

Fashion Sketching

Unit

10

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Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this Unit the learner will be able to:

- Explore materials used in fashion sketching
- Examine posture of human figure and techniques for sketching head and face, arms and hands and feet and legs
- Examine presentation techniques of fashion drawing and dressing up the figure drawn

Fashion design sketches help us paint the picture we have in your mind. Before one can actually designs a good dress, he must visualise it first, and once it is done, he can slowly try recreating the image using pen and paper.

The reason fashion design and design sketches are around; is so that one can have a rough idea of what is in his mind and then using his imagination and creativity he can make alterations accordingly.

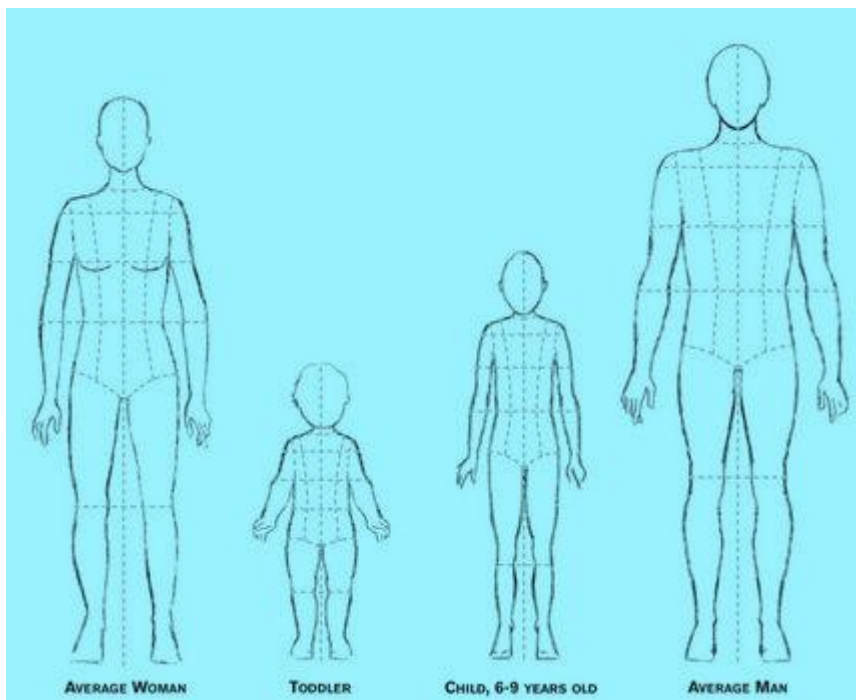
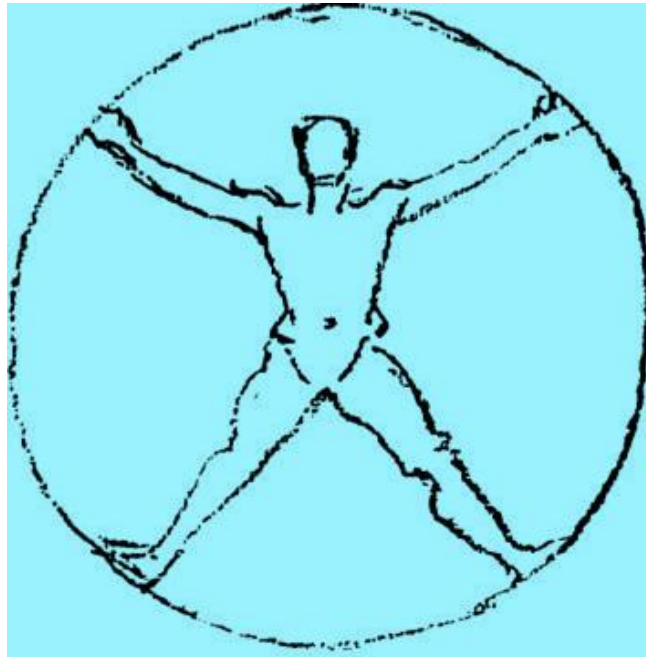
Be it shoes, tops, belts, pants, shorts, dresses, skirts, coats or whatever it is, it must start with a sketch or two. Besides that, the fashion design sketches are what you will submit to your manufacturing companies to produce your design. With your drawings you will also be able to determine what type of materials and fabrics would best suit it because not everything goes with cotton or silk.

