

# 16th Century Italian Drawers Tutorial

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This is a tutorial on how to make 16th century Italian drawers based on extant pairs in Janet Arnold. This set of instructions will help you draft your own custom pair of drawers based on the bara system of measurement. If you're interested in learning the bara system, check out *The Modern Maker* (<http://themodernmaker.net/>) books.

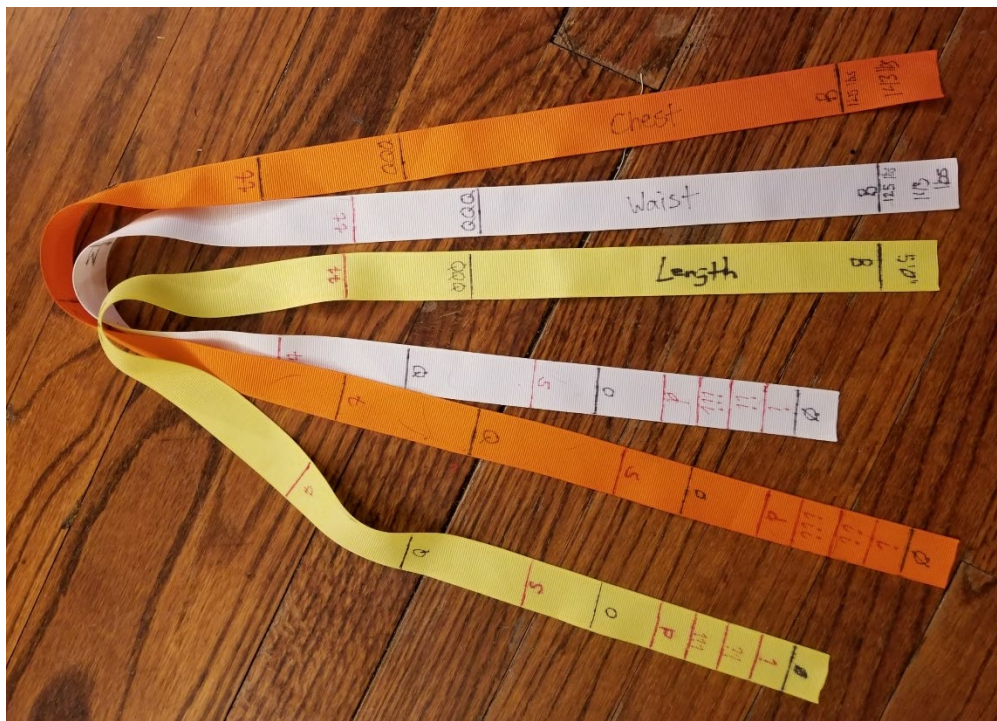
Bara tapes needed:

Length

Waist

Hip

Measurements are annotated as W – B (Waist – B) or L – B (Length – B) or H – B (Hip – B).

