

**Welcome to**  
**Design Your Own Doll**  
**by Judi Ward**



**This class was one of the first Online Classes! It was designed back in 1997 and has been taken by students worldwide with many becoming well know doll designers.**

**Due to the continued requests for the class information we have provided it in this download format.**

**You will find Judi explains everything in detail and this Classic Class is worth every penny and will start you on your way to being a Doll Designer!**



**These are the original chapters with only a few minor changes. In 1997 web design was not as flashy and digital cameras were not available but you will find a vast wealth of information in this class.**



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**[Judi's Dolls](#) - Judi's Patterns and More!**

**[Dollmaker's Journey](#) - Supplies and Patterns!**

**See Dolls Made By Students at**  
**<http://dollnetcampus.com/alumnihall/>**

# Design Your Own Cloth Doll Class

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Taught by Judi Ward of Judi's Dolls

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## Introduction

Have you been wishing and dreaming that you could design your own cloth doll, but just didn't think you had the ability to do it? Is there a dream doll inside of you that is just dying to get out? Then this is the class for you!

This is going to be a multi-part adventure into a simple and fun way to design your **OWN ORIGINAL CLOTH DOLL!**

You say, but I can't draw! I don't know proportion! I just don't know where to begin! Well let's begin anyway, it's easier than you think. With this method you don't need to be an artist. You don't need to know all about anatomy. But you do need to be adventurous enough to put pencil to paper and follow the class instructions with a little bit of "**CAN DO**" attitude in place! Because **YOU CAN DO IT!**

This is a **DESIGNING** class. You are the **DESIGNER**, and you will succeed in designing a great looking doll. You will have a pattern that you can use over and over. You can refine it, change it and enjoy the great feeling of success!

After this class you will have the skills to use this designing method to make dolls of all shapes and sizes. You will be able to make ladies, kids, elves, fairies, gnomes, men, mermaids, and almost any other human or part human doll you wish.

There won't be a lot of instructions on sewing technique and finishing skills because this class will assume that you have made a few cloth dolls from patterns, so you should have a number of skills in place already. You probably have favorite sewing and stuffing methods, and please use these, if you are happy with the results you achieve when making dolls from other designer's patterns.

There will be some special techniques, that I use in my dollmaking, that I will pass on to help you achieve the making of a beautifully designed cloth doll, like invisible jointing, lump free stuffing, articulated fingers, easy face design etc. but this won't be a beginning sewing class.

The dolls you design will be basic Tab Head dolls. This type of doll design is very popular and prevalent within the pattern industry. It is also very versatile. You will not be designing a pancake doll. With the designing method I will teach you, you will skip right over pancake dolls, right over Raggedy Ann type dolls and right on to a doll with separate legs, arms, body and head. Your dolls can be jointed or un-jointed (I prefer jointed). You can even design a high heel doll right away if you wish, and I will show you how to design three types of high heel feet! I will also show you how to design two types of regular feet. The basic design instructions will be for a mitt type hand, but

you can add hands with fingers to your design, if you are ready for that, by following the FINGER DESIGN LESSON that was a free lesson before this class began.

After the doll itself is designed and made, you can let your imagination run wild for the dressing and finishing. I will teach you several basic clothing designs that you can use in many ways. I will also teach you a simple way to design faces, and several hairstyles.

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## LET'S BEGIN THIS DESIGN ADVENTURE!

**Please READ ALL OF THE DIRECTIONS BEFORE STARTING, THEN COME BACK TO HERE AND BEGIN FOLLOWING THEM.**

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS For What We Will Cover In The Full Course

1. ...Choosing a vinyl doll to use as a designing template
2. ....Designing arms and legs
3. ....Designing the body and head. Adding ears if desired
4. ....Making your stuffing fork from the 12" long upholstery needle. If you already have a Barbara Willis stuffing fork you don't need to do this step
5. ....Stuffing and jointing (or stitching the limbs on). Includes ideas for knees, elbows, and articulating fingers
6. ....Places for Faces, with basic face designing and painting. Designing and adding a nose if desired
7. ....Several hairstyles, and application
8. ....Designing basic clothing items
9. ....Designing simple shoes or painting shoes on.

