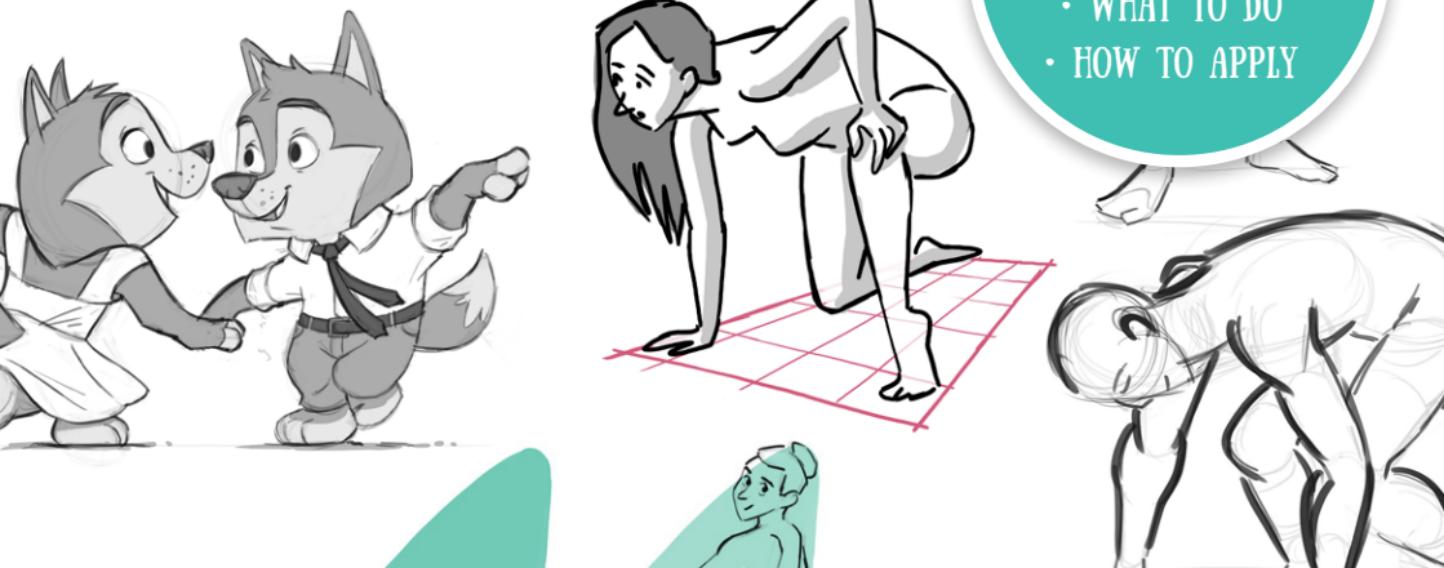


# HOW TO START FIGURE DRAWING

BY MITCH LEEUWE

YOU'LL LEARN:

- HOW TO START
- WHAT TO DO
- HOW TO APPLY





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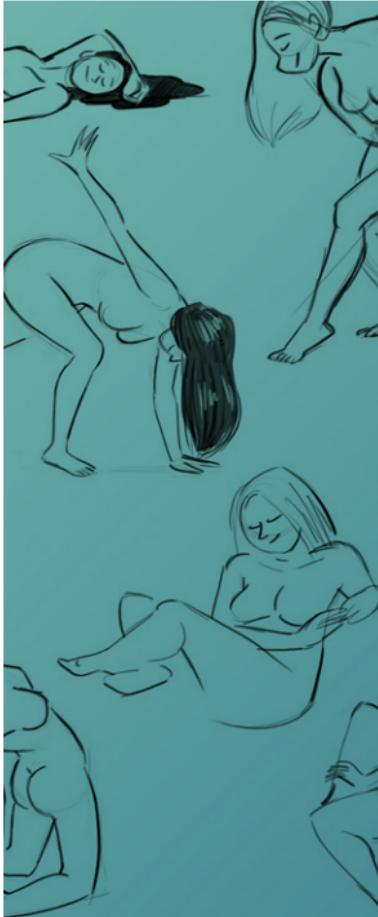
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# INTRODUCTION

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Thank you for reading my figure drawing book. I started this book by the habit of doing a daily figure drawing warmup each day. Figure drawing is important because it's a great way of learning to draw fast. Because in 30 minutes you can draw 30 1 minute poses, so you really draw a lot in a short period of time. If you do that daily just think how much poses you drawn. This is a great habit, because even if you don't have a lot of time you still can do this and over time really make a lot of drawing mileage. And the next

time you draw an illustration you take all that experience of all those figure drawings with you. Each time you are doing a figure drawing session you can focus on one of the principles of drawing. Like construction, line of action, story, gesture, space, overlap, foreshortening, drawing hands, anatomy and more. In this book I show my studies and tell about what I tried to learn. I hope this is interesting for you and inspires you to do more figure drawing.

Mitch Leeuwe

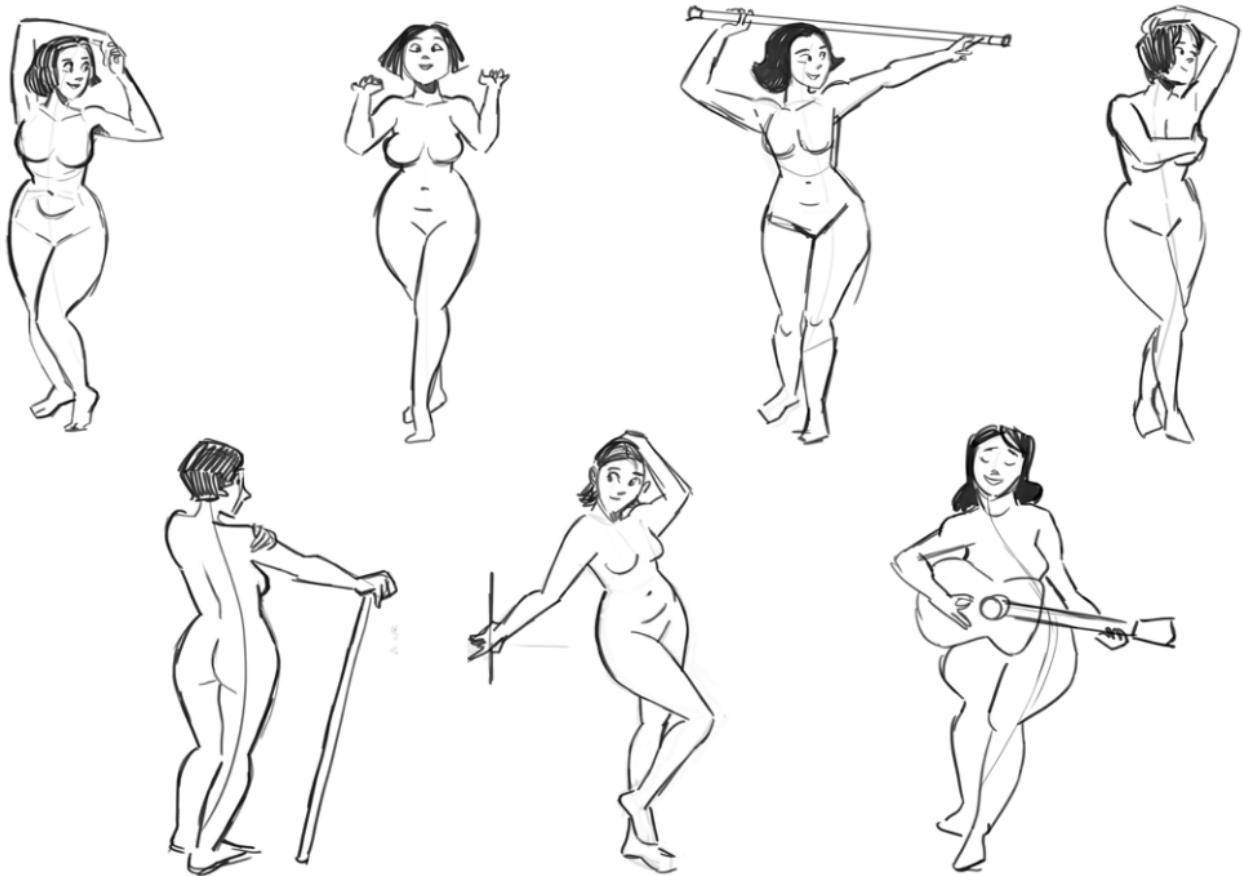
# HOW TO START

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Maybe there is a place where you live you can do some figure drawing. Drawing from life is the best way. But maybe you don't have that option. In that case the internet is great. There are tons of sources to do figure drawing from. Search on google or youtube for figure drawing and you'll find so many sources!

