

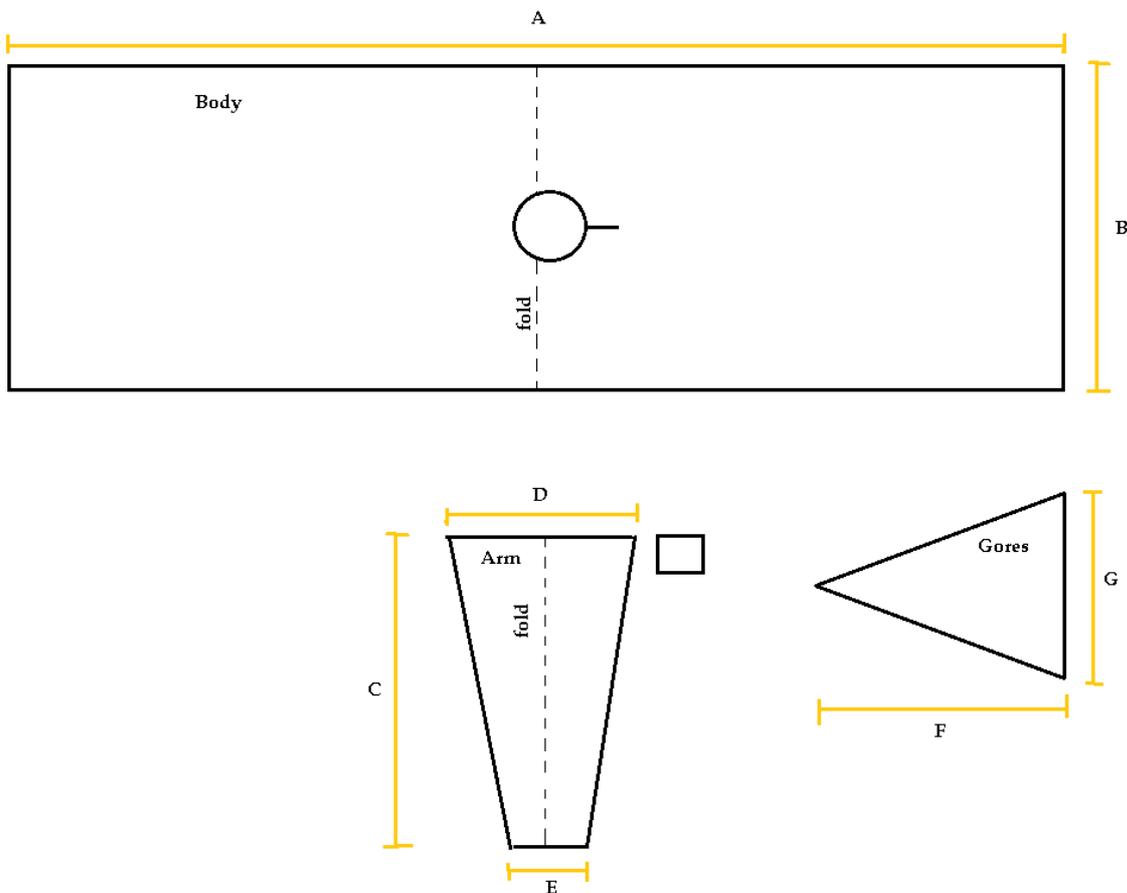
Clothing and Patterns

The basic garment worn by the Vikings was called the *kyrtill* or *serk*. It took the form of a long shirt, about knee length for men and an ankle length dress for women. It is one of the few garments similar for both sexes, so take note of the differences as Viking men were very sensitive to accusations of effeminacy and women were lampooned for wearing men's clothes.

Vikings seem to have followed earlier Germanic styles and clothes were generally close fitting to the body and flared from the waist. Sleeves were close fitting, quite tight on the lower arm and virtually always wrist length.

The neck holes were also very close, often a small hole for the neck with a slit for the head to fit through, especially for men as wearing a shirt with an open chest was a divorceable offence in Viking law. Women's necklines seem to be a bit more open with a possible neckline from Oseberg having a quite large oval opening or keyhole necklines from Birka needing a brooch closure due to very long slits that may have been designed for breastfeeding.

