

# How to select the correct pilot size

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I get many phone calls from fellow modelers looking for a pilot figure to finish off their latest scale or sport model. A lot of these callers are not sure what size pilot figure to use in their model that would fit right and also make everything “look right”. So I thought I’d put together a few simple rules to help you determine the most appropriate size pilot figure.



To determine what size pilot figure your plane would require you’ll need to know at least one simple dimension of the full size aircraft: the wing span in feet.

Once you have this dimension, following these simple steps will help you arrive at what size pilot you’ll need for your model.

- 1) Convert the wingspan of the full size plane into inches. (feet X 12 = inches)
- 2) Divide this number by the wingspan of your model (in inches).  
This number is the “scale factor (SF)” that the model is built at.
- 3) Invert this number by placing it below the number 1. Thus making a fraction.

*For example*, lets suppose we have a 40 ft wingspan on a full size plane such as a P-47. And for this exercise the model is done at 92 inches wingspan. If we follow the above steps this is what we get.

- 1) 40 ft X 12 = 480 inches
- 2)  $480 / 92 = 5.29$  (where 480 is the wingspan of the full size plane, in inches, and 92 is the wingspan of the model, in inches)
- 3)  $1 / 5.29$  this is our “scale factor”. Round this off to **1/5** for the pilot size required.

Simple enough, right?

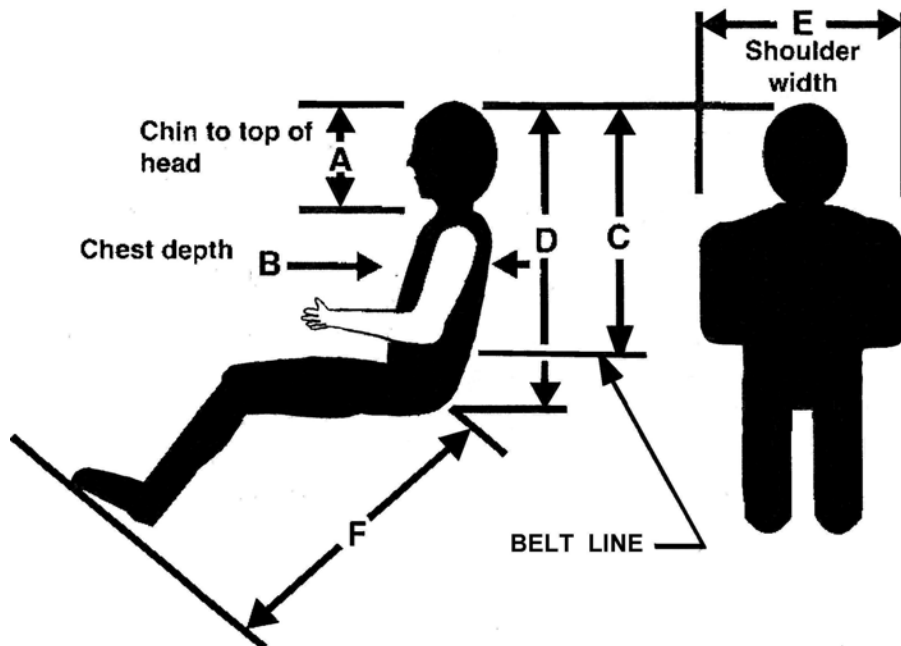
Just in case you have a hard time figuring the scale factor for your model, here is a simple chart that should help you make a good choice for a “correct looking” pilot.

<b>Pilot size</b> (scale)	<b>Wingspan of full size (in feet)</b>			
	<b>32</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>
1/3	128	144	160	200
1/4	96	108	120	150
1/5	77	86	96	120
1/6	64	72	80	100
1/7	55	62	68	86
1/8	48	54	60	75
1/9	43	48	53	66

Model size in inches

The above process will work very well for most types of “scale” models. That is, a model that was done after a full size plane. But what do you do if the model is a “model only” kind of plane? A plane like the Lanier “Stinger” comes to mind. Well, here we are left to the selection as to what “looks right”. To help you make a suitable selection here is a simple chart that will get you a pretty close fit for a lot of scale and non-scale models. Here are some approximate dimensions for the various sizes of pilots versus their scale factor. All these dimensions are based on a full size person of 6 feet tall. These dimensions may vary slightly for military vs. civilian pilots or for pilots from different manufacturers. The intent of this chart is to give you a rough guide for proper selection.

<u>PILOT SIZE</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>
1/3	3	3 ¾	9	11 ½	6 ¼	10 ½
1/4	2 ½	2 ¼	7	9 ½	5 ¼	9
1/5	2	2	5 ½	7	3 ¾	7
1/6	1 ¾	2 3/8	4 ¾	6	3	6
1/7	1 ½	1 ¾	4 1/8	5 ½	2 7/8	5 ¼
1/8	1 ¼	1 ½	3 ½	4 5/8	2 5/8	4 ½
1/9	1 1/8	1 ½	3 3/8	4 ¼	2 3/8	3 ¾



If you are “stuck” with an odd size requirement generally a smaller scale pilot will be a good fit in the cockpit space you have available but a slightly bigger pilot will “look” better. Sometimes the “larger” pilot can be shortened, etc. by removing a section of his torso or a portion of his seat. There are many modifications that you can do to any size pilot, or the cockpit, to get the effect you desire. Don’t be afraid to be inventive and experiment.

Hope this helps you out. Good luck on your latest project!