There are many different ways of figure drawing. I usually do every day 30 to 60 minutes of practise. And sometimes I do 1 minute poses and other times 5 minute poses. But not longer than that, or else it's more an illustration. I always try to experiment a bit with it.

**Tip: Try different things and find out what you like**



# LINE OF ACTION

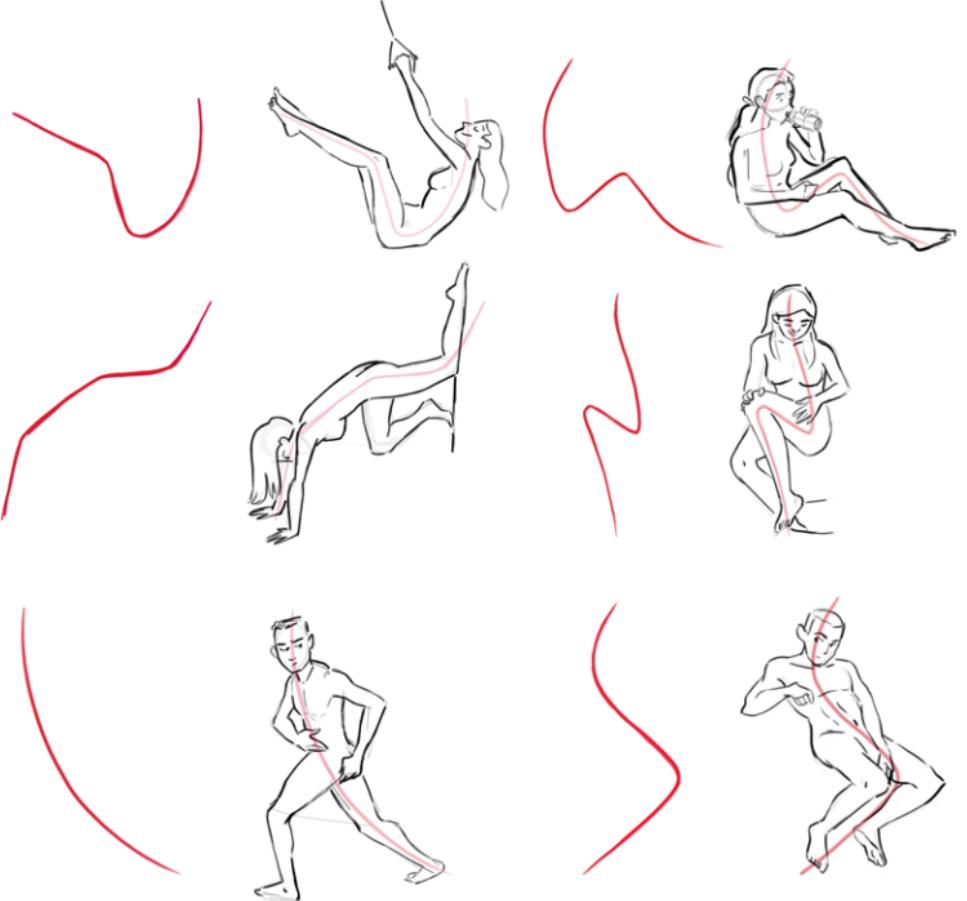
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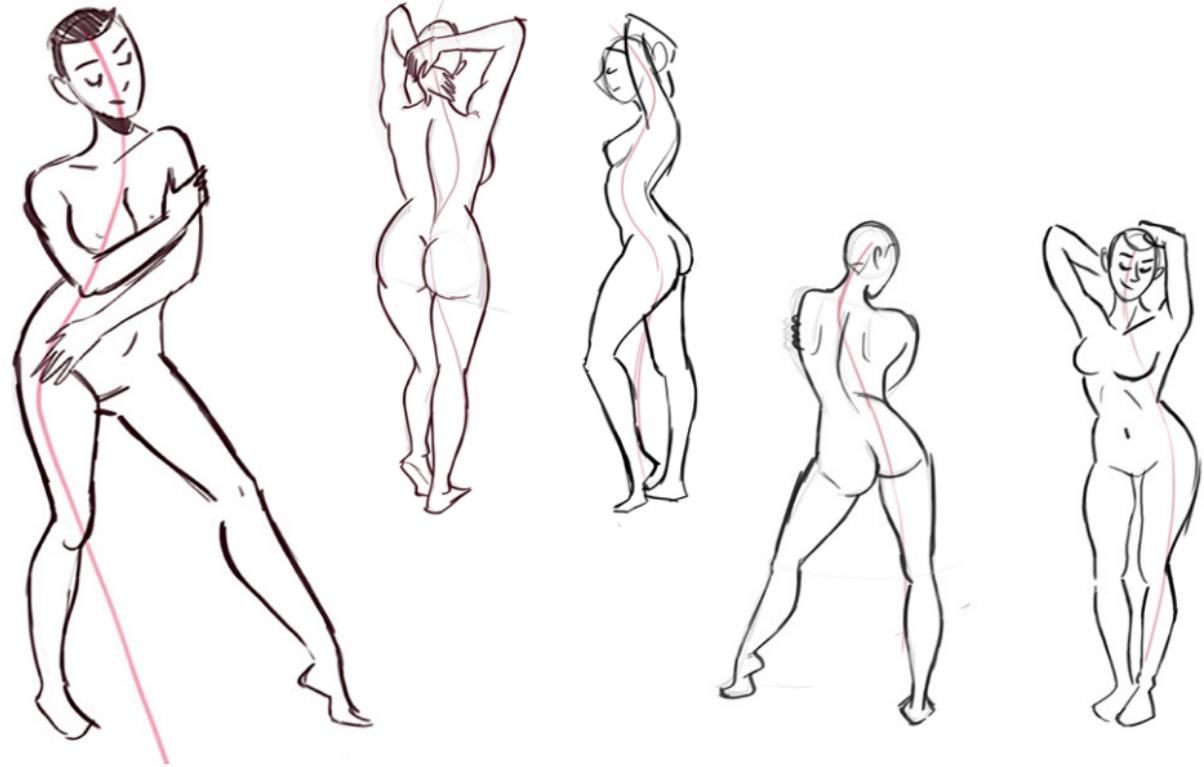
I always start looking at the model and ask myself: "What is the story behind this pose and how can I translate that to a line of action?"

The best way to learn to use action lines is by observation and drawing only the action