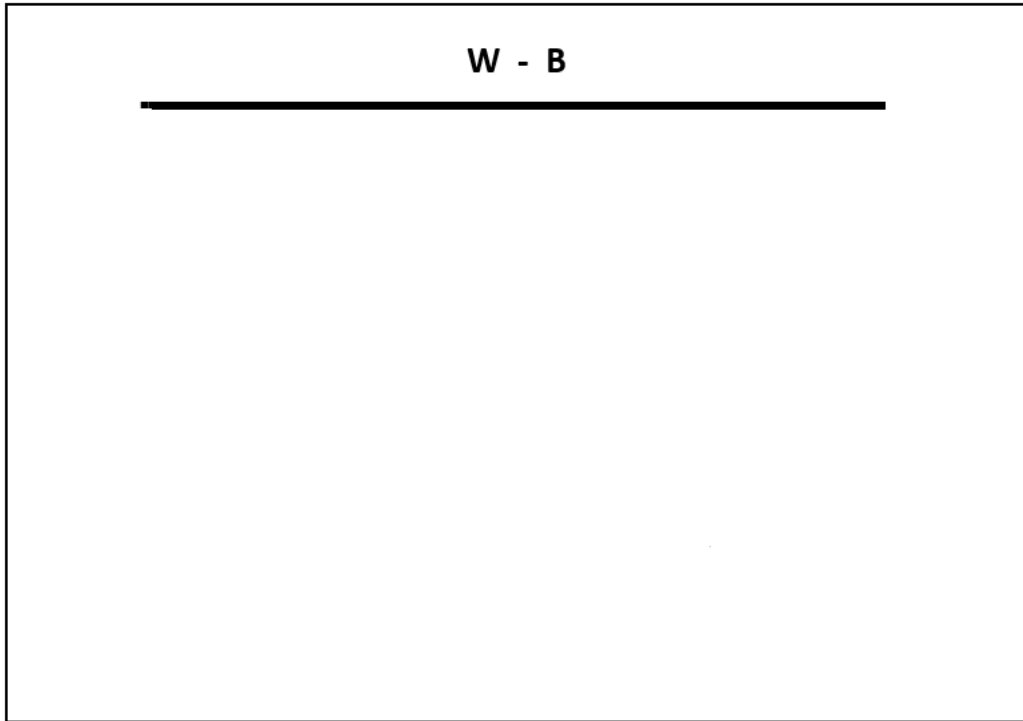


Bara tapes work similarly to Roman Numerals, in that a “smaller” letter before a letter is subtracted from the second letter (iM = M - i). A “smaller” letter after a letter is added to the first letter (ti = t + i).

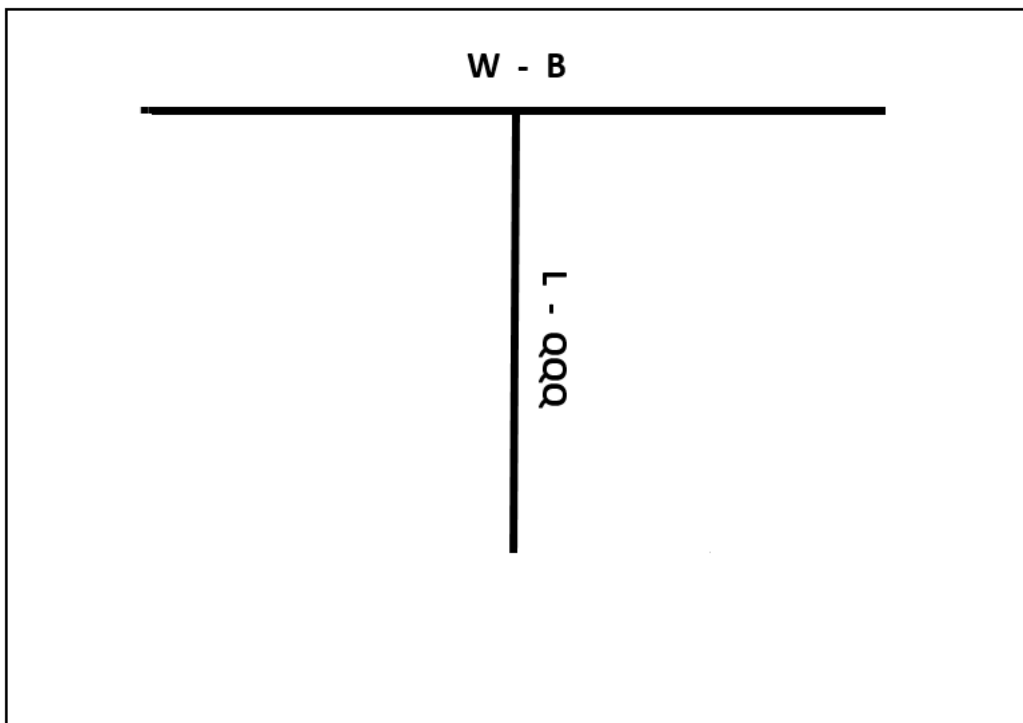
You will need to measure around your knee using the Hip tape to ensure an appropriate fit. First, hold your **Length** tape up to your natural waist. \*Yes, way up there! That's where these go! It's going to be more comfortable in the long run, I promise!\* Determine where L – QQQ falls. This is where your drawers will be cuffed, so wrap your **Hip** tape loosely around this spot (above or below the knee). You should be able to stick a couple fingers into the tape so you know it won't be too constricting when you crouch or sit. Common measurements run from ti to td. You may want to make a tiny mark on the spot that is comfortable, then check to see which measurement is the closest match for your leg opening

Now you are ready to begin. Here is the pattern laid out.

