

Legs, Hands, and Thumbs

At first, people used their legs to tell how far away something was. From one place to another was so many steps, or paces.

Sometimes, they wanted to measure something very short. Then they used the width of their thumb. The thumb measure was about one inch.

For something a little longer, they used the width of their hands. Each hand was about four inches. Hands were used to tell how tall horses were.

Sometimes, the thing was longer than a hand but shorter than a pace. Then people used a foot. A foot came to be twelve inches.

Another measure was the yard. Stretch out your arm. From your nose to the end of your thumb is about one yard. It is about the same as a pace.