**The key to a good line of action is: Keep it simple.**

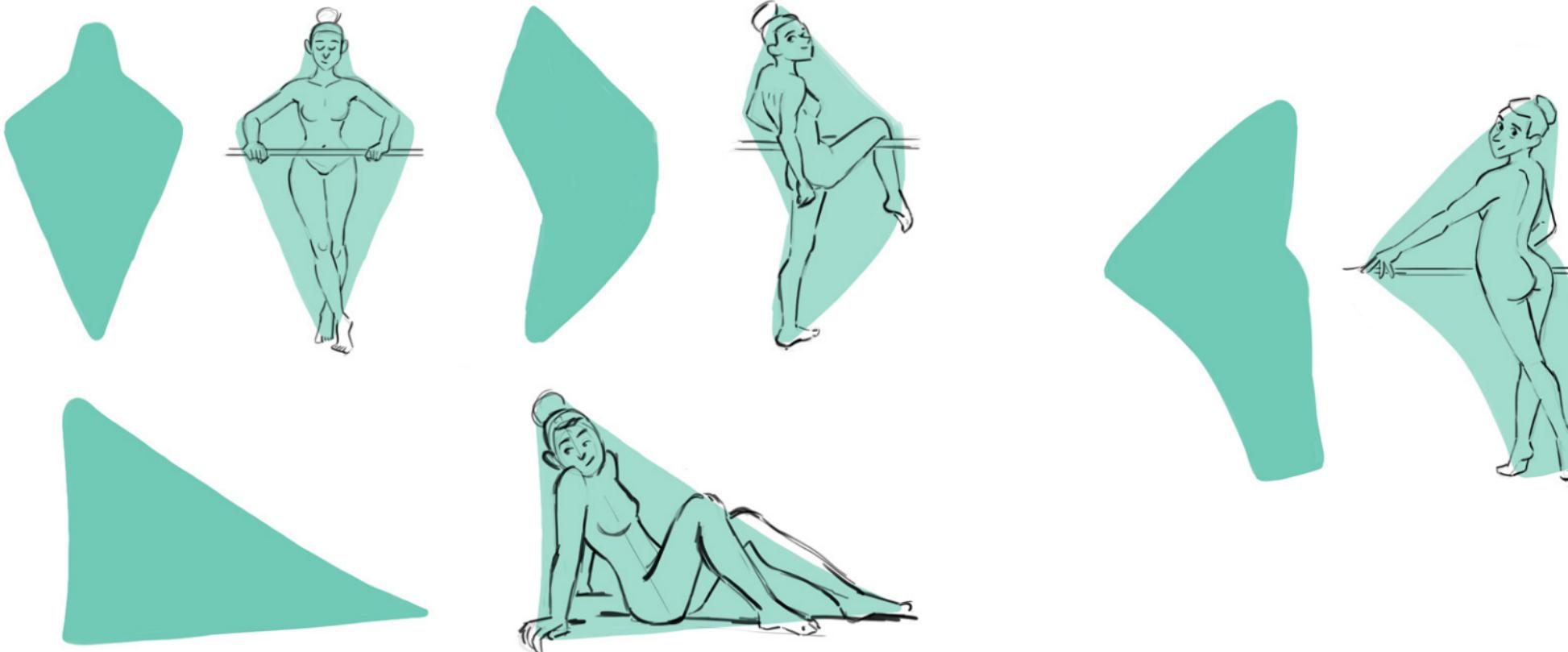
line of a pose for practise. When you focus on drawing this for a while you will understand the movement much better and prevent yourself from drawing stiff.





LINE OF ACTION





## SHAPES

.....

An other good thing to focus on is shape. Instead of drawing an action line. Ask your self how can I translate this pose to a shape.

It's a good excersise because you are learning yourself how to think of the model in front of you as one shape and as a whole. And not as a seperate head, torso etc.

# SILHOUETTE

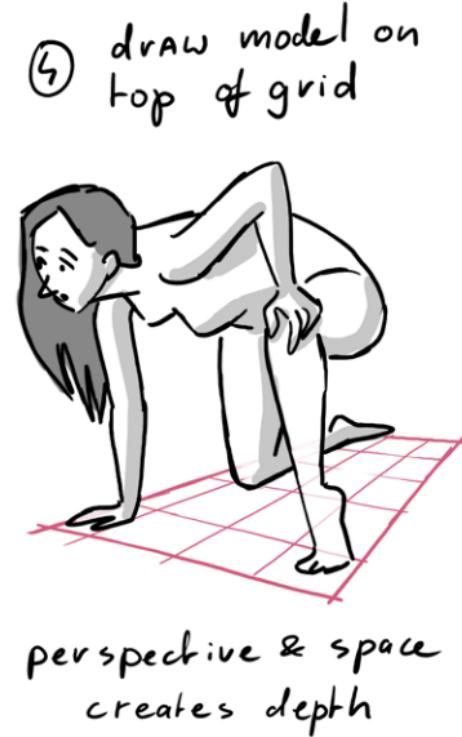
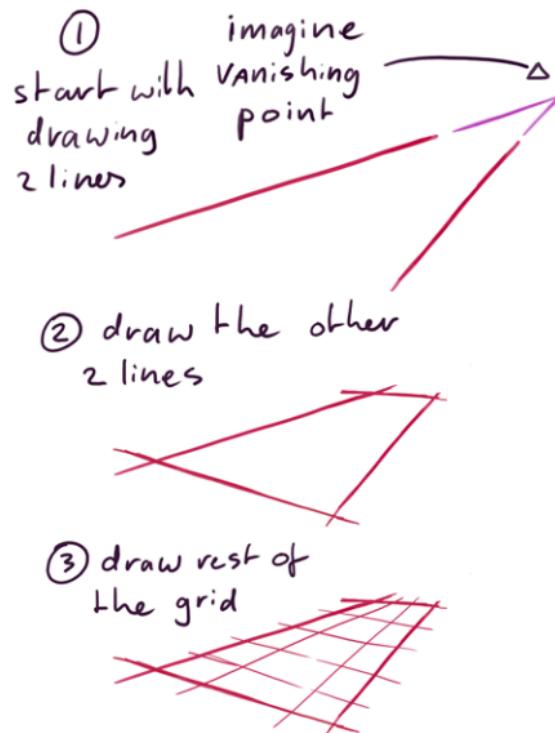
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You can do the same thing with silhouette. A clear silhouette is really important, if you can get this clear it really helps making you're figure readable.

With a silhouette you can clearly see the negative and positve space. The positive space is all the black and the negative space

is all the white. For example the arm is positive space and the negative space is the white between the arm, shoulder and head. If your pose isn't really clear in silhouette making those negative shapes bigger can help make you're pose way more clearer.



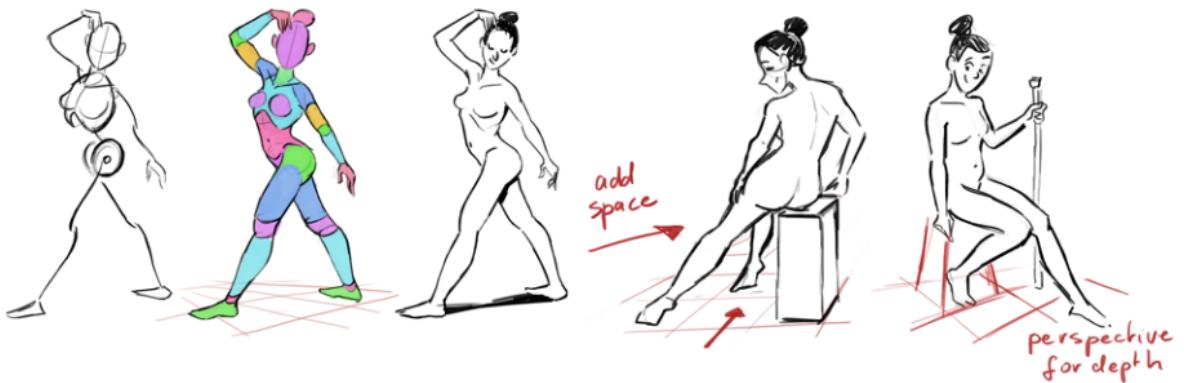


## SPACE & PERSPECTIVE

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Using space or perspective. Sometimes it really helps to exaggerate a bit what you see. One way you can do that is to add a bit more perspective. That makes your figure way more dramatic and dynamic. You don't always see this extreme perspective in life when you are drawing a model or drawing from a screen.

But adding a bit more perspective in your drawing makes it a lot more interesting. You can also add a more dramatic perspective to create more space between the body parts so the pose is more readable and the negative shapes bigger than the source you're drawing from.