Cutting Pattern for a *Kyrtill*



Measurements to make a *kyrtill*

Seam allowances are not included you will need to add 2 cm per seam and 4 cm per hem.

BODY: A- Length: shoulder to hem x2. Hem is about the knee for men and down to the ankles for women. Women's dresses will definitely need gores. =

B - Width: Half your chest circumference +10cm =

ARM: C- Length: edge of shoulder to wrist =

D - Width: (shoulder) loose circumference of shoulder at armpits =

E - Width: (wrist) tight circumference of hand =

GUSSETS: (little squares for armpits) = 10 –15 cm squares

GORES: (triangles to flare the bottom of the garment)

F -Length: waist to hem =

G –Width at base:

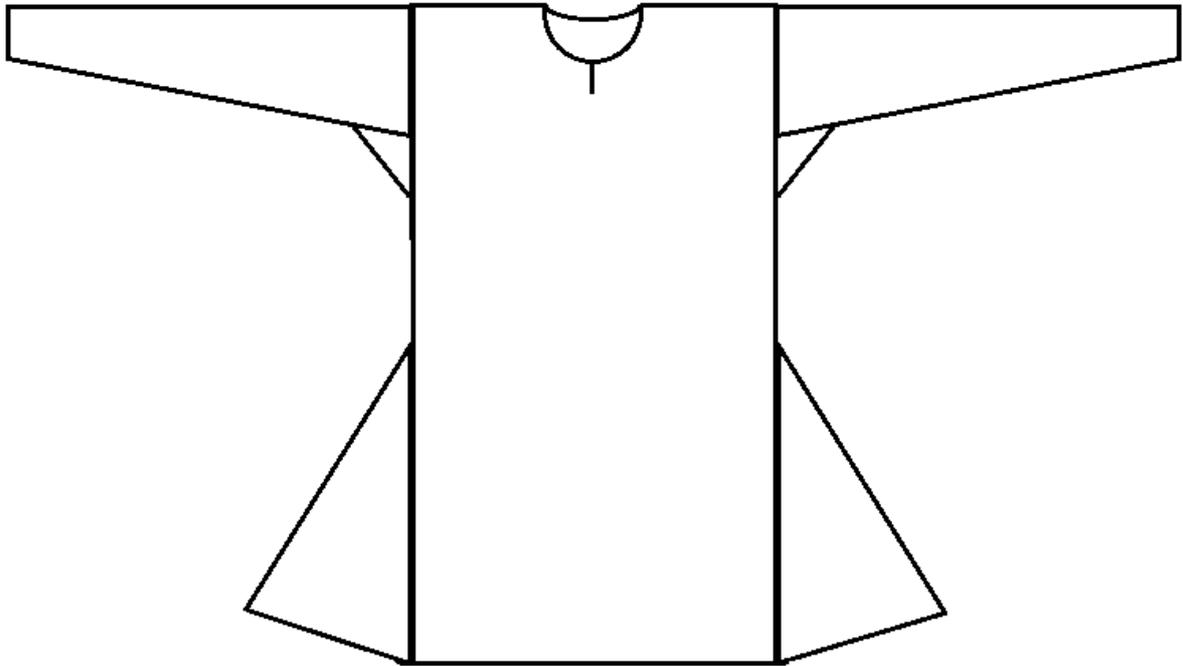
about 50cm for men's shirts or 100cm for women's dresses =

NECK: Diameter of neck =



A - An illustration from the Eadui Psalter showing a men's square keyhole neckline

B - Fragments from the Oseberg ship burial in Norway. The loop is a possible neckline and the small loop in the middle is suspension from a brooch suspended dress



Construction of a *kyrtil*

Sew the arms to the middle of the body section first, then sew in the underarm gores if required to give extra arm room. You can then sew all the way up to the wrist.

Add in the gores on one side first and then sew from the armpits down to the bottom hem. The gores can be made from two right-angled triangles to save fabric.

To cut the neck hole, a circle the diameter of your neck is needed, not the diameter of your head as the keyhole slash gives enough room to pass your head through. An easy way to work out the diameter of your neck is to measure its circumference and divide by pi. Situate the head hole 2/3 toward the front of the tunic and cut the slash about 10cm long.

Finish all hems by rolling them and whip stitching them down on the inside.