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## Chapter 1 and 2

The first thing I want you to do is to go into your child's toy box and find an all vinyl doll which has arms, legs, and head that can be popped off. Another choice is a "dress me" doll from a craft store. I am using the latter for this **DESIGN CLASS**. The dolls I will teach with are a 13" tall doll with young girl proportions, and a 15 " tall high heel lady doll.

**Now, pop the legs, arms and head off.**

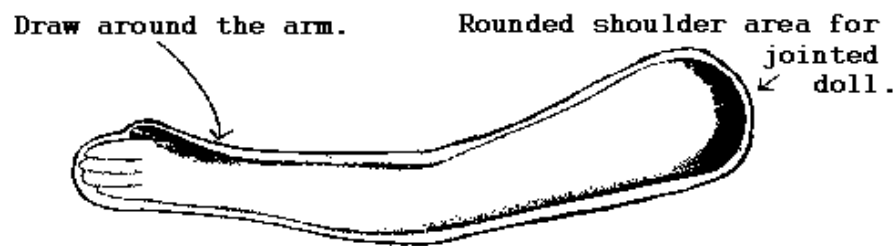
You will be drawing around one arm, and one leg, so you can set the other leg and arm aside.

**Time to Get Started! Chapter 1 and 2 are split into Part A and Part B below. Enjoy!**

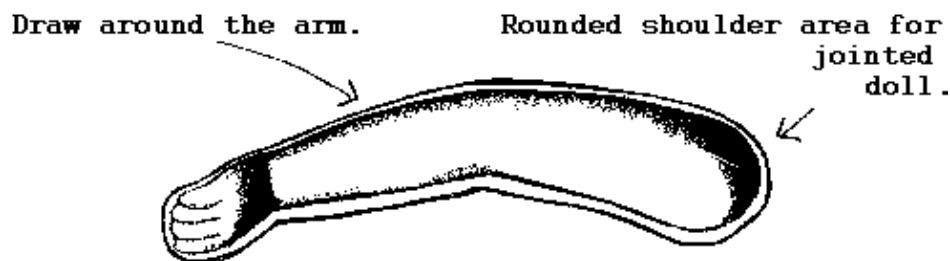
## Chapter 1 and 2 - Part A - ARMS AND HANDS

Place the arm down on a piece of freezer paper or plain paper, with the joint flange down. Holding your pencil **STRAIGHT UP AND DOWN** draw around the arm, while holding the arm down firmly with your fingers. **NOTE...**If you slant your pencil inward, the doll will be skinnier. If you slant your pencil outward, your doll will be fatter. It is very important that you hold your pencil **STRAIGHT UP AND DOWN** for drawing around all of the parts for this first doll pattern. The vinyl doll is in proportion, so if you slant the pencil in for the arms and out for the legs etc. you will lose that proportion. Later you can play with the pattern you have designed to make any proportion you want. Long skinny legs and arms. Big body and tiny head. Big head and little body etc. The shapes and variations are practically limitless! ...**NOTE...**I have noticed that some of the vinyl dolls arms are a little short for their bodies. After you make one doll from the pattern you are designing, you may need to lengthen the arm pattern a little. This is especially true for the lady dolls. The doll I am using needed to have her arm pattern lengthened 1/4" between the shoulder and elbow, and 1/4" between the elbow and wrist. She didn't look awful with the shorter arms, but I wanted them more true to human proportion. **TO ACHIEVE TRUE HUMAN PROPORTION** the finger tips should be 1/2 way between the crotch and the knees.

### LADY TYPE, VINYL DOLL ARM



### CHILD TYPE, VINYL DOLL ARM



If you wish to make un-jointed, stitched on arms, draw about 1/2" past the top, rounded shoulder area, then straight across as shown below. This is for a lady, child or baby doll.