Materials for Sketching

The advanced student in fashion sketching prefers using long sharp point on his pencil, but the beginner can work more freely and easily with a blunt point. Long leads are time-savers, which is an important point with the commercial artist. The important requirement of pencils is that they should be long enough to keep the fingers and hand from cramping, which means that the wrist and arm should be kept free and flexible.

The beginners can find a tilted board more convenient to obtain correct proportions, but with practice one can learn to draw just as well on a flat board. Art gum is the most popular eraser among commercial artists, but any type of soft eraser is all right.

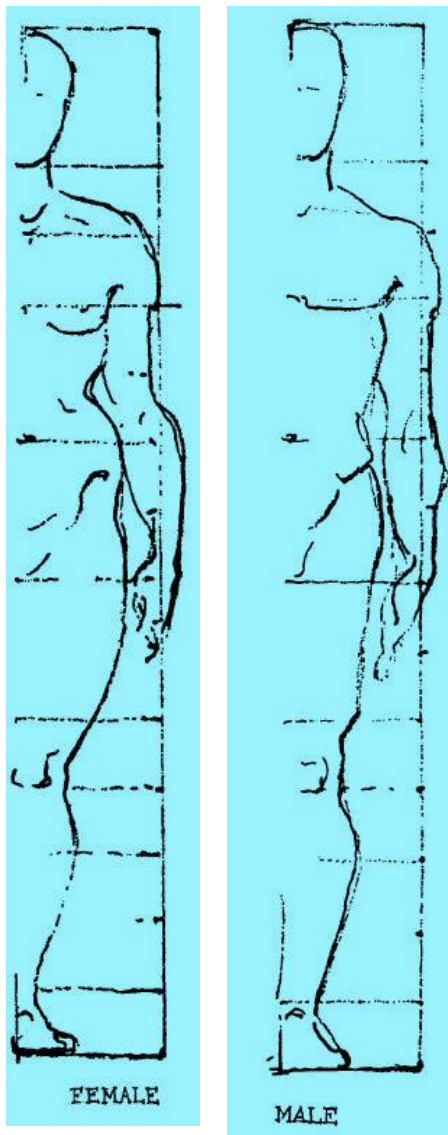
Portions of human figure



The average human figure is about eight heads tall, whereas a fashion figure may be from eight to ten heads tall, - in extreme mannequin types, as many as twelve heads. However, the height of the fashion figure should be governed by the length of the head and the width of the shoulders. This added height lends sophistication, grace and smartness to the figure - qualities that are envied by the majority of women and therefore enhance the appeal of an advertisement.

There should be a more angular appearance and a more abstract feeling to a fashion sketch than there is to a human figure, but at the same time the fashion figure, to meet modern popular demands, must be natural looking and suggestive of action.

This comparison will illustrate the contrasting proportions of the human and fashion figures. Both figures were started with the same size head as their unit of measuring.



The average person will find it easier to draw from left to right and from top of the paper down, but you may proceed in any manner you prefer. As the head is the most useful unit for measuring a figure, it will be used as a measuring unit for all other proportions. The

human figure is about 8 heads tall, whereas a fashion figure is from eight to ten heads tall. The Animated Type of fashion figure is about eight and three-quarters heads tall.

First, draw a vertical line lengthwise through the centre of your drawing paper.

Construct an egg-shaped oval at the top of this line with the larger part of the oval at the top. This represents the head.

Mark off eight heads on the vertical line, numbering each head on the left of the page, i.e. 1st Head, 2nd Head, etc. As you fill in the proportions mark in the identifications on the right-hand side, i.e. Shoulder-line, 'Waist-line, etc.

Drop down one-half of the second head for the shoulder line. Here, too, is located the pit of the neck. The shoulders should be approximately one and three-quarters head wide. The arms extend slightly over this mark.

Fashion sketches head and face

The best rule to follow in sketching the face is to omit as much detail as possible in order to avoid a photographic likeness. Remember you are sketching - not trying to reproduce a detailed likeness of anyone. Detail tightens; keep your sketch free and loose. Omit part of the outline of the face, you may even leave out the nostrils of the nose; be a little abstract. Such things will tend to give your work freedom.





The one place where it is most important to strive for personality and character is in the face. Facial weakness suggests one of two things, - either a lack of knowledge of the subject illustrated, or the weak character of the artist himself. You have doubtlessly heard casual

observers say of a sketch "Why, that looks exactly like Miss So-and-so, the artist". And quite frequently it does. The explanation is that all artists inject a certain amount of themselves into their sketches.