Men's Cloaks

Men's cloaks were usually a large rectangle shaped blanket and worn pinned at the right shoulder or sometimes the hip with a ringed pin leaving the right arm free. One Viking name for a cloak is *feldr* which could indicate being worn folded. Common Decoration was fringed ends tablet woven borders, tassels or a decorative weave, such a stripes or checks. One form of Icelandic cloak had unspun tufts of wool woven in like a shag pile rug. Coats made the same way as tunics and open at the front were also worn by both men and women. Cloaks are usually only shown being worn by men or rank or men not engaged in physical work, but sailors or workers would need something for weather protection, these could be given a measure of waterproofing by leaving the lanolin in the wool or weaving in the outer guard hairs of the animal.

The Icelandic Grey Goose laws give the size of a trade cloak as 2 thumb ells by 4 thumb ells which would give a size of about 2m long and 1m wide though some actual finds seem to be a larger rectangle about 150w 200cm long.



10th century men wearing cloaks



A Bronze ringed cloak pin from York

Women's shawls

Women also use a square or rectangle shaped cloak and some forms use the same word as men's cloaks. Though evidence for complete women's clothing is rare fragments from grave finds seem to indicate shawls were similar to men's cloaks though probably slightly smaller. There is also evidence at Birka for pleated or very fine trains that seem to be very decorative fashion. The shawl can be worn over the shoulders square or folded into a triangle and pinned at the neck with a pin or brooch, such as a trefoil brooch. A long coat open at the front does seem to have largely replaced the shawl as worn in Viking valkyrie pendants in the 10th century, due to a fashion change as traditional Viking women's costume began to be regarded as pagan.