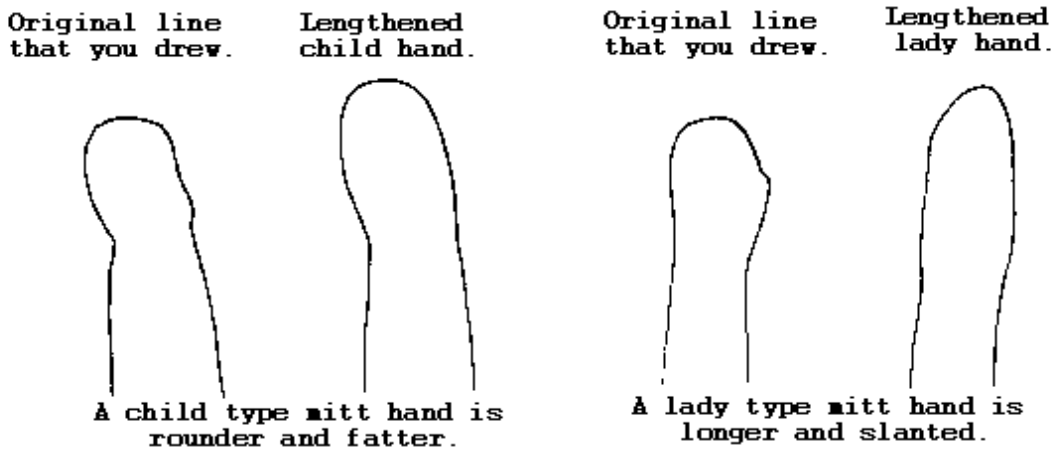
Top of the arm pattern for an un-jointed doll arm.



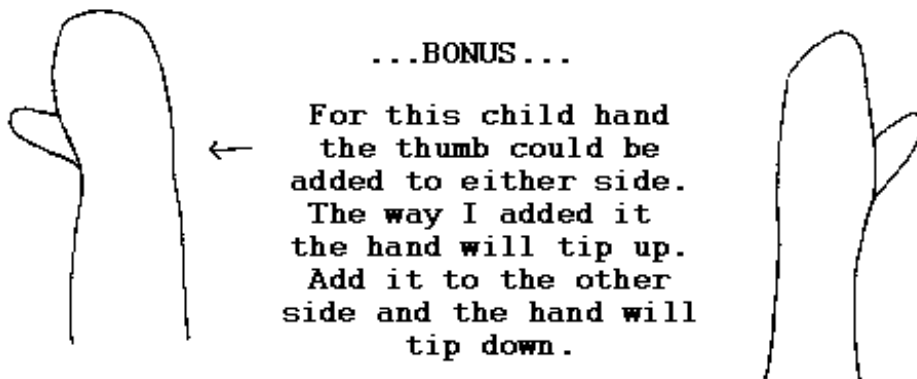
When you get to the hands, you won't worry about the fingers since we are making the simpler mitt hands for the first doll.

The hands are usually turned slightly so just draw around the whole thing, making a curved, thumb-less mitt.

You will need to lengthen and round the mitt out a little, since the vinyl hand probably curves inward so it loses some length.



Add the thumb as shown. It's just a skinny U shape



**...FOR MORE ADVANCED DOLLMAKERS...**

At this time, if you wish to add hands with fingers, use one of the "finger hands" that you designed from the free Hand Design class (PDF included with class). Remember though, that very small hands don't take too well to finger sewing and turning, especially if you are a beginner at sewing around tiny curves. For the hands in the sizes shown above, I would use the "fingers together" type hand for the lady and the 2 center fingers together for the child.

On the first draft pattern pieces the lines you drew may be a little wiggly, If so, even them out, then cut the arm pattern/patterns out and set aside

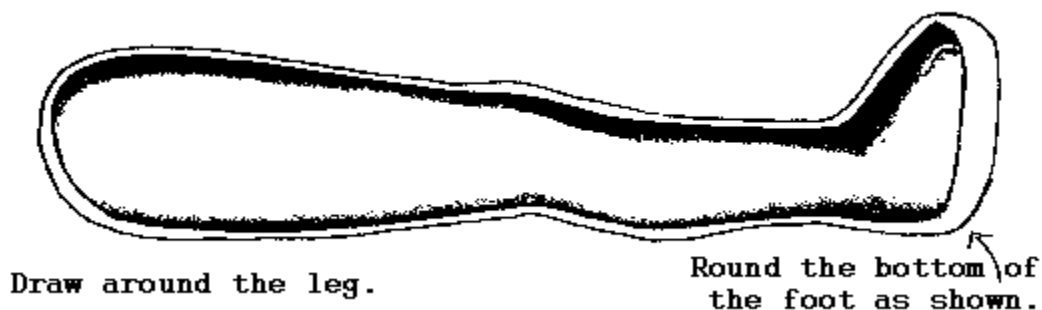
## Chapter 1 and 2 - Part B - LEGS AND FEET