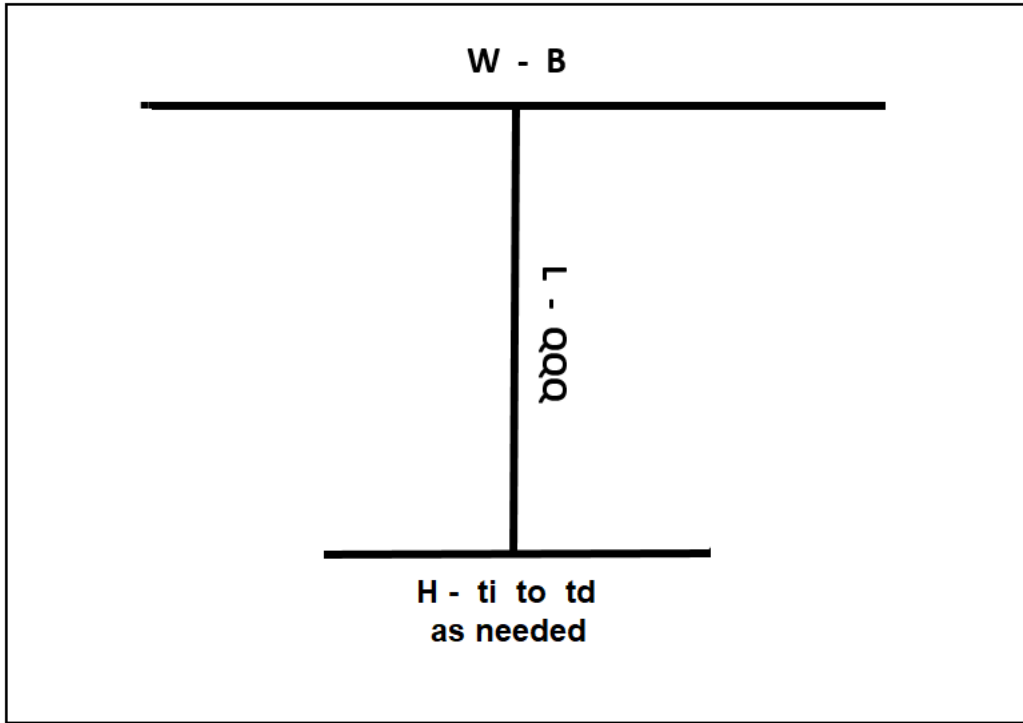
\*Using a large piece of paper, draw a straight line along one edge the length of  $W - B$ . This is the waist of the drawers.



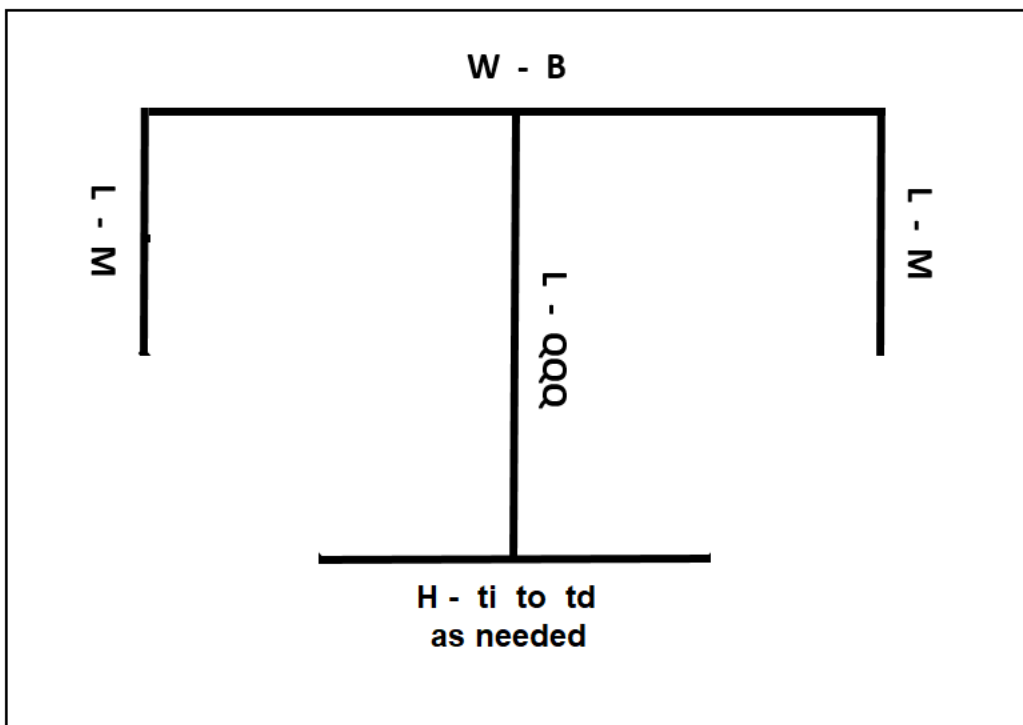
\*Find the center and draw a perpendicular line the length of  $L - QQQ$ . This is the length of the drawers.