SPACE & PERSPECTIVE





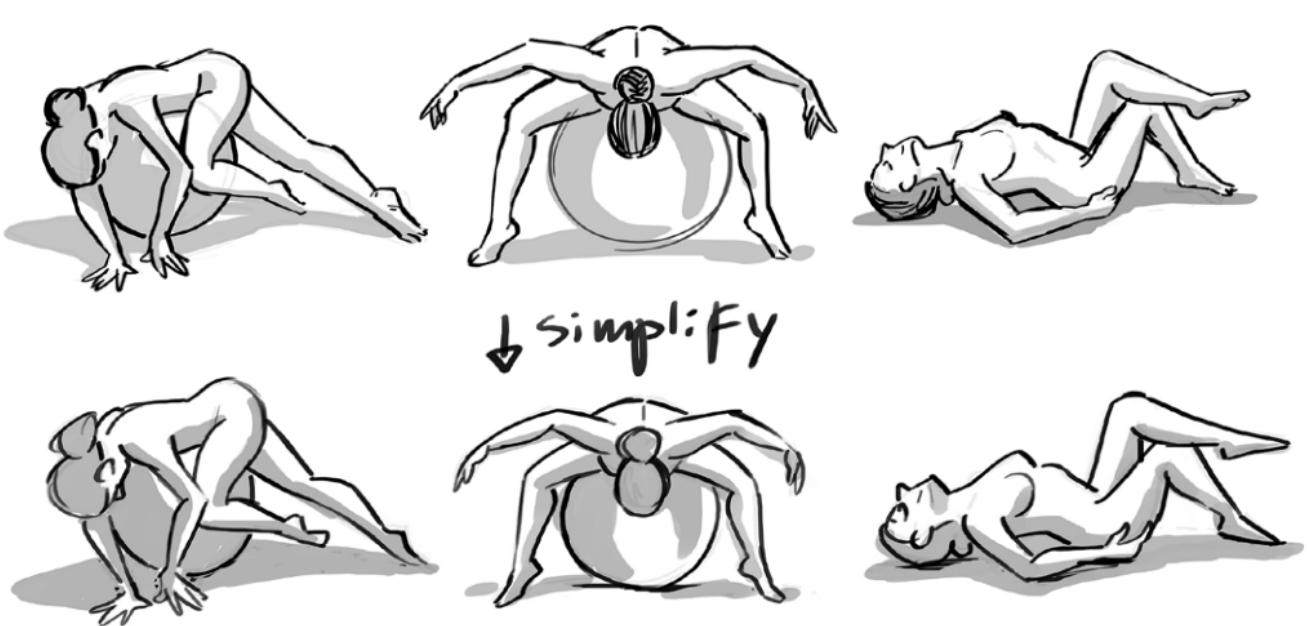
↓ Simplify more

## SIMPLIFY

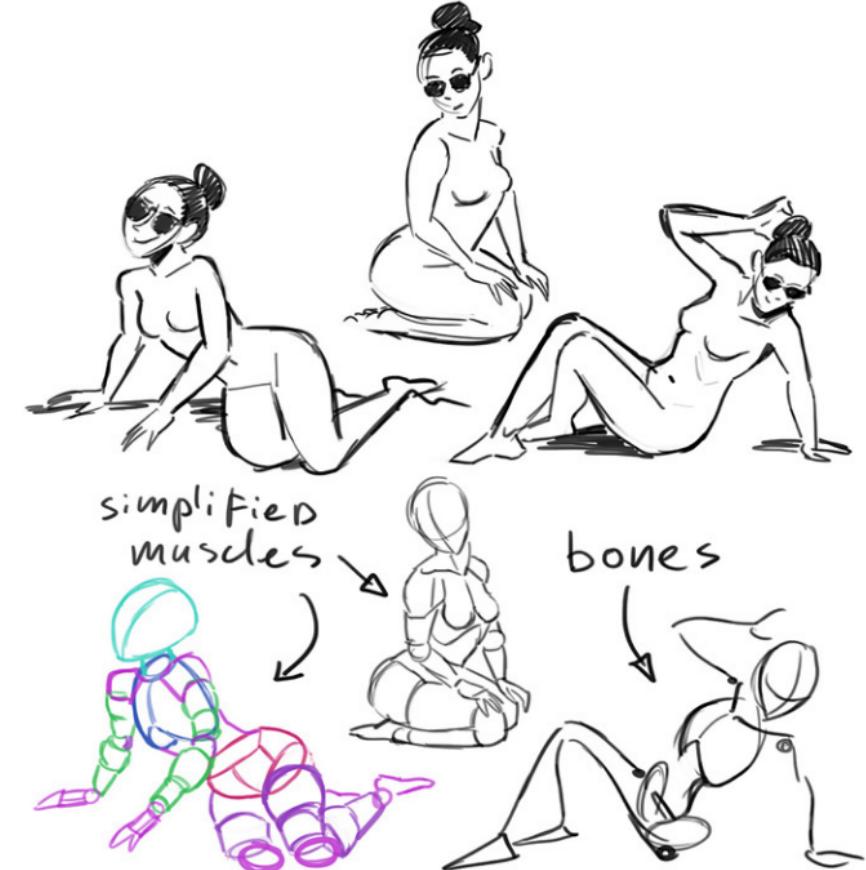
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Making a pose in 1 or 2 minutes means that you need to be fast. So try to find ways to simplify your figures more. You can redraw your illustrations and try to draw them a bit more simplified. This can be really hard to do. As you can see in this example I tried to simplify my drawings. When you have drawn

a couple of poses you can try redo them and look what you can leave out and try less more lines. The more you practise this, the more you will use this automatically the next time. Try to go as extreme as you can. Sometimes we can surprise ourselves by how far we can go. My advise: push it until it breaks.



SIMPLIFY

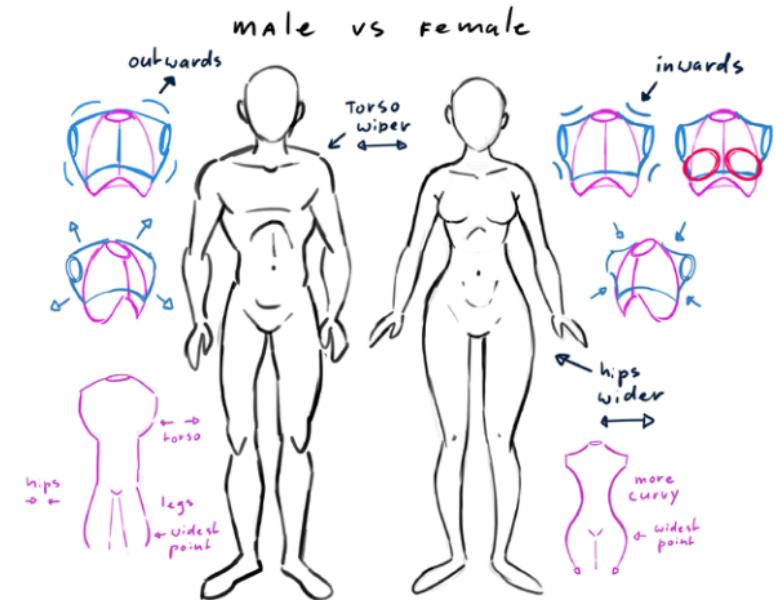
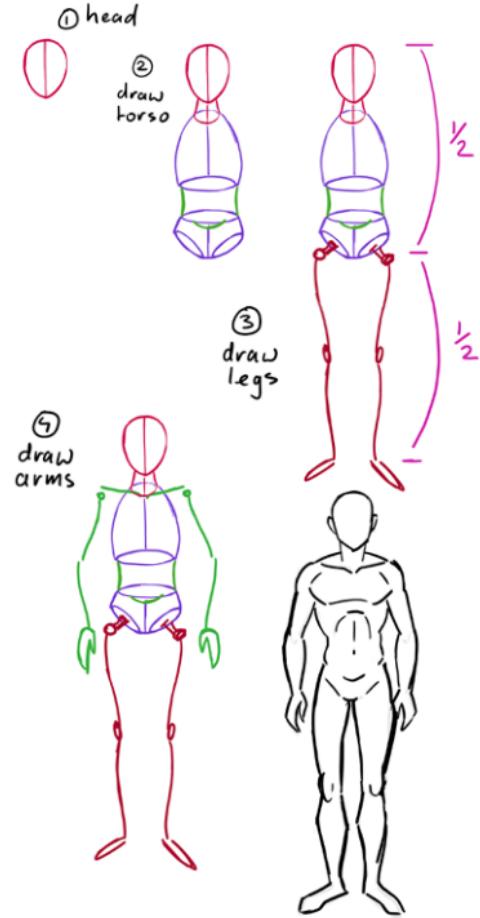