Now place the leg down on the freezer paper or other paper and draw around it the same way you did for the arm. **HOLDING YOUR PENCIL STRAIGHT UP AND DOWN.**

The first, beginner foot will be rounded for the child doll, So just draw around the whole foot, rounding the bottom, as shown.

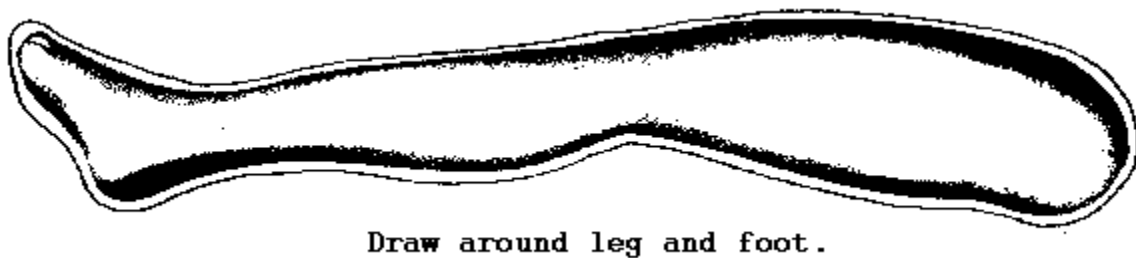
The rounded hip area is for a jointed doll. If you want an unjointed doll, do the same for the leg pattern as you did for the un-jointed arm pattern shown above, adding at least 1/2" to the top length.

### CHILD TYPE LEG AND FOOT.



### ...LADY TYPE LEG WITH HIGH HEEL FOOT...

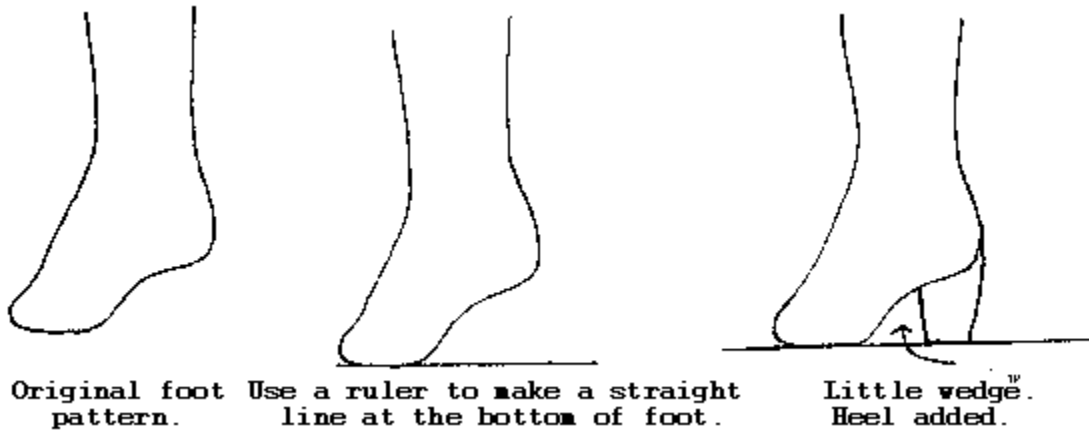
For the lady type leg, you will draw around it just as you did for the child leg, but when you get to the foot, continue drawing around it just like you did the leg. Do not round the bottom out.



**Remember:** *If you are making an unjointed doll, you need to straighten out and extend the leg top as you did for the arms and/or the other type of leg.*

This gives you a simple foot that can actually be put into a purchased high heel shoe, or may even fit into the shoes that came on the vinyl doll you are using as a pattern template. (Mine had high heel shoes on)

Now I will show you how to design a high heel foot that has the heel already on it. This will be a foot that you will paint the shoes onto. I like the painted on shoes for high heel dolls. It's fun to color co-ordinate them with the dolls clothes and to decorate them around the edges with fancy braid or cording. They also don't get lost!