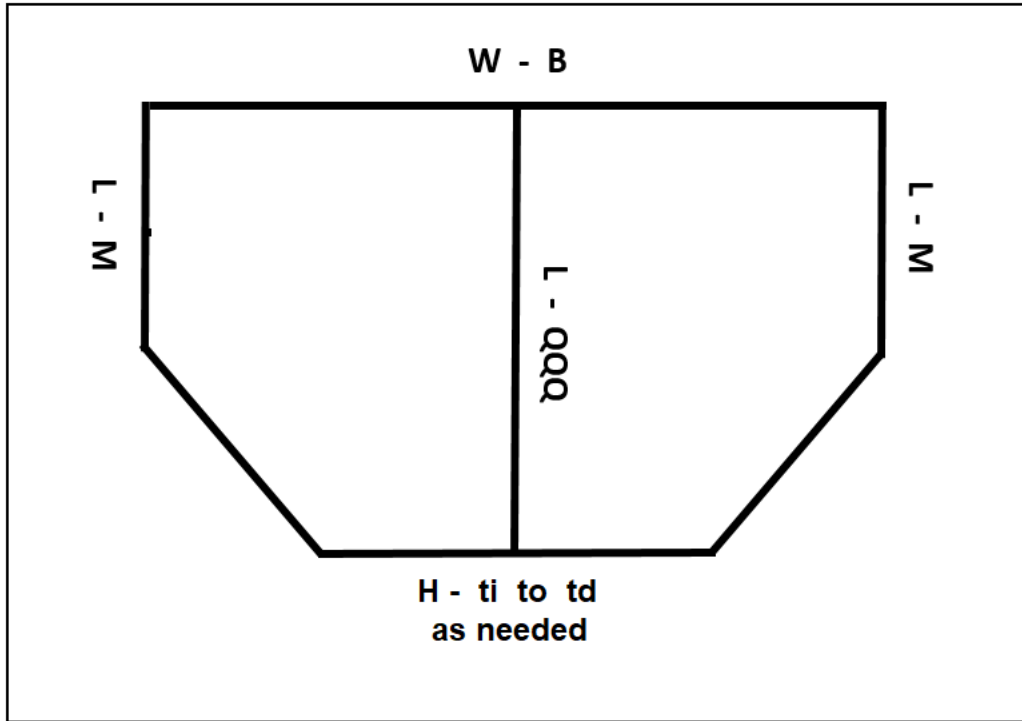
\*At the bottom of L – QQQ, draw a perpendicular line the length of your leg opening. (Again, this is your Hip tape wrapped above or below the knee. Common measurements run from H - ti to td. It's ok if yours is a little bigger or smaller than these common measurements.