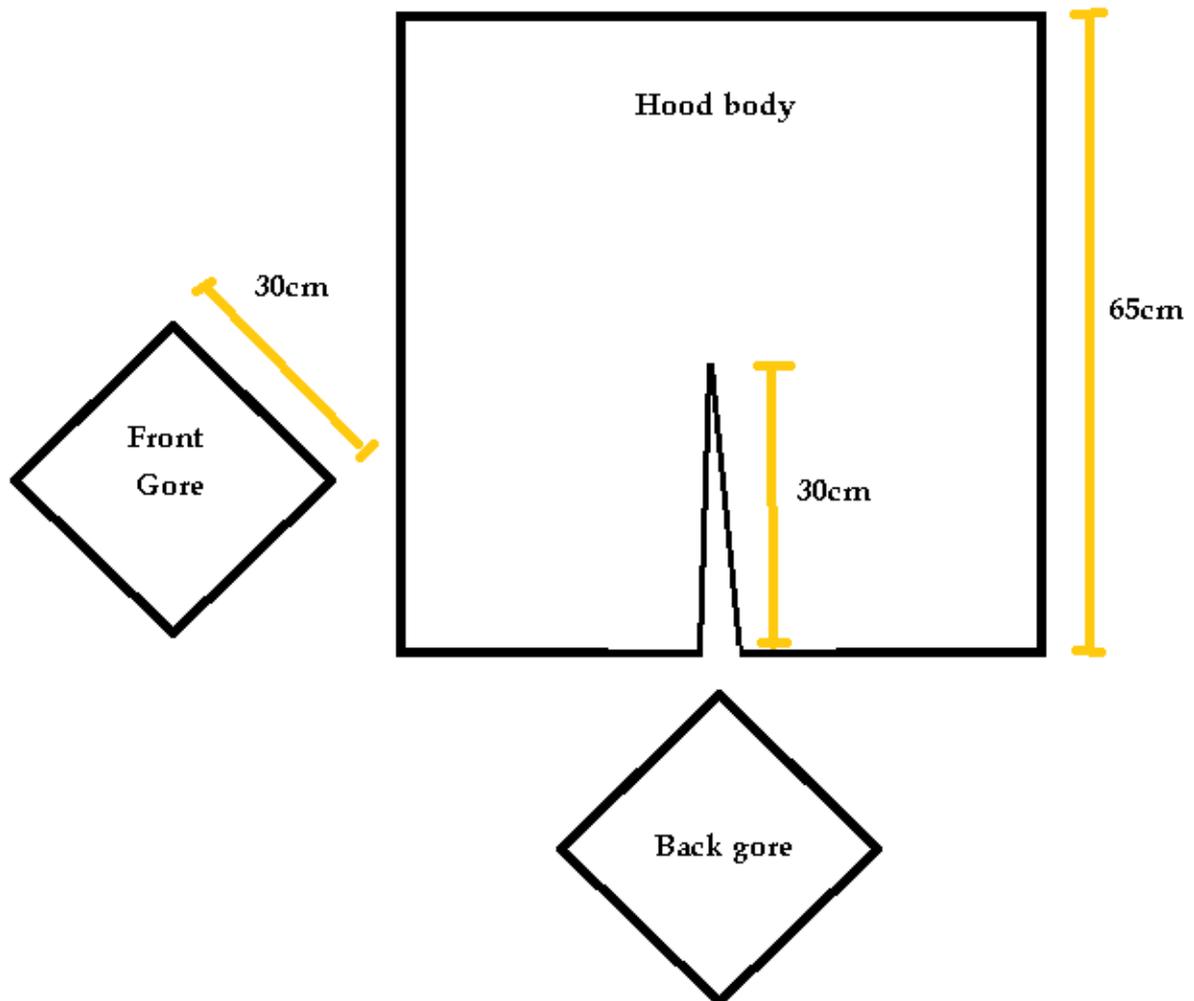


Shawl wearing valkyrie pendant from Sweden

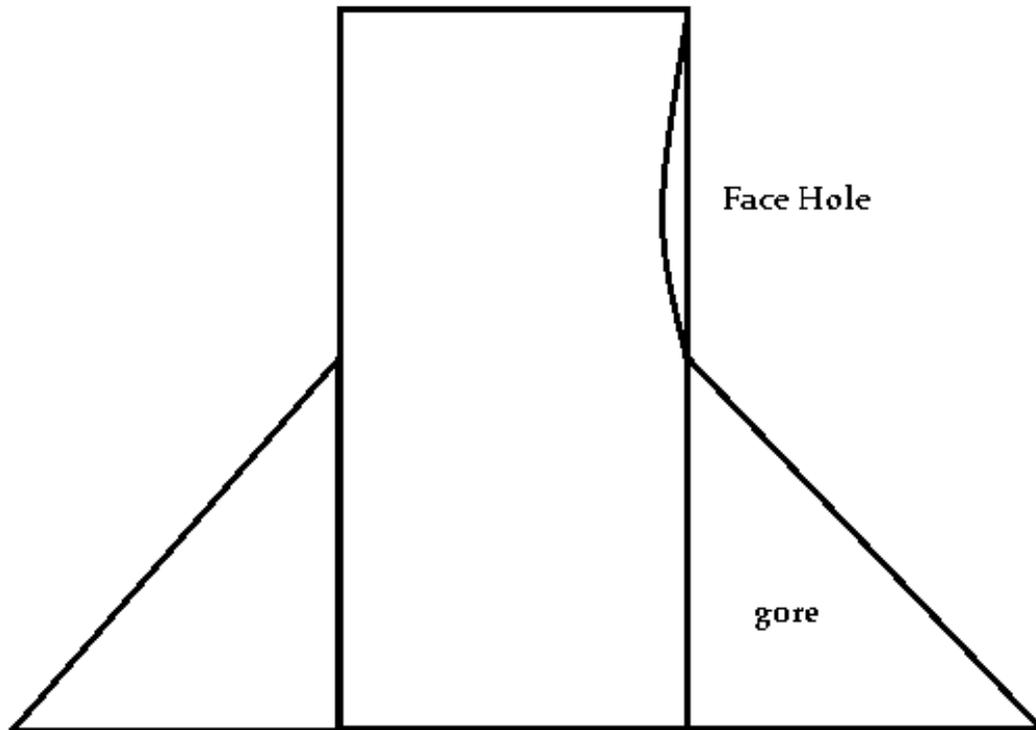
Headwear

There is not much evidence for men's headwear. Small caps must have existed as Viking law specifies strict penalties for pulling a hat from someone's head and various types of headwear are known from other Viking sites. The word *Hotr* seems to refer to a hood garment that covered the head and shoulders worn in bad weather. Tails hanging from the back of the hood called a *liripipe* and found on medieval hoods probably weren't widespread in the Viking age, though a well-tailored hood from Hedeby in Denmark had one.