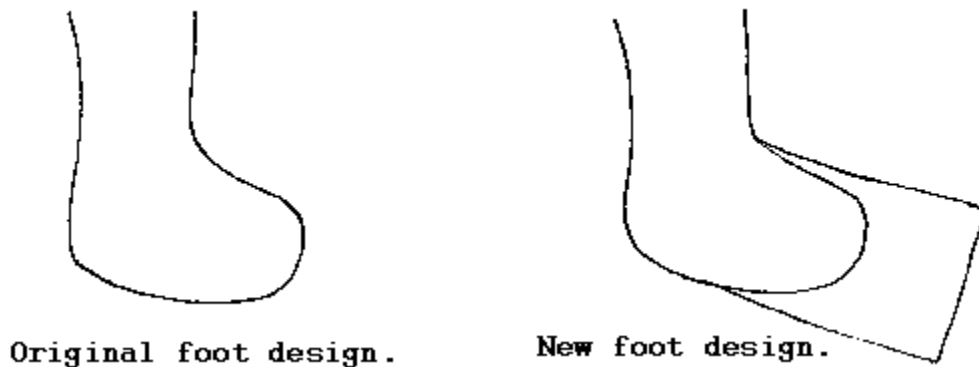


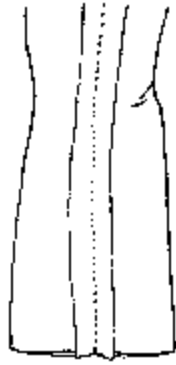
**....FOR MORE ADVANCED DOLLMAKERS...**

Below, I will show you how to design an easy, flat front, foot style. For the child type doll, this will allow you to needle sculpt toes if you wish. For the high heel doll, it will make a more realistic looking shoe front.

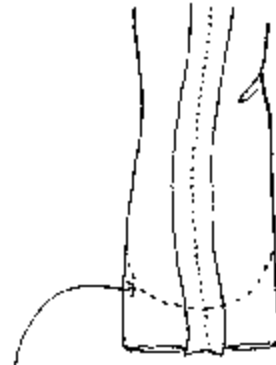
For the child/baby doll foot, start at the crook of the ankle and draw a line straight out, along the foot top, and straight out along the foot bottom as shown. Extend this line about 1/2" past the rounded foot front. Connect the lines. You now have a foot pattern that looks like it will be **REALLY WEIRD** when done, but it won't, I promise.

When sewing this type of leg/foot, you will leave the foot front open, along with the opening for stuffing. You will then fold the foot part "seam to seam", and sew a curved toe area, tapering the seam to the edge at each side. In fact, you can draw the little toe bumps on, sew on the lines you drew, turn right side out, stuff, then needle-sculpt more defined toes.





Fold the foot;  
"seam to seam".



Sew a rounded foot  
front, tapering the seam  
to the edge at each side.

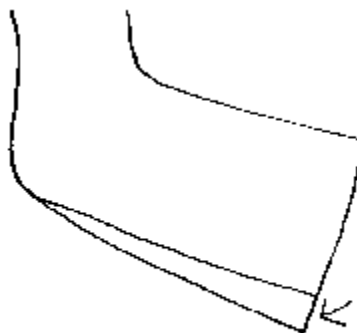
....NOTE...This foot will be narrow, if you want a fatter foot, draw the bottom foot line down a little farther, and then make the foot the same as above.



Your original, rounded  
bottom foot pattern.



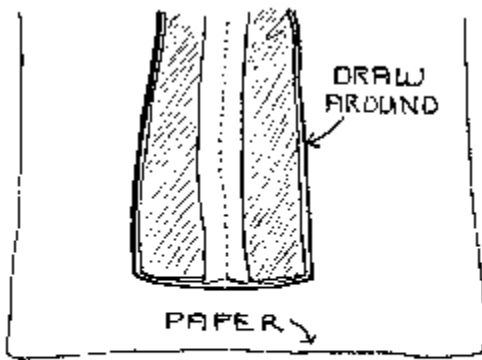
The first, more  
advanced foot  
pattern for a narrow foot.