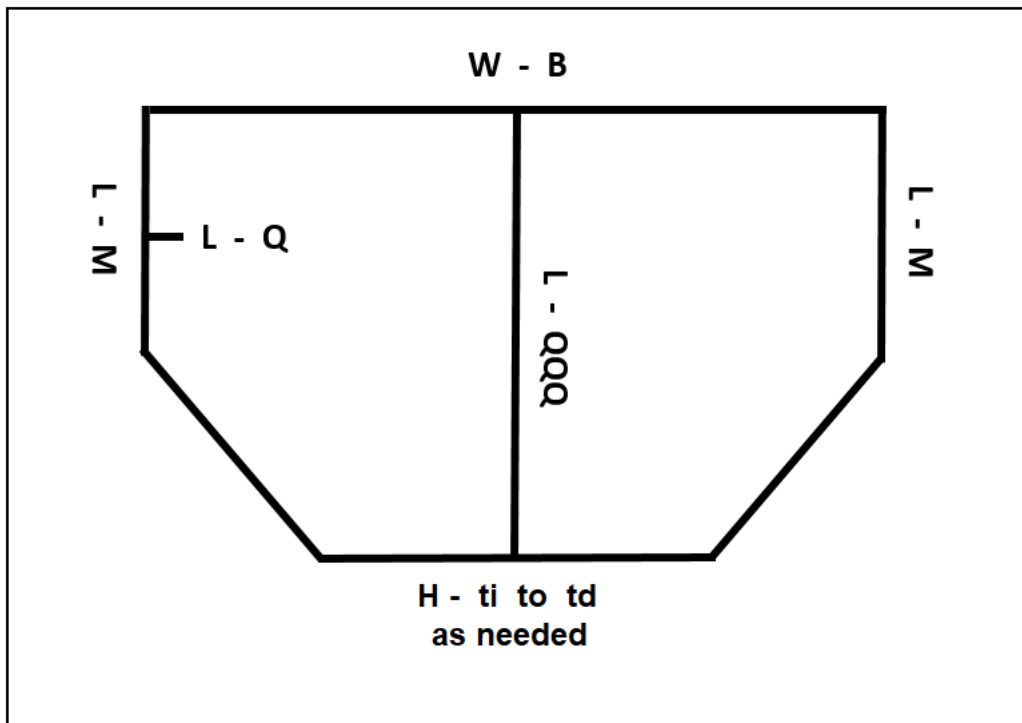
\*From the edges of W – B, measure a perpendicular line the length of L – M.



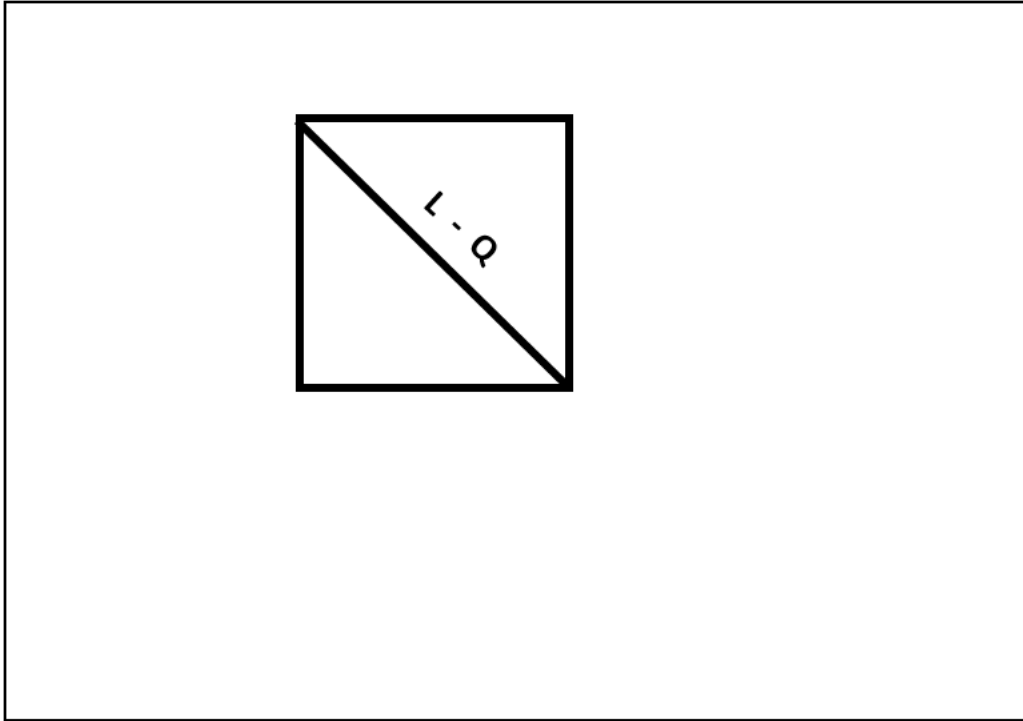
\*Connect the L – M line to H – ti to td.