There are many number of individual characteristics you can give your faces. No one can tell you what to add or to eliminate in a sketch to give it individuality; that is something every artist must work out for himself. Another person will recognise it when it is there, but he can't tell you how to get it. Some artists express their individuality by omitting the pupil in the eye, suggesting the eye in rather a loose manner rather than a tight detailed drawing while some fill in the entire eye. If the pupil is drawn it should not be shown as a complete circle, but the eye-lid should cover part of the upper portion of it. There should be the width of an eye distance between the two eyes in a front view. The eyes appear to be closer together as the head turns around to a three-quarter view. In a profile view one sees only one eye.

The following instructions are for a front view and may be varied to meet your individual needs:

Construct an egg-shaped oval, placing the larger part at the top.

Draw a vertical line through the centre, which is the centre of the face in a symmetrical pose. Now, draw a horizontal line a little above the centre of the oval. This is the eye-line and is to be divided into eight equal parts. Connect the second and third spaces in an almond-shaped oval. This is the left eye of the sketch. Connect spaces six and seven, also, in the same manner.

Drop down one-half the distance from the eye-line and chin line for the nose line. Indicate a horizontal line about the width of an eye. The bridge of the nose is extremely narrow between the eyes and broadens out near the nostrils. A wide bridge tends to give a common expression. Strive for an aristocratic expression.

When drawing the nose in a front view think of a small circle, from which are extended the nostrils. The planes of the nose are suggested by two lines going up toward the eyes. Later everything but the nostrils may be erased.

One third of the remaining lower part of the oval is the location for the mouth. The mouth is about one and one-half the length of an eye. Pull lips are used for a youthful expression and narrow lips for a mature expression.

One may think of the mouth in terms of a Cupid's bow for the upper lip. The lower lip is then suggested. In a profile view of the mouth the upper lip extends out over the lower lip slightly. Some artists draw small pointed mouths, while others draw full lips and rather large mouths.

There are no set rules for the eye-brows, as they vary in relation to the expression. The ears extend a little outside the oval and follow the lines of the eyebrow and nose. After the features have been placed in the face, the oval should be shaped. Indent at the eye-line. If you like hollow cheeks, curve the cheek line in a little. Make angular chin lines. In sketching the hair use as few lines as possible. Nothing is more amateurish than to draw a lot of meaningless lines.

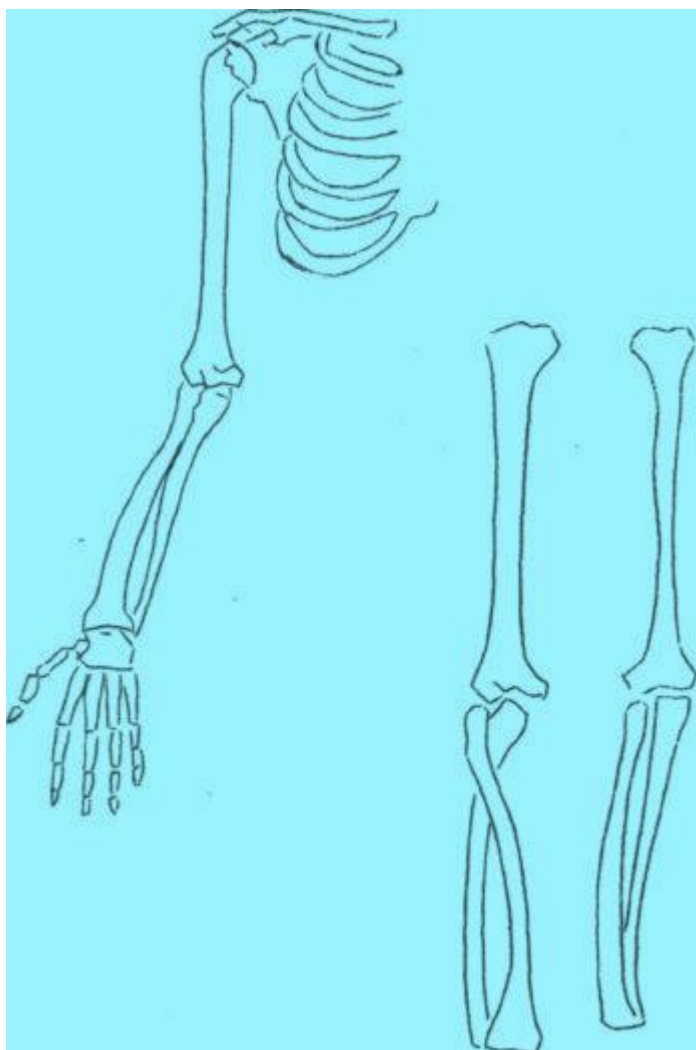
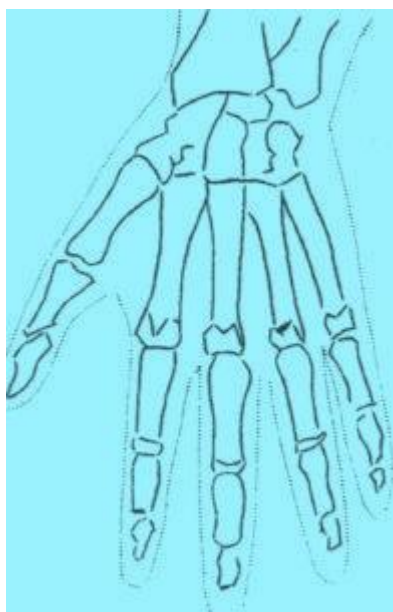
The Arms and Hands