Bottom foot line drawn  
down a little farther to  
make a wider foot.

This wider foot is easier to make needle-sculpted toes on. In fact, you can draw the little toe bumps on, sew on the lines you drew, turn right side out, stuff, then needle-sculpt more shaped and well-defined toes.

**BUT I CAN'T DRAW THE TOE BUMPS YOU SAY! BUT YOU CAN DRAW AROUND A BIG DOLLS TOES, (THEY ARE MORE DEFINED THAN A SMALL DOLLS TOES) PUT THE DRAWING ON A COPY MACHINE, THEN SHRINK AND/OR ENLARGE IT TO FIT ALL KINDS OF DOLL SIZES.**

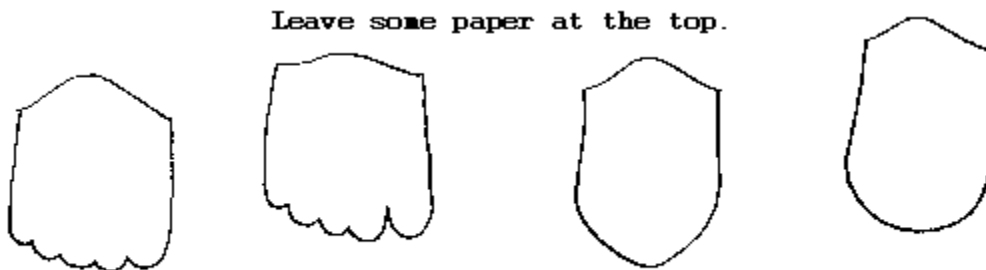


To make a foot front (or toe) template, fold your fabric foot "seam to seam" then draw around it on the paper.



Draw the foot front (or toes) shape you want, about 1/2" back from paper edge.

Cut these foot front or "toe bump" designs out, leaving some at the top of them. You now have foot/toe templates to draw around for many sizes of doll feet with or without toes.



Some toe templates for feet with and without toes.

I always draw templates freehand to draw around, so if I wish to use a pattern over again, or to put it into pattern form for my doll pattern business, I have the foot front already designed. With the method above you don't need to be able to draw free hand. With these types of feet, you can make needle-sculptured toes then put "real" doll shoes and socks on, or if you just make the toe area rounded, you can even paint the shoes on.

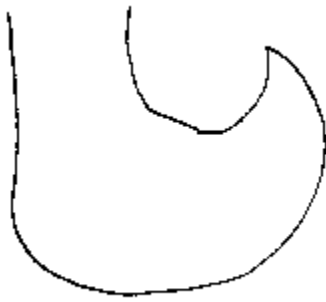
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**NOW, IT'S TIME TO THINK LIKE A DESIGNER!!!! YOU ARE ONE!!!!**

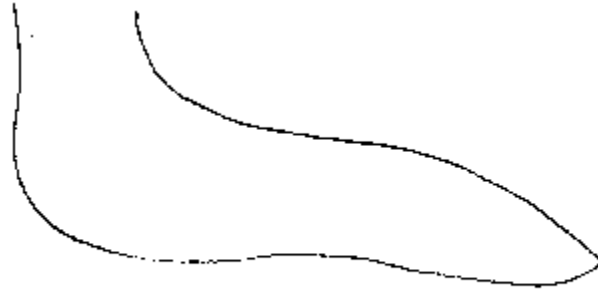
Think of the possibilities in foot design! How about really long feet for a hillbilly doll? How about really fat, wide feet for a cartoony, baby doll or child doll?

Go back up to the basic rounded foot pattern and think "pointed up toes" for an elf doll. Think long pointed toes for another elf or fairy look. Think and look-look and think. Let your creativity and imagination start working. Put it into overtime.

Think about different fabrics for legs and feet. Stripes? Prints? Cut the feet off at the ankles, add seam allowances to the cut edges, then make the legs from one fabric and the feet from another. Just think-think-think! Create-create-create!



Elf foot with turned up toes.