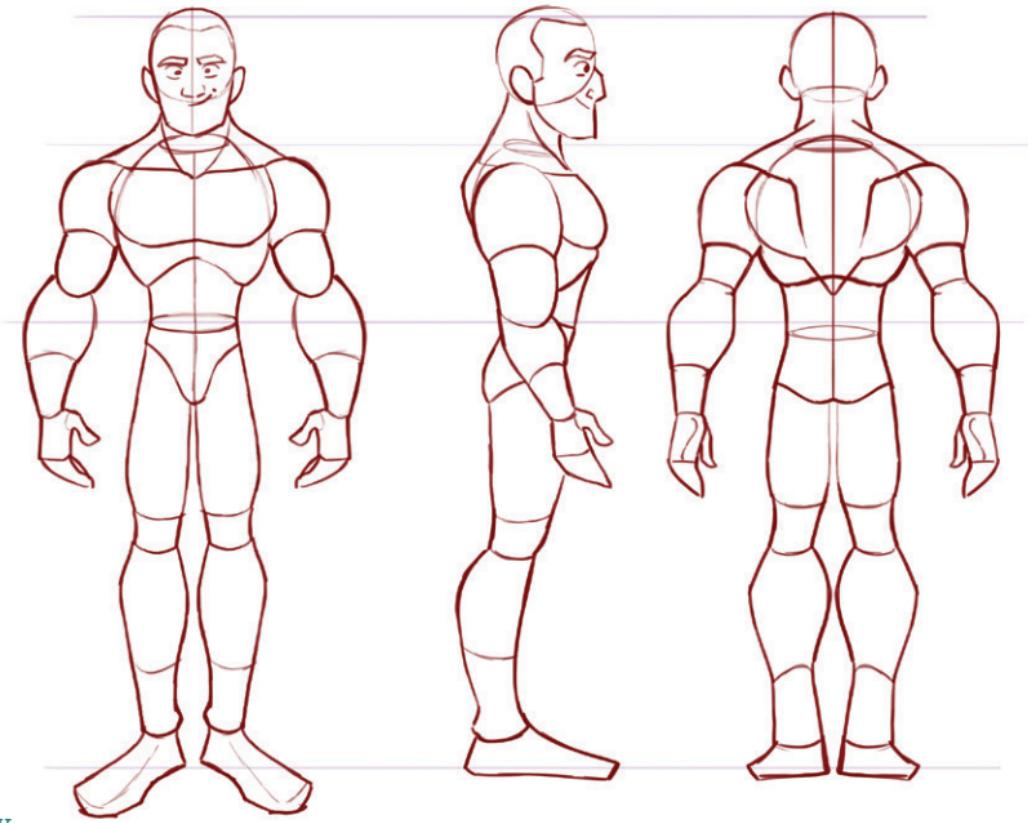


# ANATOMY

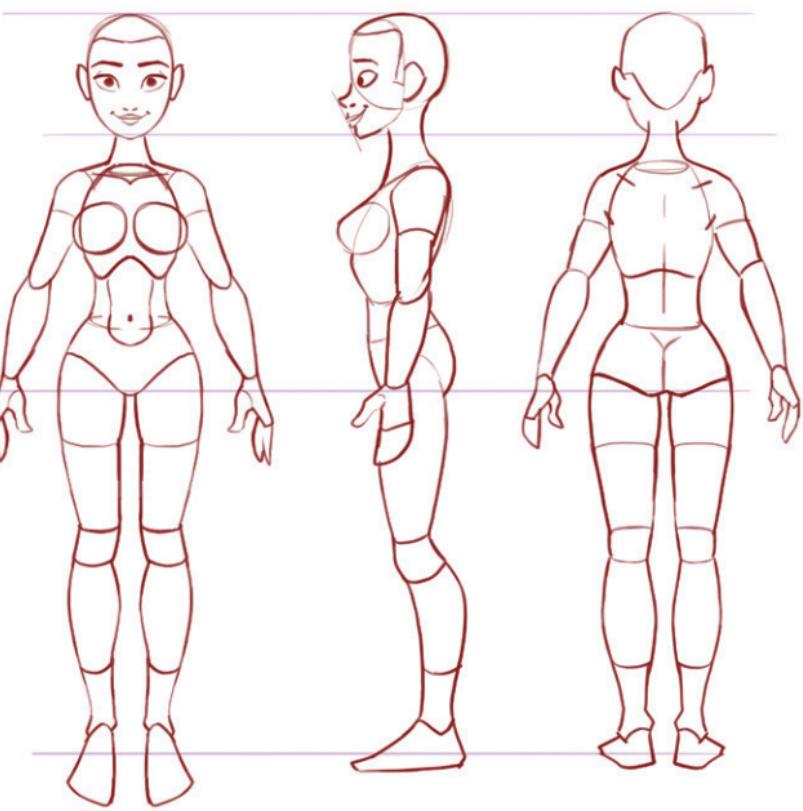
Learning simple construction and anatomy of the human figure can help you become faster because you don't have to think so much about it when you are drawing. For figure drawing I use this basic anatomy to remind myself of the proportions and the shapes I need to use to build the human figure.

Sometimes if I have a hard time, I first draw a figure from the front so I can use that as a guide for the poses I need to draw. Using reference and some examples is something I really recommend. Keep using it until it's in your head. I also try to have some clear steps that are easy to remember.





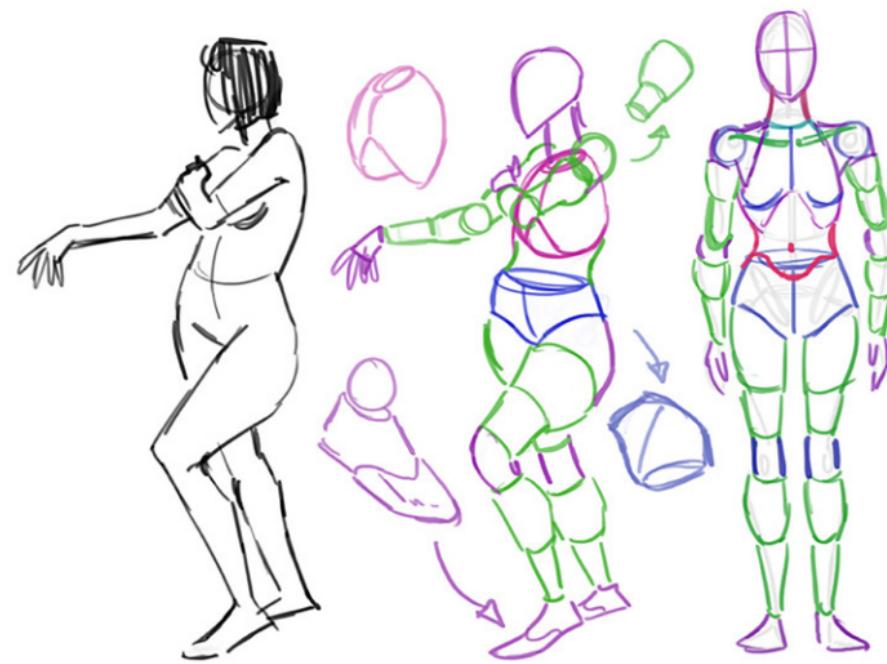
ANATOMY



Bones



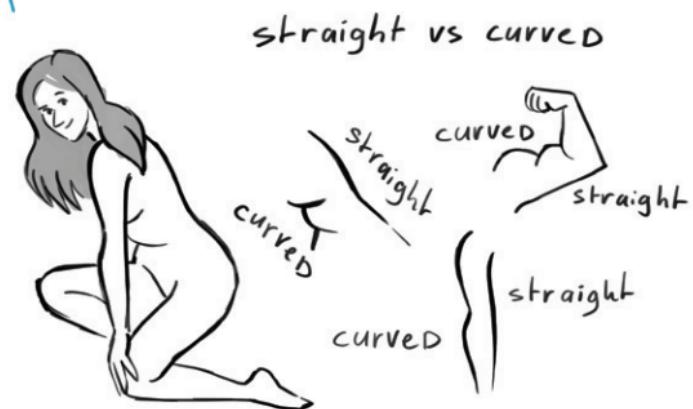
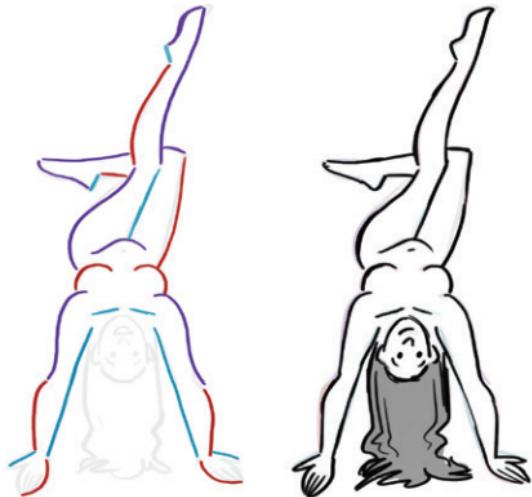
(simplified)  
construction & muscles



use different lines like:

C S I

good bad  
( S ( )  
/ ( SS  
S/ //



## C-S-I SHAPES

.....