This is a very simple pattern from a 11th century hood from a bog burial in Norway, that was decorated with simple embroidery. Recommended fabric is a thick twill wool as per the original to keep out rain and weather.



The body is a square 65cm by 65cm as are the gores which are 30cm each. The body has a slit down the back and the gores are sewn in at an angle back and front. This pattern contains seam allowances and should fit most people.



Hottr construction

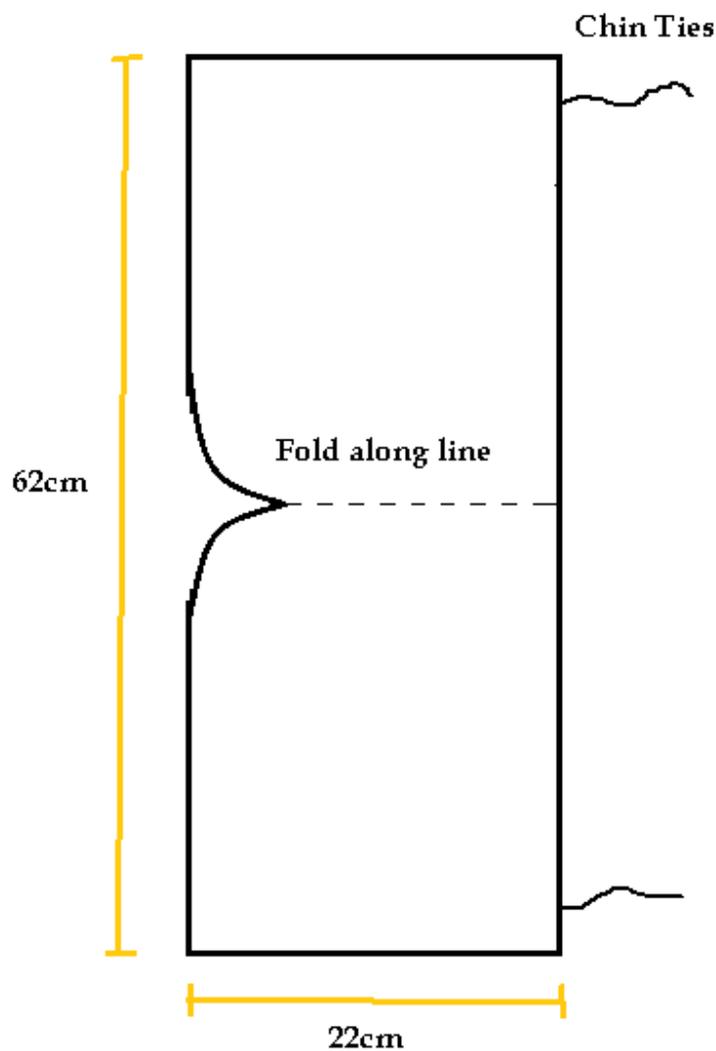
Sew the gores into the slit at the back which should be the same length as the one side of the gores. The other gore should be sewn from the bottom up on the other side of the fabric. And both should be angled diagonally with one corner pointing up like a diamond.

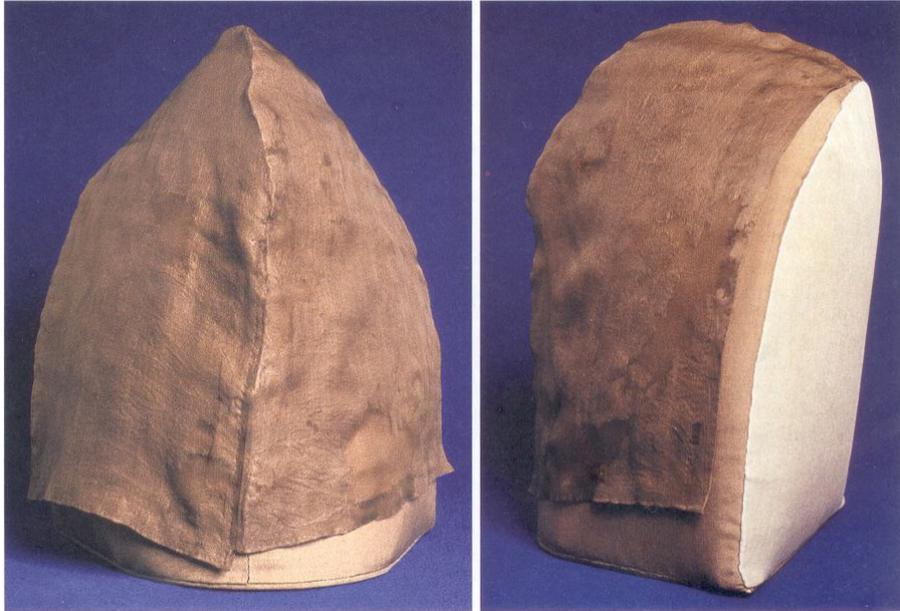
Then sew along the top of the main body piece to close the fabric and make it hood shaped. Leave the other side open and hem to make the face hole. Then hem the bottom and you're done.