\*Now you have your basic drawers pattern. Next, draw a line the length of L – Q on one edge of your pattern. This is where your front opening will end.



\*On another piece of paper, draw a square with LQ as the length of the diagonal. These will be your gussets.



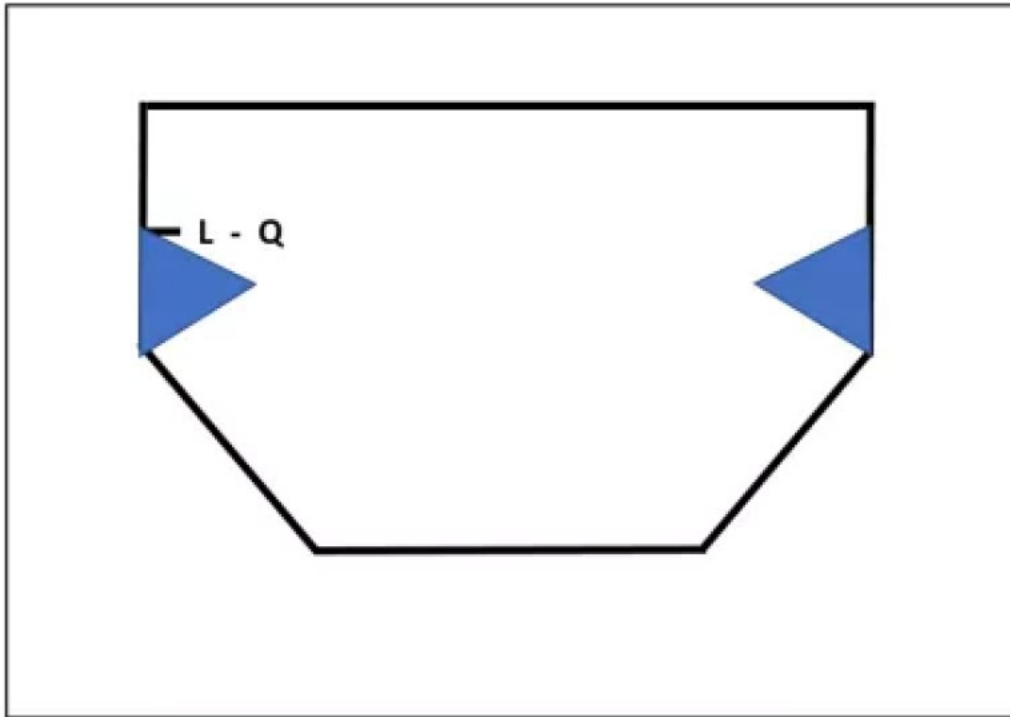
\*Next, prepare your fabric.

TIP: To pretreat your fabric, lay fabric in tub as flat as possible and wet with warm water. This will prevent wrinkles when washing by hand or machine. Check out this [blog](#) for details.