There are three types of lines you can use when you are drawing a figure. C, S and I. It's important to mix those lines up. For example, if you start with a C you can follow it with a S or an I. But try to avoid two C's next or opposite of each other. Because if you do that you get parallel lines in you're drawing

and that doesn't feel naturally but feels more mechanically. So you could use it on purpose if you want to make things feel mechanically. But if you want to make your poses dynamic and fluid, use CSI and try to mix it up as much as possible.

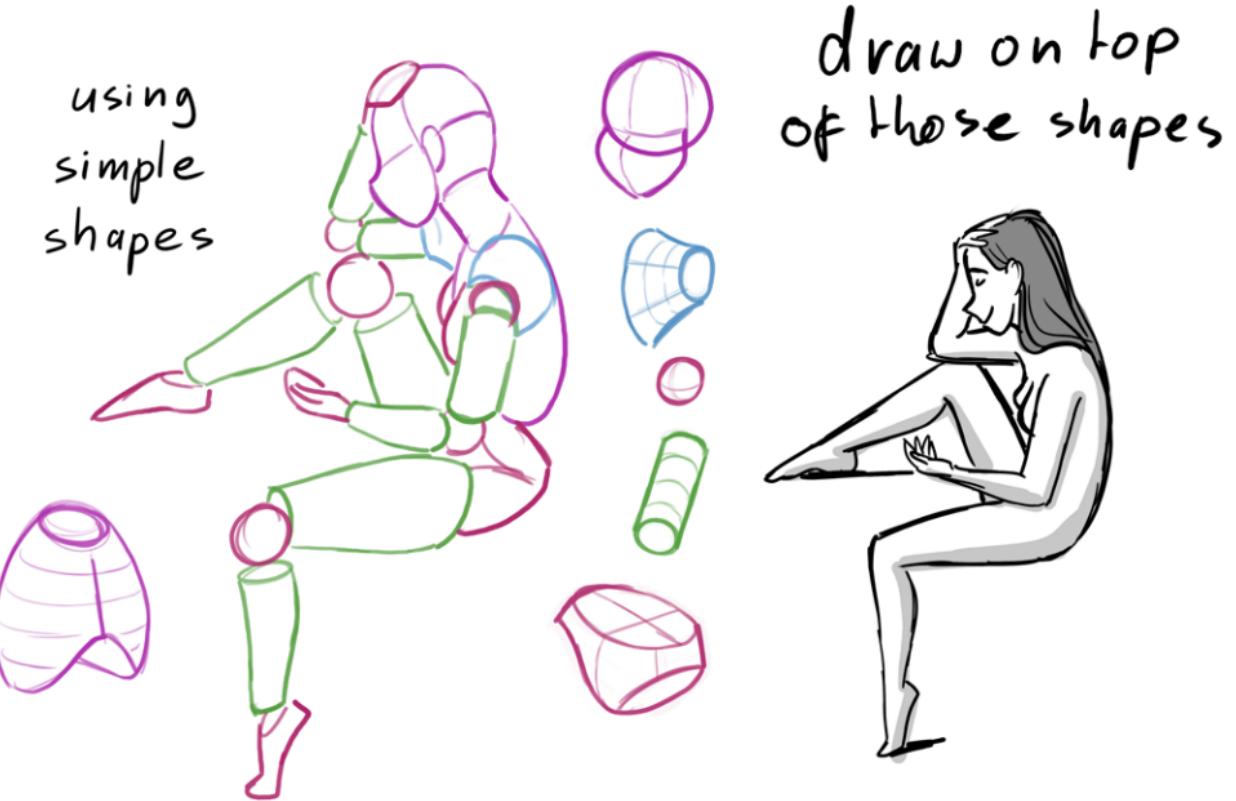
**Tip:** Also try to mix with long, medium and short lines

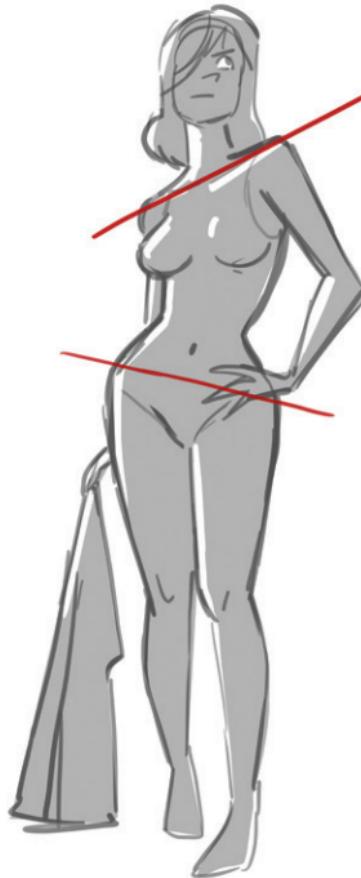
# BUILDING BLOCKS

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Sometimes it's hard to draw your figure in the three dimensions of space. It's really important to be able to think in 3D when you're drawing characters, because you don't want your characters to look stiff and static. If you use basic shapes that are easy to turn around in 3D, it will get a lot easier. After a

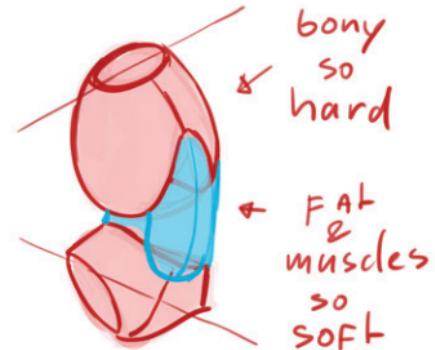
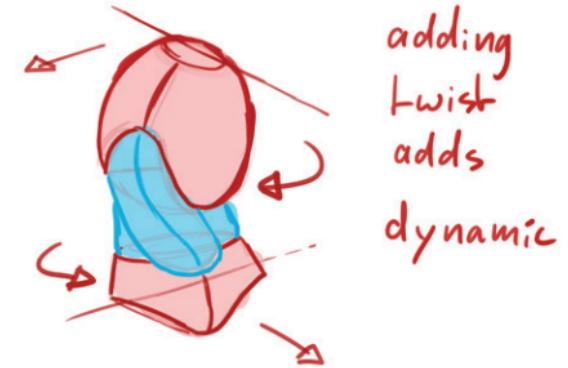
while you will learn to think in those shapes. The most basic shapes you should use to build your figure with are a sphere, cylinder and a cube. Try drawing some difficult poses with only those three shapes. I think this is a great way to understand how you can create a sense of depth on a sheet of paper.