Female headdresses are quite common both in archaeology and art; they were probably worn for modesty especially by married women or Christians.

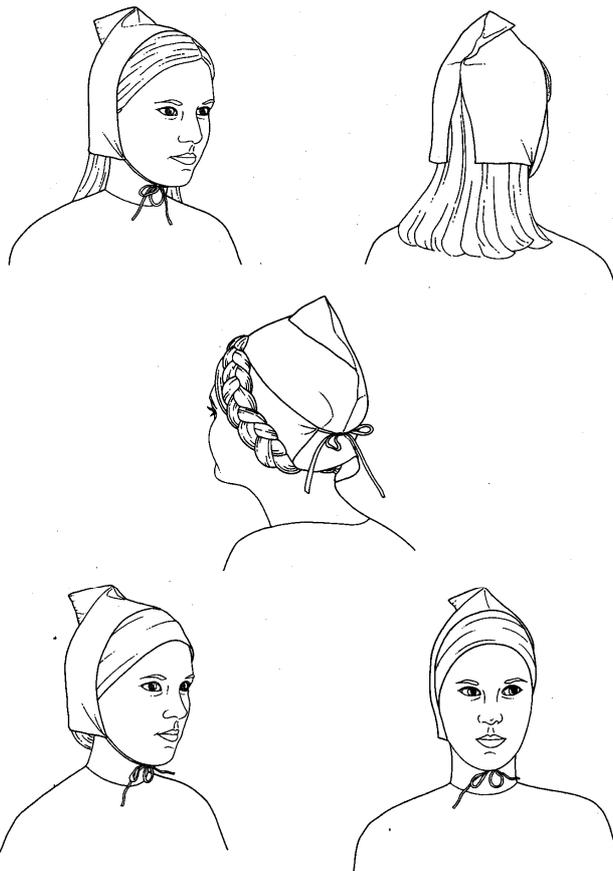
This pattern is from a cap found in the Coppergate digs at York. The original is now yellowish and is made of tabby silk with linen ties to tie under the chin and is one style of women's headdress that seems to have been popular, very similar examples made from fine wool were found in Viking Dublin but left the square peak intact. Another possible style is a wound cloth around the head that may be similar to later medieval headwear styles.

Recommended fabric could be silk like the original or a fine white linen tabby. Cut the rectangle, which is then folded down the middle and sewn up the rounded side. Hem the other sides. The chin ties should be made out of strips of fine linen cut about an inch thick and long enough to tie under the chin. Fold the raw edges inside to make a ribbon.