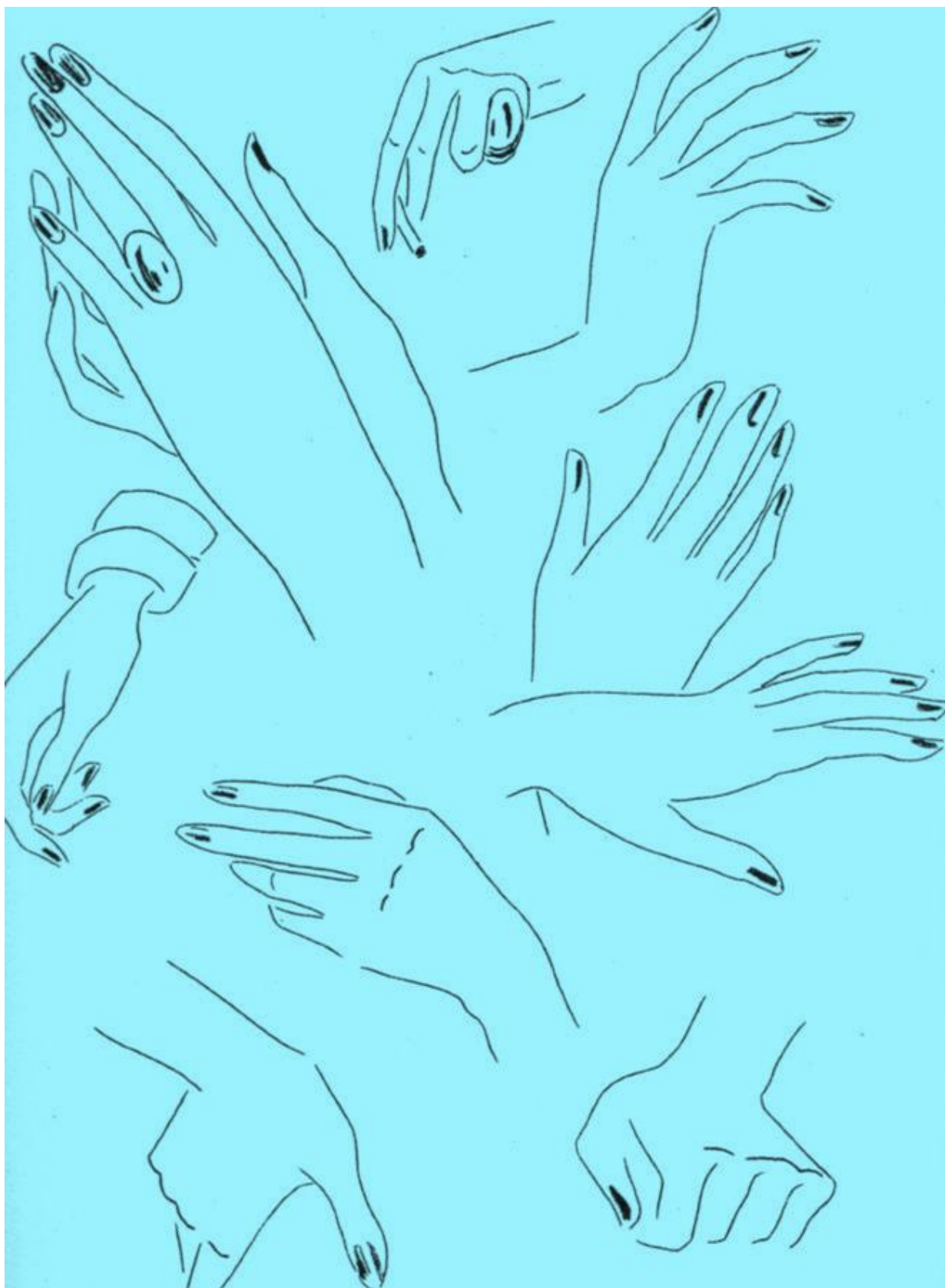
It is advisable for the student of fashion sketching to be familiar with the anatomical construction of the human figure. He should know the skeleton structure of the limbs, the trunk, and the hands and feet.