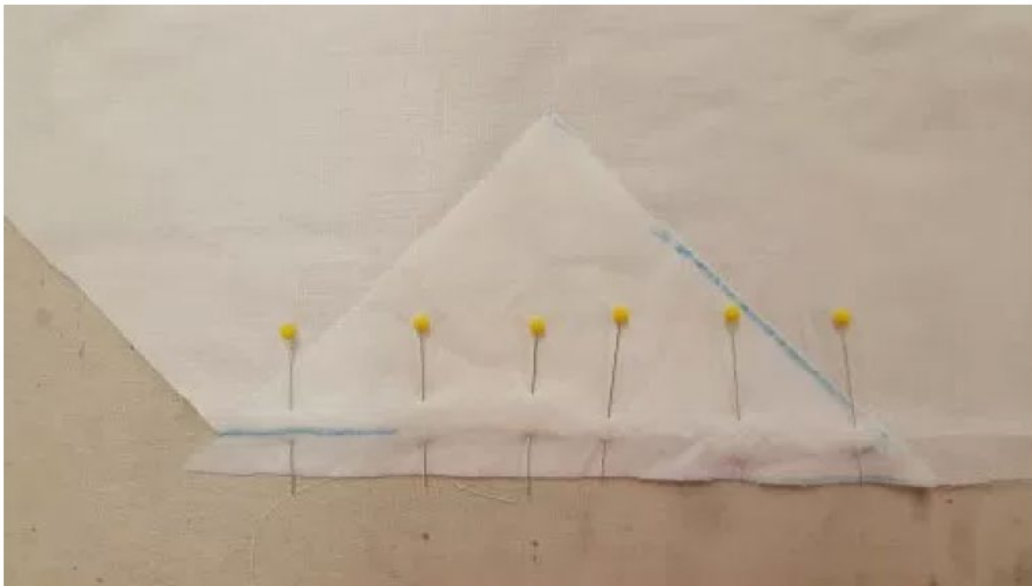
\*Trace two each of both the drawers pattern and the gussets pattern. Cut the gussets on the diagonal line to create 4 gussets. Cut out drawers.

TIP: Use a 1/2 inch seam allowance on this pattern, already included.

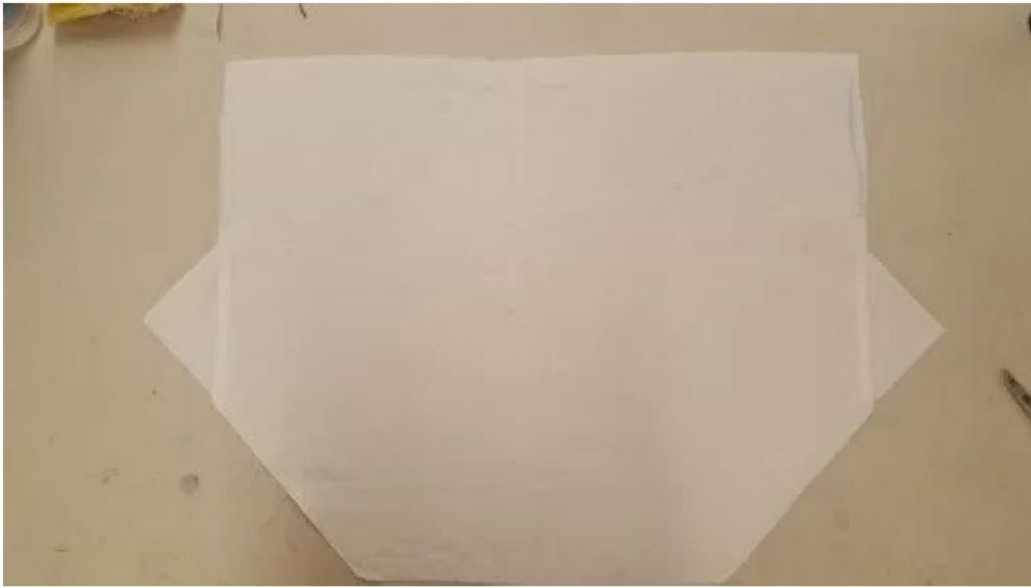
\*Stitch gussets on drawers, right sides together, as shown below. The diagonal edge is aligned with the edge of the drawers.



TIP: Align gusset on drawers so the seam allowance is hanging over the edge of of the drawers.