Elf or fairy foot with a long pointy front.

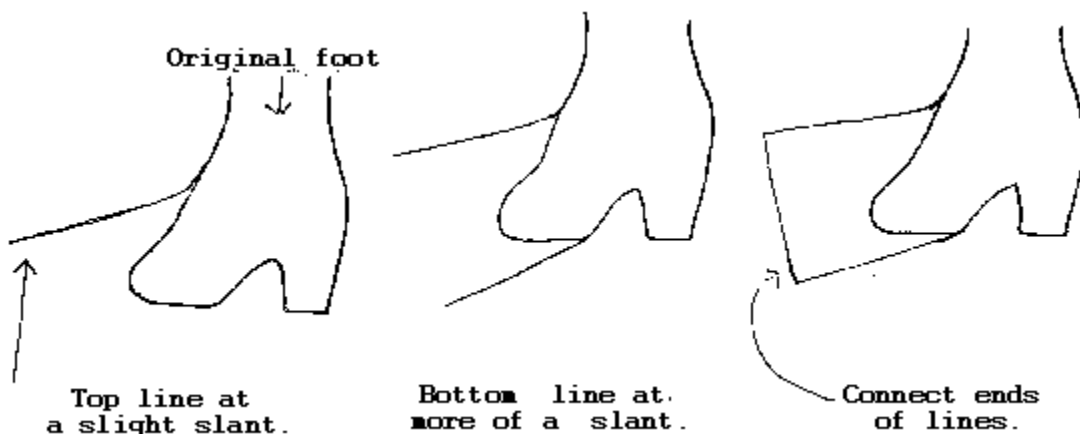
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**NOW, TO DESIGN A FLATTER FRONT HIGH HEEL FOOT.**

**THIS IS A LITTLE MORE ADVANCED, BUT NOT AT ALL HARD. REALLY!**

You may have to make a couple of patterns and feet to get the length and width you want for a particular doll.

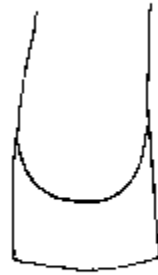
Put your original high heel foot pattern, with the heel on it, down on a new piece of freezer paper or other paper. Where the foot bends at the arch, draw a line straight out, slanted slightly lower than parallel to the flat bottom of the original foot. This line needs to be about 1/2" beyond the end of the original foot too. Now draw a straight line out from the bottom "ball" of the foot. This line will slant downward slightly more than the upper line you drew. Connect the ends of the lines.... **NOTE...**The farther apart the ends of the lines are, the wider the foot will be.



When sewing this type of high heel foot, you will first leave the front of the foot open, along with the opening in the leg for stuffing. You will then fold the foot front "seam to seam" like for the child or baby feet. Draw and sew a curved seam around the front, tapering the seam to the edge at each side. If you want a pointed toe on the high heels sew a seam around the front that comes to a point at the center. I make a template to draw around so if I wish to use a pattern over again, I have the foot front already designed. After you have made a few feet, you will like some and not others, throw away the templates you don't like.



To make a shoe front template. Fold your fabric foot "seam to seam" and draw around it on paper.



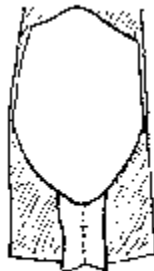
Draw the shoe front shape you want about 1/2" back from the front edge of the paper.



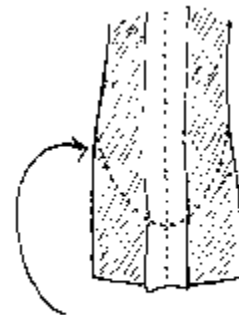
Draw a rounded foot front template, then cut it out.



Draw a pointed foot front template, then cut it out.



Draw around either template at the front of the fabric foot.