The upper limb is composed of three masses, the upper arm, the fore-arm, and the hand. The upper arm extends from the shoulder to the elbow. It has only one large bone. The forearm extends from the elbow to the wrist and has two bones. The bones of the fore-arm are jointed together in such a way they can move freely, one on another in certain positions. The outer bone rotates over the inner bone. The movement of these bones will influence the contour of the arm.

The hand is composed of two large masses, the hand proper and the thumb. These should be blocked-in first in sketching the hand. The length of the hand, including the wrist, is equivalent to the length of the head. It is three-quarters the length of the fore-arm. The bones of the fingers are attached to a common centre in the same manner as petals in a flower. Each finger has three bones. The middle finger is the longest, and is the same length as the palm. The fashion artist exaggerates the length of the fingers, and minimizes the width of the hand. Long and graceful, is the creed for fashion hands.

Make sketches of your own hands in various positions. Work before a mirror and sketch the reflection. This is also beneficial in sketching figures. Be your own model. Study your hands and figure for reference.





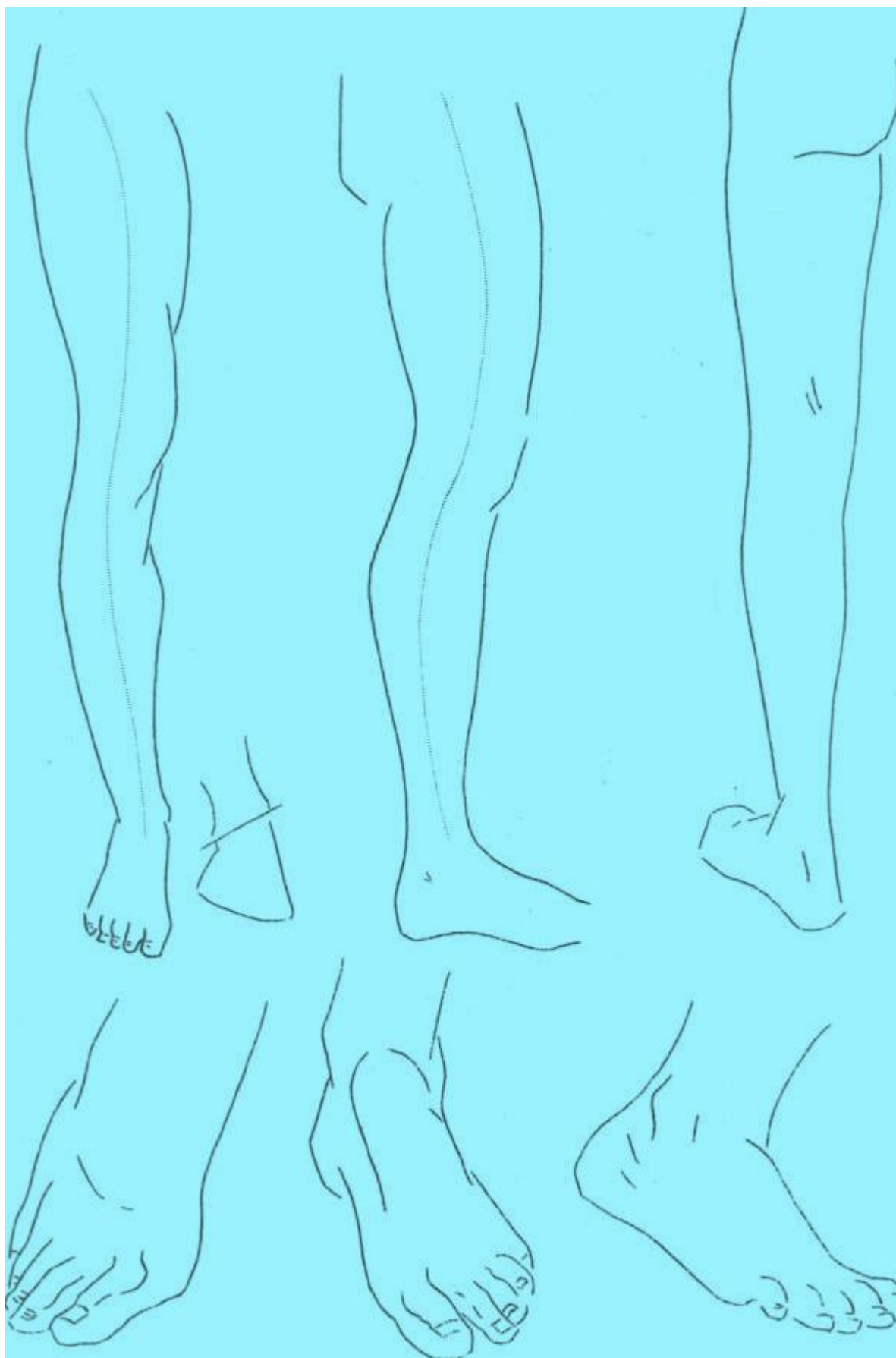
The Feet and Legs

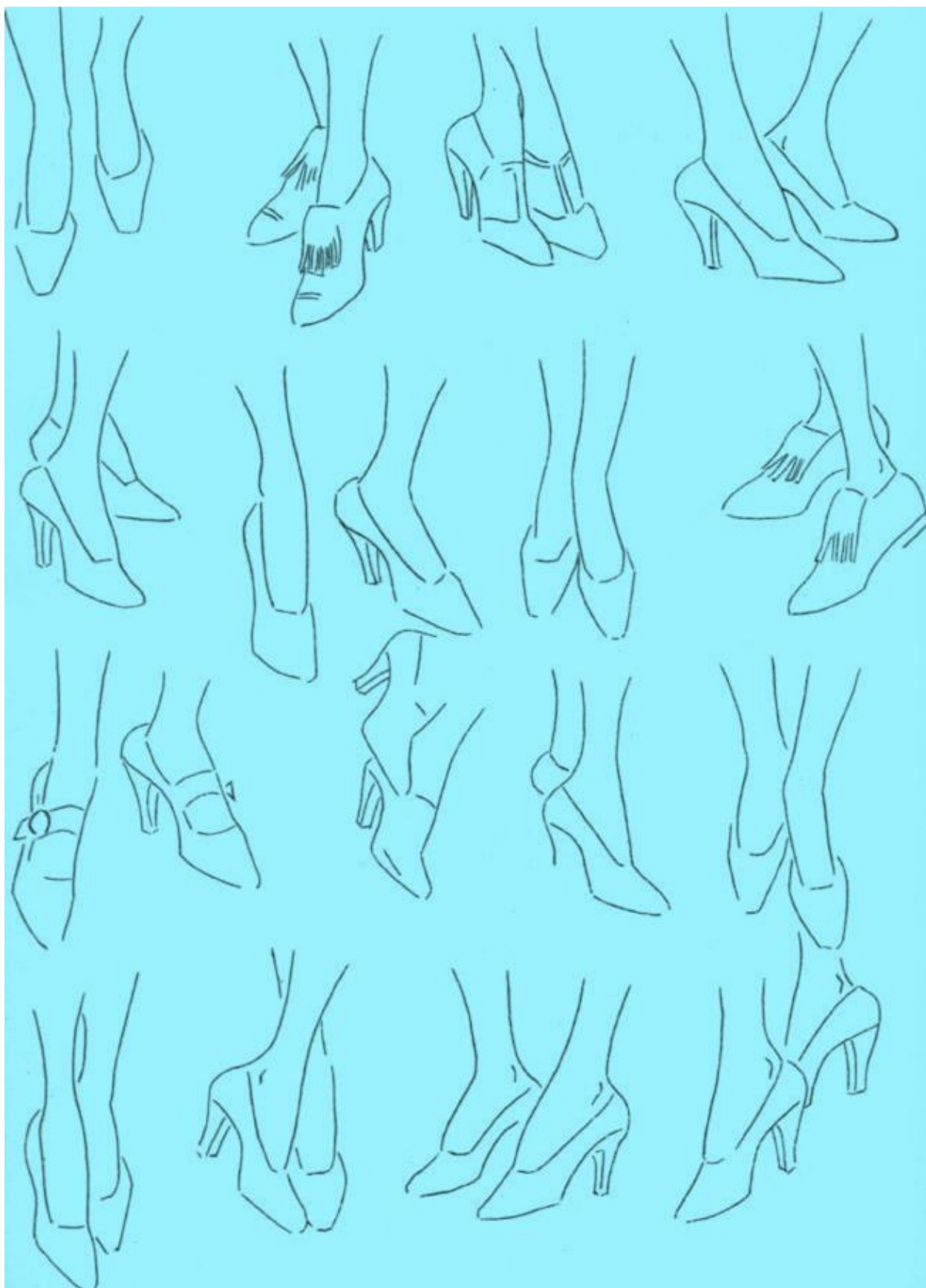
The lower limb, like the upper limb, is composed of three masses, the thigh, the leg, and the foot. The thigh extends from the hip to the knee, like the upper arm it has only one bone. The leg extends from the knee to the foot. In the leg the bones are immovably united, while in the fore-arm they move freely, one on another. The thigh and leg diminish in thickness as they descend to the foot.

