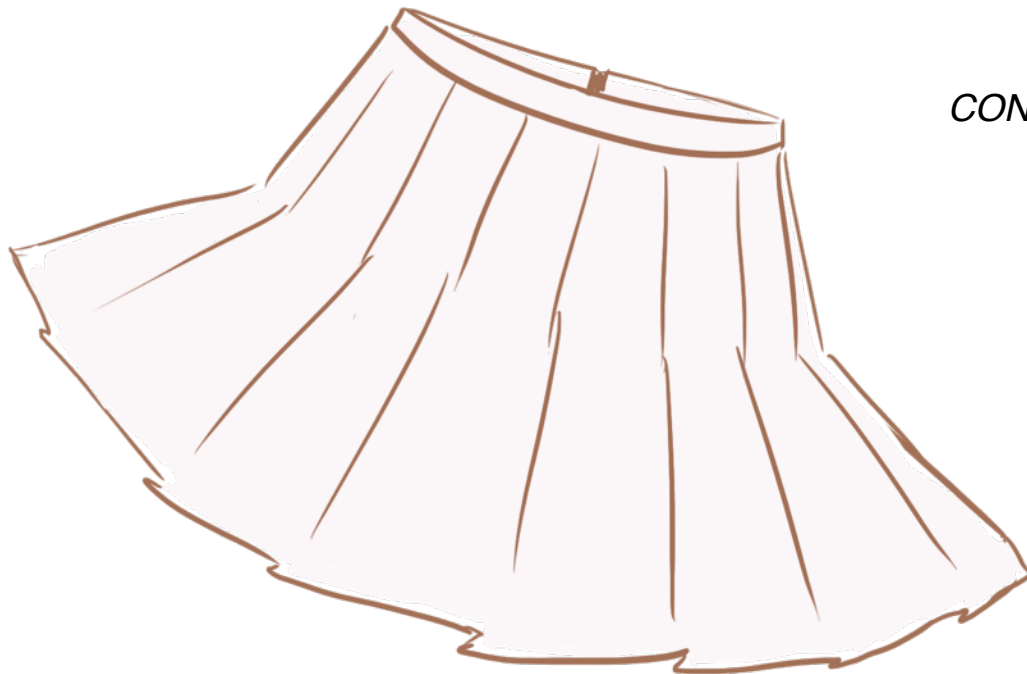


fig.17

I hand sewed the zipper in, but if you feel confident enough to do it on your machine I'm told that's a thing one can do too. I also had to sew another bit of the hip-bottom seam because my zipper wasn't long enough to fill the entire gap.

Once the zipper is in, the back closed off, and all the seams finished off inside, you can iron down your pleats so they feather out according to the waist-hip angle and will fall neatly.



CONGRATS! YOU HAVE OFFICIALLY MADE A SKIRT!