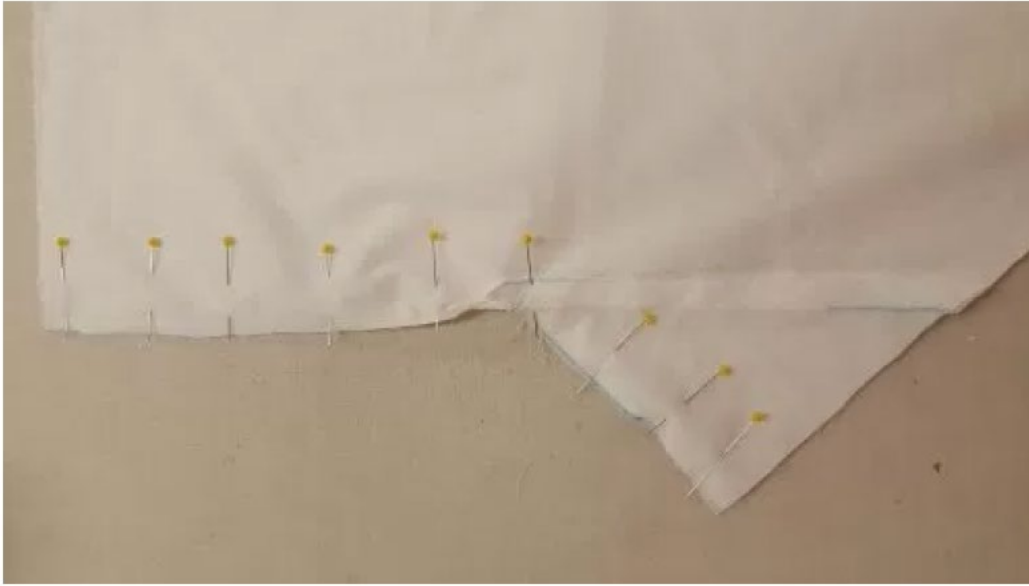
\*Press seam allowance towards center of drawers. Your drawers should look like this.



\*Spread both sides of drawers over one another, right sides together. Stitch from center front opening to point of gusset.

TIP: Reinforce the center front opening so your seam doesn't split with wear.

\*Stitch from top edge to point of gusset on the back side of the drawers.



TIP: Stitch line should be just outside of the seam allowance of the gusset, allowing for the weirdness of the turned back seam allowance.



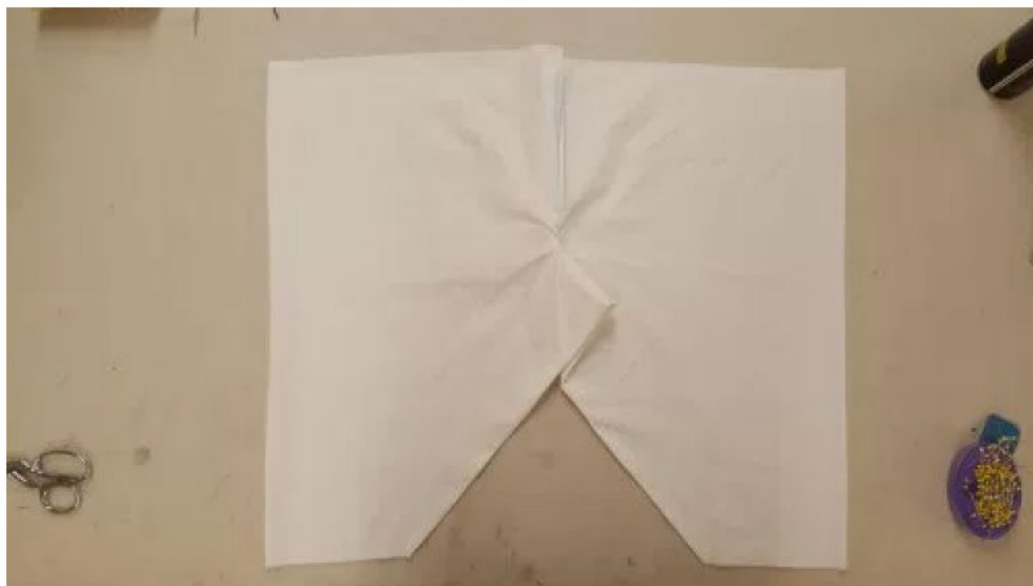
\*Press seam allowances open.



\*Position drawers so the gussets are aligned over one another, right sides together, and the legs are straight, as below. Stitch.



\*Press seam allowances open.



\*Hem leg openings and center front openings.



\*Finish waist. Here are some possible methods:

- Double fold waist and thread a ribbon (or elastic) through the channel. This will provide a fit that is below your natural waist.
- Make a waist band from bias tape. Thread ribbon (or elastic) through the channel.
- Make a waist band from straight grain or bias fabric. Gather waist to waist band and finish with ties or a button.

\*Finish seams in your preferred manner.