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# Drapery

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# Fundamentals

When beginning your academic study of drapery, it is helpful to break it down into six basic folds, diaper, zigzag, pipe, spiral, halflock, and drop. You can find tons of helpful information about this in George Bridgman's Complete Guide to Drawing from Life, this is one of the best written chapters in the book. My goal is not to re-write his book but to help clarify what he has written with knowledge I have gained from other texts (including the Famous Artist's School Course) and my own experience. Let's begin.

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## Chapter 1: The Diaper & The Zigzag

Let's start with some basic terminology:

*Tension or Anchor Point*- This is any point that supports or anchors cloth to a solid form, creating tension. These create the primary pull of the fold.

*Eye*- This is a point in the fold that breaks under the weight of the fabric, creating a secondary pull or tension.

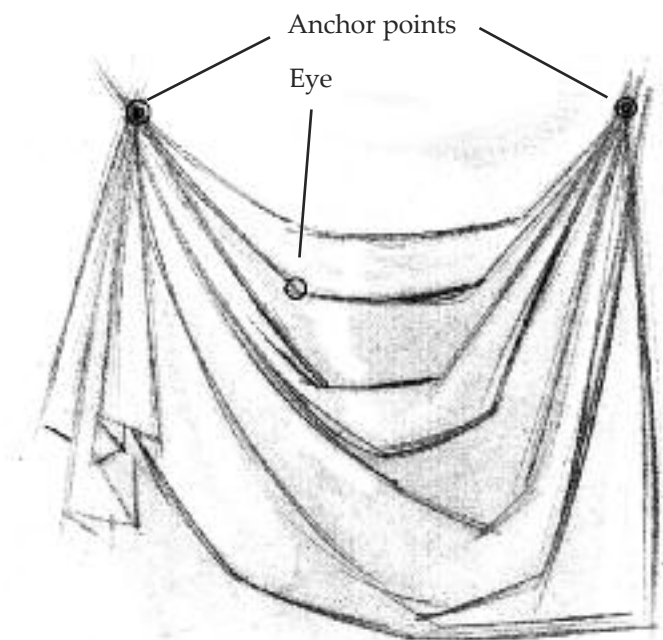
*Belly*- This is the fullest part of the fold, usually the farthest from any *anchor point*. Occasionally the *belly* will get to full and the fold will diffuse or break and create an *eye*.

This class will be broken up into three blocks of two folds; we will start with academic studies, moving on to master studies, and concluding with life studies. I find this is one of the best ways to pursue structural study because it allows you to learn the basic rules, learn how past masters have utilized these rules, and then combine this information to create our one unique interpretation of nature/life.

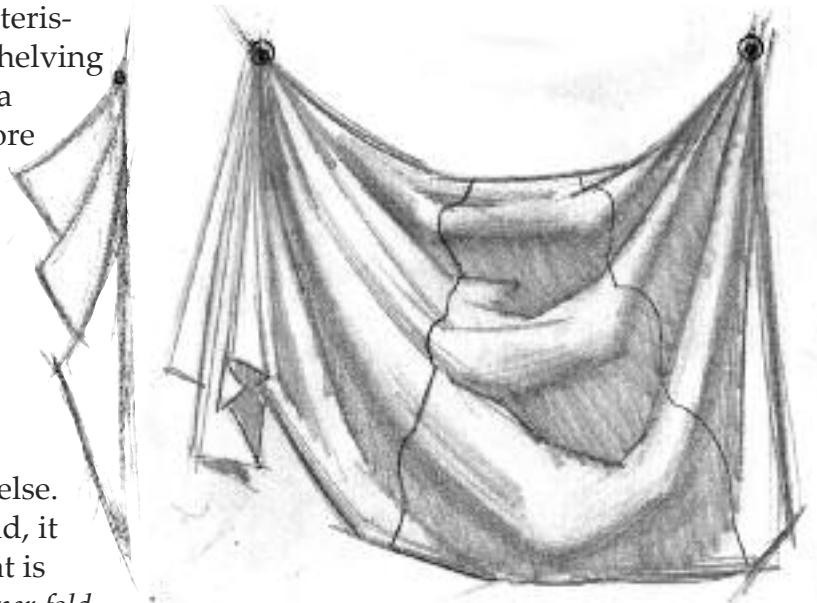
## The Diaper

The first two folds we will study are the *diaper fold* and the *zigzag fold*.

\*The *diaper fold* is created when a simple piece of fabric is supported by the two upper corners allowing the center to sag. All diaper folds are created by the competition of these nearly equal *tension points*, often creating a distinct interlocking of folds in the middle of the fabric. All folds will radiate out from these two *anchor points*.



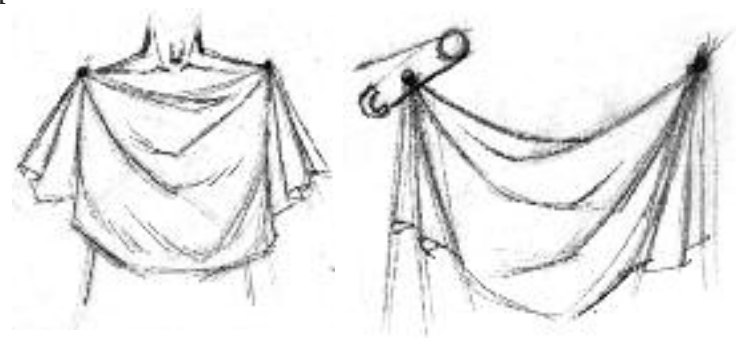
One of the most identifiable characteristics of the *diaper fold* is the alternating or shelving effect of the light and dark pattern. With a heavier fabric this pattern will become more evident, with a light fabric less so, but it will always be there. From the side these shelves will be more easily observed.



Folds are forms, just like anything else. The difference with fabric is that like liquid, it will take on characteristics of the form that is supporting it. As mentioned before, a *diaper fold* is supported primarily by two *anchor points*, so basically the form of the fold is created by these two points being in constant conflict causing a rippling effect. The folds then take on form not unlike ripples in a pond, alternating from highlight to halftone, to core shadow, to reflected light to castshadow and repeating, becoming more diffused as the folds move further from the anchor points. When rendering the fold keep in mind that all edges will be harder nearer tension points, and softer further from the tension points.



The most common places to see a *diaper fold* on the human figure are the shirt or blouse being supported by the shoulders, or a skirt with the knees supporting in the seated position.



# The Zigzag

\*A tubular fold of cloth may be bent. As it bends, the outer portion becomes rigid, and underneath it becomes slack. The excess cloth on the innerside buckles into a more or less definite pattern.

One of the most distinct characteristics of the *zigzag fold* is this lighting bolt or “zigzag” pattern. The *zigzag* is similar to the *diaper* in that it is supported by an *anchor point* at each end, with a sagging body in the middle. The slight twist that is common in this scenario makes this pattern all the more evident. Unlike the *diaper fold*, there is little or no diffusion to the folds because of its compressed nature. Another result of this compression is the more common occurrence of breakpoints, or *eyes*.

When rendering *zigzag folds* there will be a much tighter alternating of light and dark, and the edges will tend to be much harder than a *diaper fold*.

The most common place on the human figure to find a *zigzag fold* is at the knee, where the tubular cloth of the pant leg bends. This creates *anchor points* at the hip and ankle, with a secondary tension point at the knee.