The length of the foot and the fore-arm is the same.

The calf of the leg is the same width as the neck.







Dressing the Figure

One of the biggest problems confronting the fashion artist is that of dressing the figure. He must, first of all, be absolutely familiar with the human figure and capable of making the garment appear to be on a body, not on a flat hanger. The dress should be placed on a model, preferably a live model; but when one is not available a dummy mannequin may be substituted. Seeing the dress on a figure will aid the artist greatly in sketching it.

Nearly every woman has a definitely personal reaction to clothes. When she sees an attractive dress or an illustration of one, she immediately visualises it on herself. If the dress is well-modelled or well-pictured, she feels that it would be attractive on her. And that is the way you must strive to make her feel. The artist may be able to illustrate a dress so attractively that many women will feel they cannot live without it.

After the figure has been freely, but carefully, blocked in and all unnecessary lines erased, visualise a line through the centre of the figure. This should not be confused with the line of balance which by this time should have been erased. Visualise, also, the centre of the dress and place it on the centre of the figure. Sketch all lines and trimmings of the dress in proportion to, and correct location on, the figure.

The artist should strive always to get the contour of the body under the dress, -to show that third dimension, thickness. The contour of the body will influence certain lines of the dress. For instance, the position of the legs will determine the folds and lines of the skirt. If the skirt is circular or cut on the bias, it will cling very snugly to the waist and hips, and then flare out (the amount depending upon the fullness) around the thighs and hemline. If the skirt is cut straight, the outline will follow the body line to the hem. There is very little variation in the width of a straight skirt from the hipline down, although it may appear a little narrower around the knees. If the straight skirt has lines or pleats in it, these lines will be influenced by the position of the legs and will follow their lines.

In a front view a few wrinkles should be placed across the abdomen and pelvis. These wrinkles will pull from the hip on which the weight of the body is resting. Frequently they are extended to suggest the position of the legs.

The bottom of the skirt should never be sketched straight across, but, rather, should have the general feeling of a rectangle. If it is drawn straight, it has the effect of being on something flat instead of being on a body that has thickness. Curve the rectangle at the sides to lend the appearance of going around the figure. The hemline will appear to be longer over the leg in the foreground or the foot nearer the artist. Strive for rhythm in the lines expressing the folds of the skirt.

If the dress is belted and the belt fits snugly, make your sketch of it on straight lines across the front, curving it on the sides. If it were curved all the way around it would give the impression either of being on a fat waistline or of being too large for the figure, - drooping effects which should be avoided in modern styles.

Place a few wrinkles at the bend of the arm to make sleeves in a garment apparent. This may seem a slight detail, but it is not unusual that a sketch appears to be sleeveless because of the omission of this detail.

If a garment is trimmed with buttons, count them and sketch the same number.