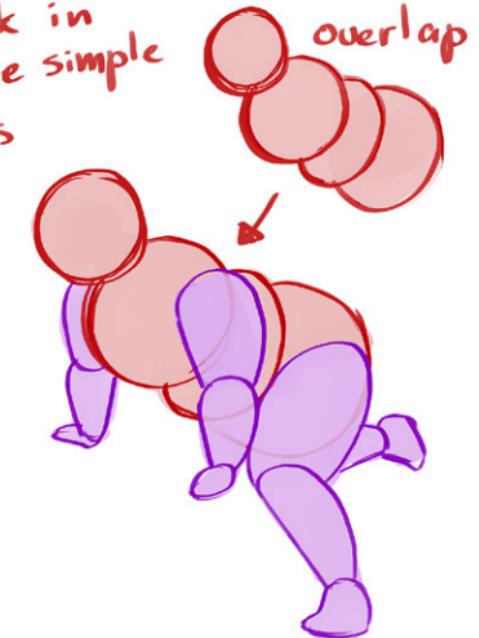


opposite  
angles

OR

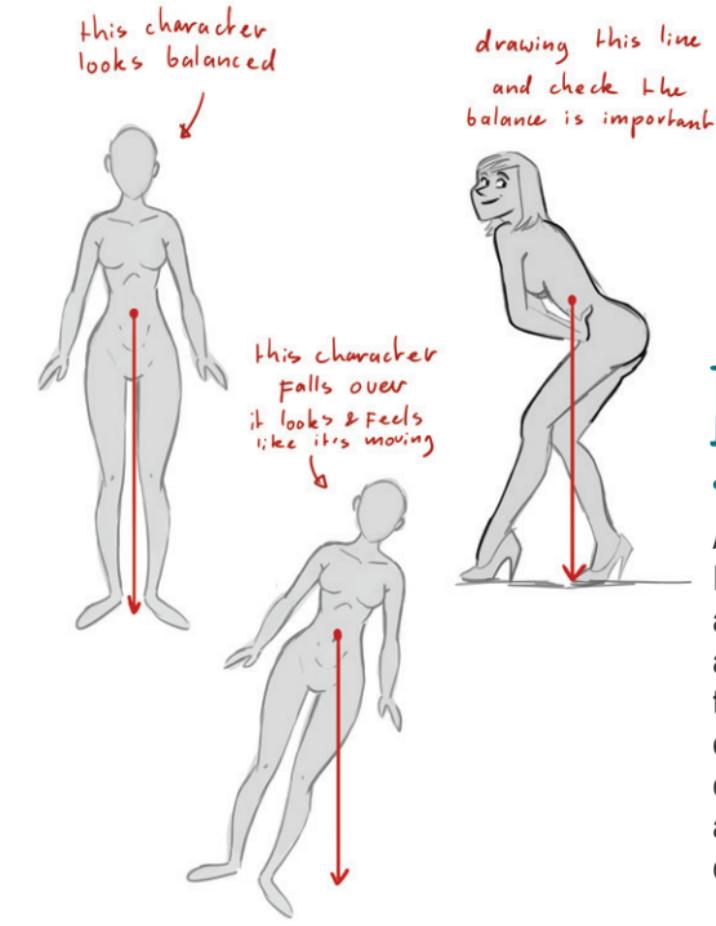
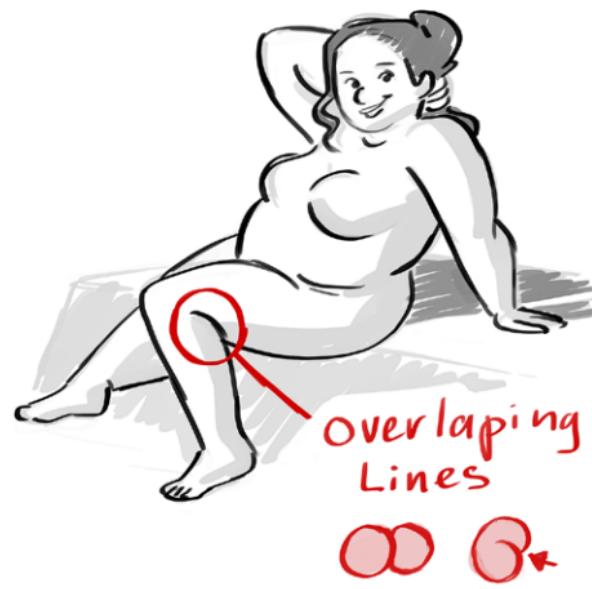


think in  
these simple  
balls



## OVERLAP

It's important to use overlap in your drawings, because this creates a sense of depth. When you put two shapes on top of each other you can clearly see which one is in the front and which one is in the back. So try to find some points where you can emphasize the lines where there is overlap. Like in the example next to this text.



## BALANCE

Always check if your character is in balance. If you work digital you could flip your canvas and if you're working on paper you can take a mirror and see the drawing flipped through the mirror. This helps seeing mistakes. In the example next to the text I show how you can check it with drawing a dot in the weightpoint and draw a line straight down. This way you can see that she isn't toppling over.

# APPLY THE POSE

I do figure drawing because eventually I want to use the knowledge for my own character poses. In the example I show how I used reference to create these poses. Most of the time I look for poses of people online, but sometimes I act them out myself and photograph it to use as reference.

Some people say using reference is bad. But I don't agree with them. Ofcourse: You shouldn't steal other peoples work. But you can look at a pose, become inspired and try to capture the idea behind it. Always try to take something as a reference and make that stronger in your drawing.

**Tip:** Try to exaggerate the pose in your drawing



start with  
a quick simple  
sketch and find  
out what makes  
the pose work



For the  
cartoon animals  
i made some  
changes to let  
it work with  
the proportions

