

Using Inches Only in Blender 2.72b

When working from some technical drawings, especially those produced before every country in the world (well, most) went whacky and switched to metric for everyday life (I mean, if your feet (and the king's feet were the first real-world item upon which a standard of measurement was based) are one meter long—or one centimeter or one millimeter—you may not be having the same human experience as those around you)... You may find these technical drawings have all measurements in inches.

Getting Blender to display just inches (as opposed to feet and fractions of feet, or feet and inches) involves a bit of mucking around, but it can be done.

Scene Properties > Units

There are three steps to be taken here:

switch to Imperial,

change Scale to 0.025 (it's actually supposed to be 0.0254, but this input box is only accurate to 1000ths), and

switch back to None (the default: Blender Units).

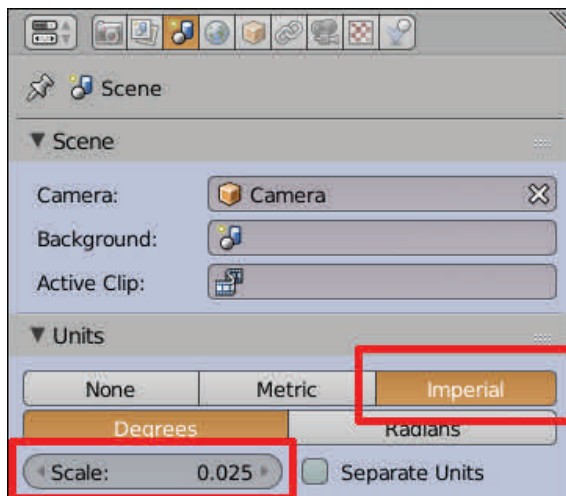


Figure 1: Scene Units - Set to "Imperial" and change the Scale.

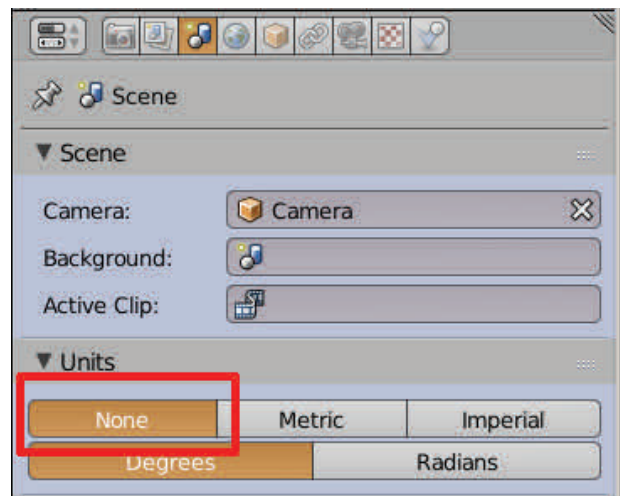


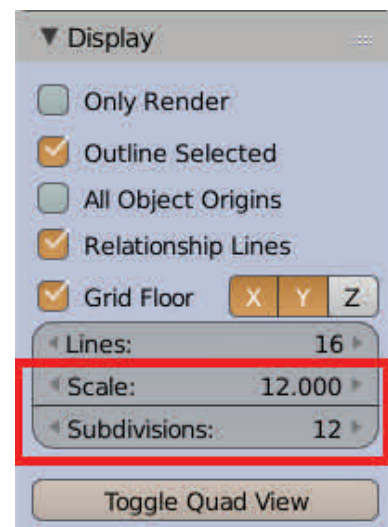
Figure 2: Switch Units back to 'None.'

N-panel Display Settings

In the N-panel Display settings, you'll have to change two items:

Scale should be set to '12' (to make the perspective view construction grid big enough to be usable), and

Subdivisions should also be '12' (so we get twelve units per foot instead of ten).



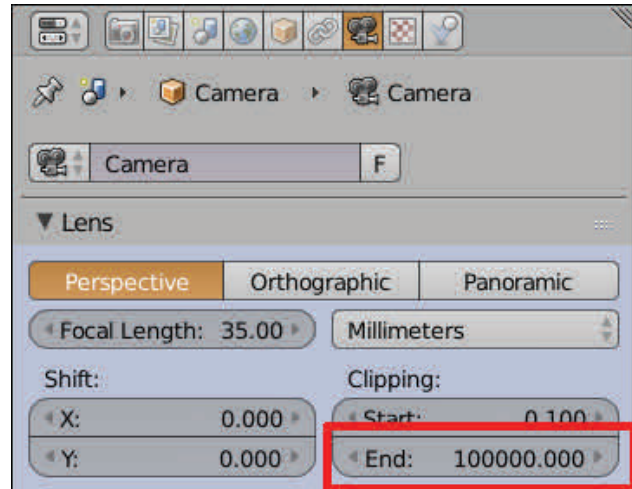
Camera Settings

Internally, Blender now thinks you're working at a really, really small scale, so we must compensate in a couple of places.

Camera Properties – Lens Clipping

Clipping planes (as you may know) set the minimum and maximum distance of objects that will be seen by the camera.

set Camera > Lens > Clipping > End to something over 10,000 (anything up to 1,000,000 will work).

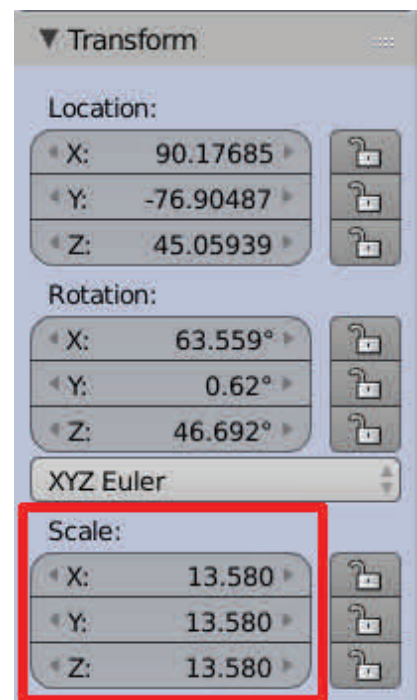


Camera Transforms

The camera object will have to be selected for this to work.

So, in the N-panel again, with the camera selected:

set Scale to anything over '12.'



Translating Back to Imperial

If you need to append an object to another Blender file that uses Imperial, you'll have to rescale the object after appending.

Just scale it down to 0.0254 (the 10,000ths place will be truncated, but what the heck). Apply scaling and you're done.