The original silk cap from York



Various ways the cap could be worn

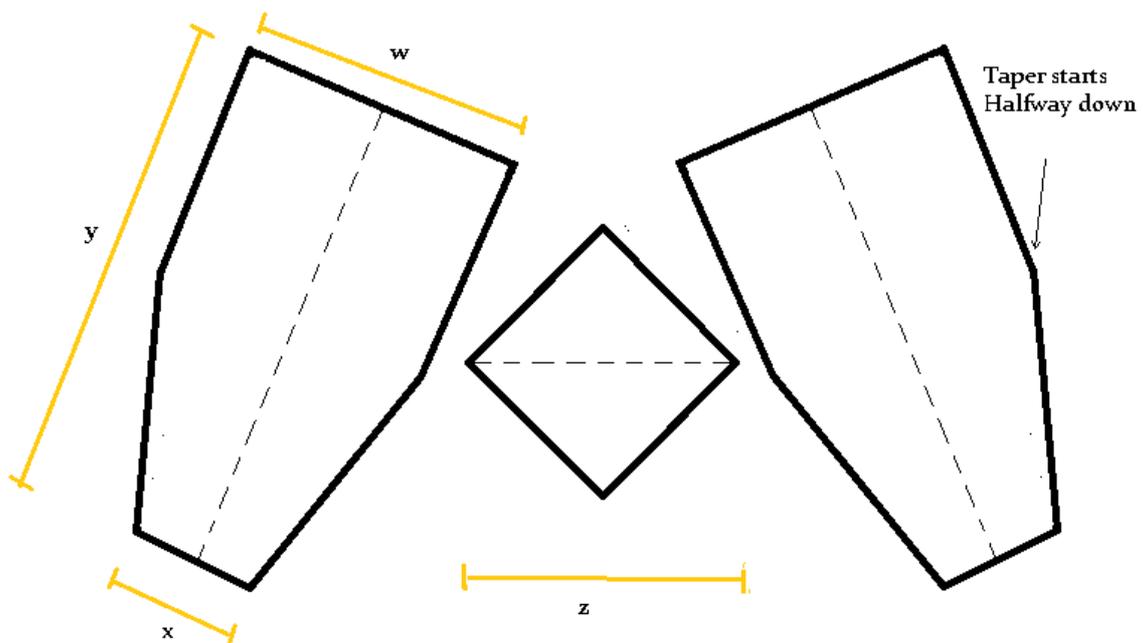
Legwear

Trousers with gores in the seat called *brok* were a fashion worn only by men. Higher ranks probably wore separate *braies* and *hose*. Braies were loose shin length underwear and trousers were ankle length and could have inclusive feet. This is a simple pattern that can be worn as trousers or shortened to about mid calf length to make braies. Not much is known what underwear women wore, but it is possible they wore braies also. Trousers could have belt loops sewn on the outside or be held up with a tablet braid drawstring.

A Viking age fashion were leg wraps these were bands of cloth usually made from herringbone twill wool about 10cm wide and 3m long wrapped around the legs from the knee down to the feet, they could be held with bronze hooks that have been found at York.



Recommended fabric for trousers is hardwearing wool and period advice recommended against going outside in just linen. If you are making *braies* rather than trousers use a white linen and cut them off at between knee and mid calf length leaving a loose open leg.



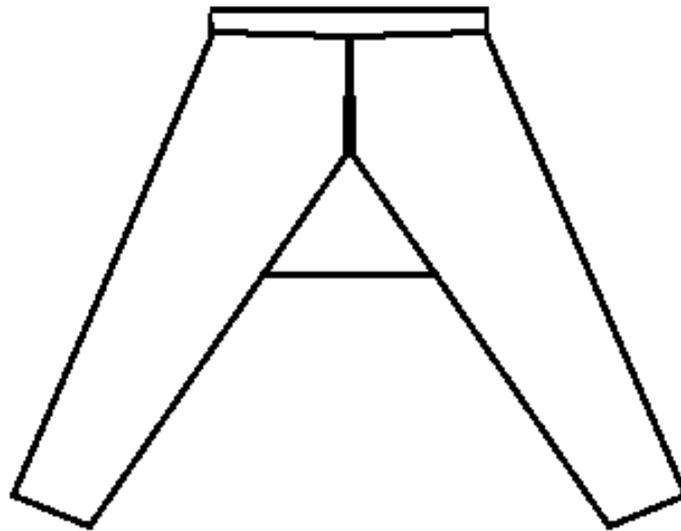
Measurements: seam allowances not included add 2 cm per seam 4 cm per hem

W – The circumference around the thigh =

X – Circumference diagonally around heel =

Y length you want your trousers to be, from the belt down to the ankles + about 5cm to allow for a drawstring tube at the top =

Z – Belt to belt between the legs =



Brok Construction

Start by sewing one side of the gore to the inside of the leg piece about 10cm down from the top and then fold in half and sew to the other side.

Sew down legs from the gore to the hem and then repeat for the other side.

Sew up above the gore to the waist.

To make the drawstring simple fold the top down into a tube making sure to leave a hole for the draw string.