A few points to bear in mind when sketching a dress on a figure are:

- Where is the neckline – high or low?
- Does the costume have a collar? Which shape?
- What is the style of sleeves - short? long? tight?
- Does it have a normal shoulder line? Exaggerated? Slanting?
- Where is the waist line? Above or below the normal
- Does it have a belt? Tight or loose?
- Which type of skirt is it - circular? Pleated? Straight?
- How long is the skirt?
- What type of trimming does the garment have?
- Which type of fabric it is?

The last question is a very important one for the artist. Without spending too much time on it, he must be able to get the effect of the material used - to catch the spirit of the fabric.

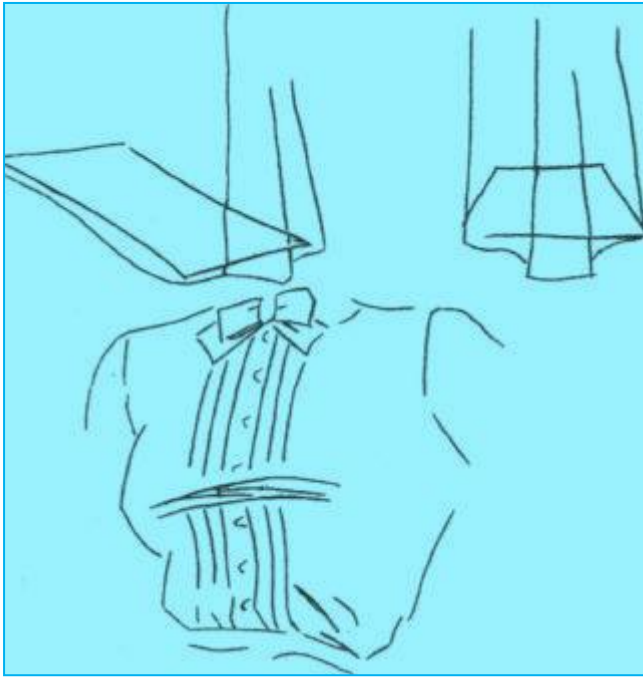
The chic of a crisp taffeta evening costume would be entirely lost if it were illustrated as a soft clinging fabric.

Nearly all fashion sketches, with the exception of evening clothes, are made with hats, bags, and gloves. This necessitates the artist keeping up-to-date on developments in accessories as well as apparel.

An important point that should be stressed here is the necessity of harmonizing the mood and action of the figure with the clothes in which the artist draws her. If the woman is presented in sports clothes, she should be depicted actually engaged in some sport.

Dramatize the figure, particularly the feminine figure, and the atmosphere of your drawing whenever possible, but don't over-emphasise. The figure should never be more prominent than the apparel. To obtain a dramatic atmosphere as well as a realistic air, the figure must wear the clothes with an air of comfort. Make the garment look as if it were actually worn by a human being.

Wrinkle the sleeve at the bend of the arm

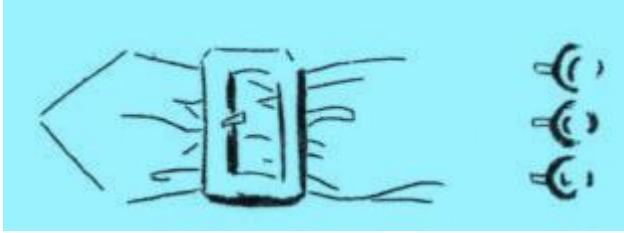


Sketch the Hemline of the Skirt in the general shape of a rectangle



Wrinkles pull away from the hip that supports the weight of the body

Curve the belt to show the third dimension of the figure



Dressing the Fashion Figure (Step by Step)



1. Sketch a pose for your drawing. Remember that you'll be drawing a human figure using basic shapes. This time, though, the figure is going to be thinner and taller than the average person.



2. Add in shapes as shown. Notice how thin the figure is and how long the legs are compared to "normal" human drawing.



3. Sketch an outline of your image. You don't need to add in too much detail on the face or hands etc. You're welcome to add hair if desired, but it's by no means necessary.



4. Add in clothes you have in mind. Think of the figure as a mannequin.



5. Outline the whole drawing and erase guidelines.



6. Colour it and it is done





Suggested Further Readings:

- **Basics Fashion Design: Fashion Drawing (BY John Hopkins)**
- **Fashion Drawing: Illustration Techniques for Fashion Designers (Michele Wesen Bryant)**