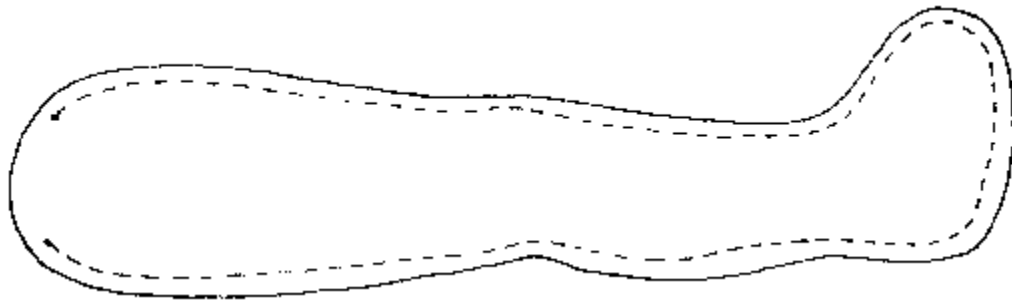
Sew on the line you drew.

You have now designed patterns for the arms and legs without seam allowances. These patterns are designed to be drawn around on doubled fabric. You then sew on the lines you have drawn. If this is a first time design experience for you, or if you are very new to the cloth doll-making world, I recommend that you first design and make the simplest arms/hands and legs/feet first. Then go on to the more detailed feet/hand types. Design and make a few sets of arms and legs for practice. You can put them all to use after the body and head design lessons, which will go on-line in 3 days.

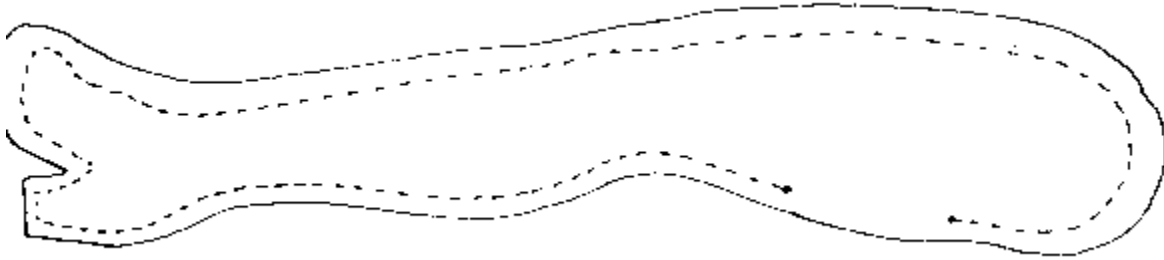
Remember to leave the tops or backs of the legs and arms open for stuffing for a jointed doll, and to leave the tops of the legs and arms open for an un-jointed doll.

Tops of legs/arms left open for a jointed doll. This is my preferred opening for turning and stuffing. The ladder stitch closes the curved tops so that the stitching is nearly invisible. I will teach the ladder stitch later in this class, for those of you who

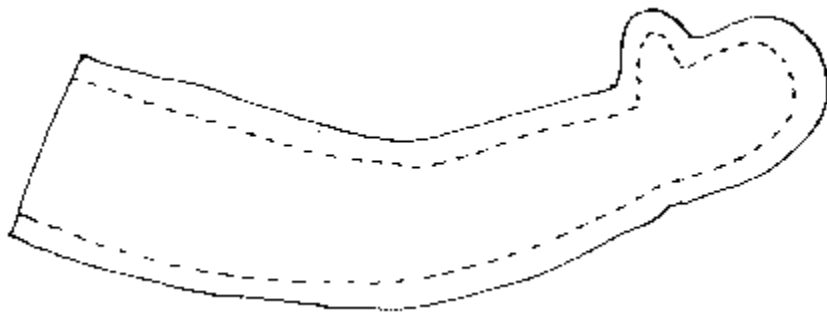
don't know how to do it.



Backs of legs/arms open for jointed doll, if you are fearful of closing on a curve.



Tops of legs/arms left open for an un-jointed doll. The un-jointed limbs will be stitched on.



You can now design and make several kinds of legs, arms, feet and hands. Make a few more patterns using the techniques you have just learned. Sew up a few arms and legs of different types. Practice makes perfect.

Remember, you need to trim away any excess fabric at the fronts of the more advanced feet, and you need to clip into any "v" shapes, before trying to turn your parts right side out.

We will design the bodies and heads and make a stuffing fork next.

**Happy Beginning Designing!**

*Judi Ward*

**Judi's Dolls**

<http://JudisDolls.com>