using real poses  
and taking stuff  
for your own  
character pose

making  
quick studies  
based on  
photos



legs  
Are iconic  
And clear



interesting -o-  
arms



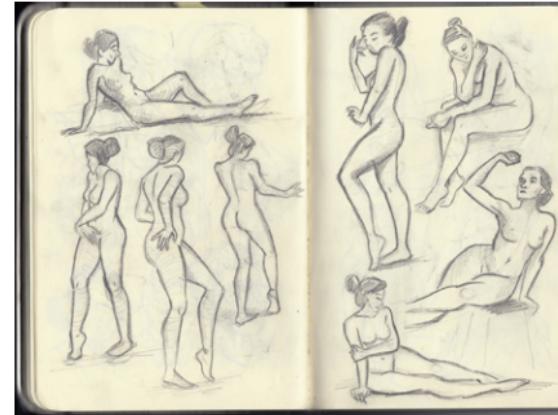
↑  
dress is  
a nice shape

used it  
in the drawing  
and tweaked  
it a bit

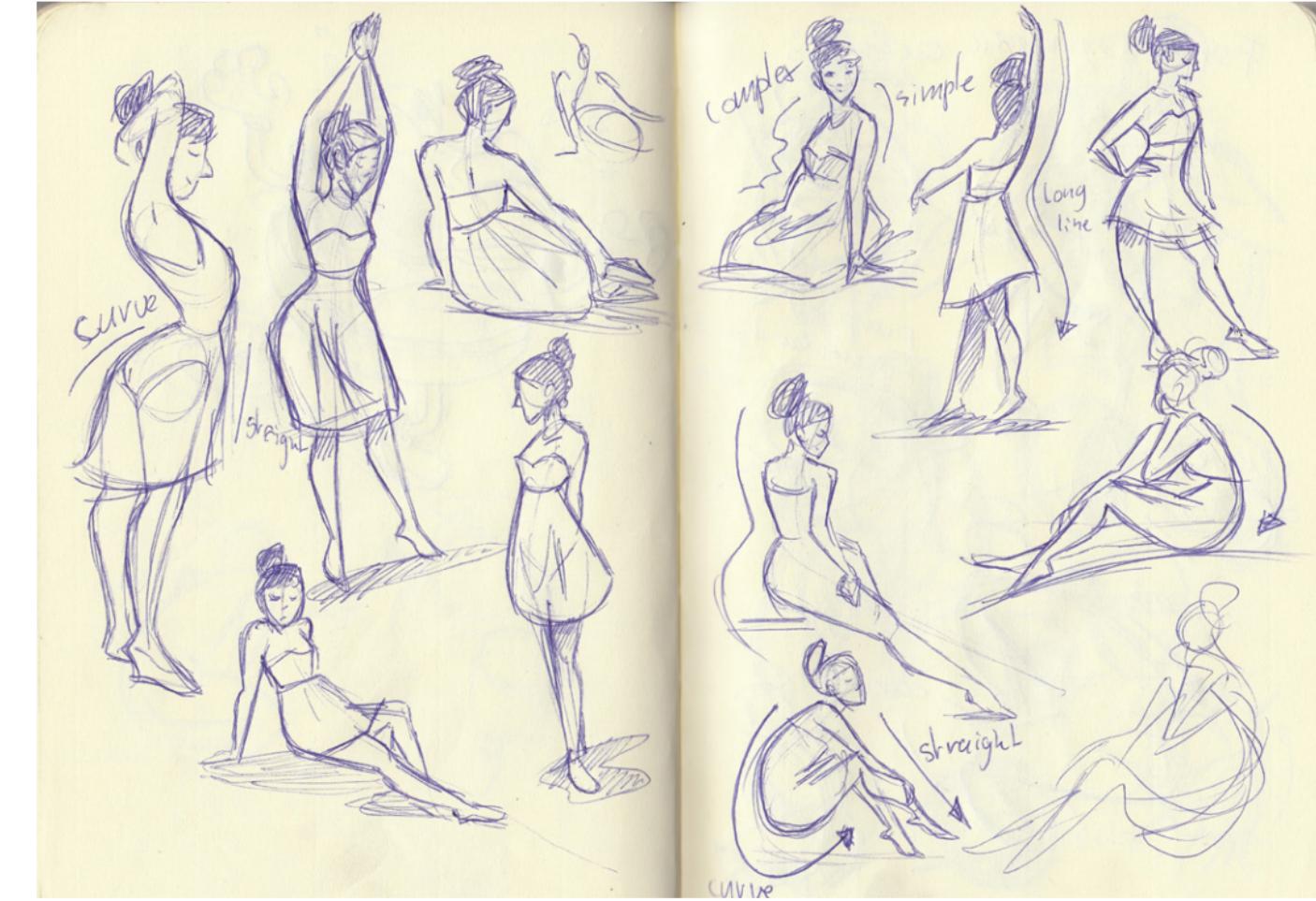
# SKETCHBOOK

I draw as much in a sketchbook as I can. Besides it's good to have a break from working at the computer all day, it also helps with learning to draw faster. It's so easy on your computer to undo and try again, but on paper you just keep going after a mistake. I like to draw with fineliners or a cheap

**Tip:** Always have a sketchbook with you



biro because you can't erase those lines. Remember that a sketchbook isn't a portfolio, but it's a book where it's OK to make mistakes and learn from it. I try to find a sketchbook that has good paper quality but that isn't too expensive so that I don't feel guilty when I mess up a page.



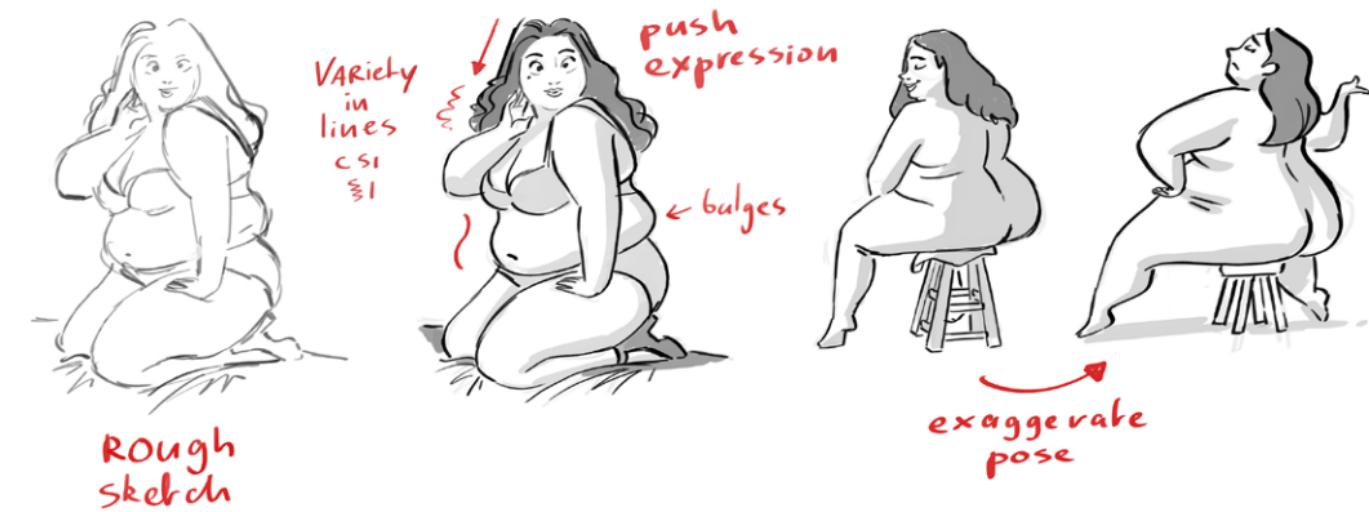


# EXAGGERATE

Try to push your poses as much as possible. When you see a model striking a pose, try to think what the story is behind that pose. When you draw the action line, start thinking about the story and how you can translate that to a line as good as possible. So you actually don't copy the figure of the model but you try to get

the story behind it and exaggerate that in the drawing. So, always try to make the drawing stronger than the real thing. That's the fun part of drawing: you are in control of how it looks. "Push it until it breaks" is a mantry I keep telling myself. When I think I got to far I push it a bit back in a new one.

**Tip: Push it until it breaks**



# GALLERY

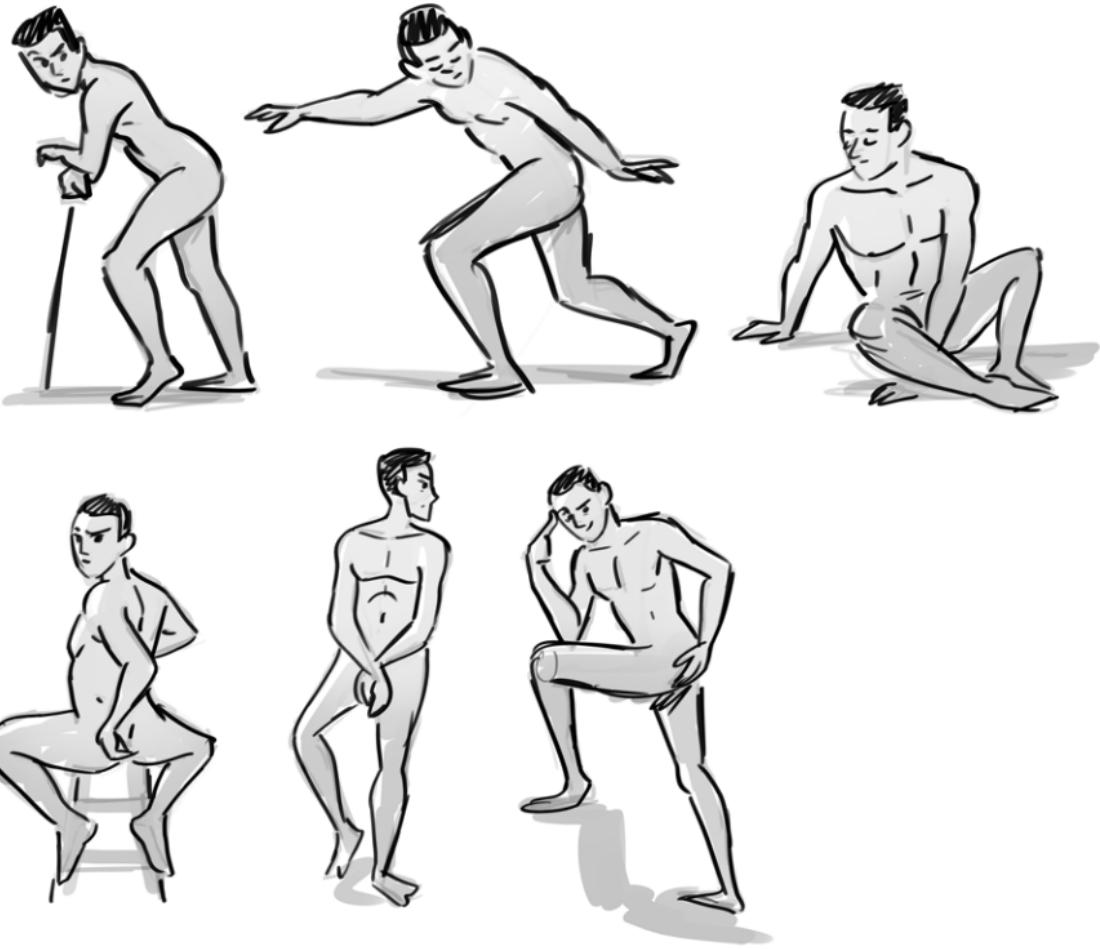
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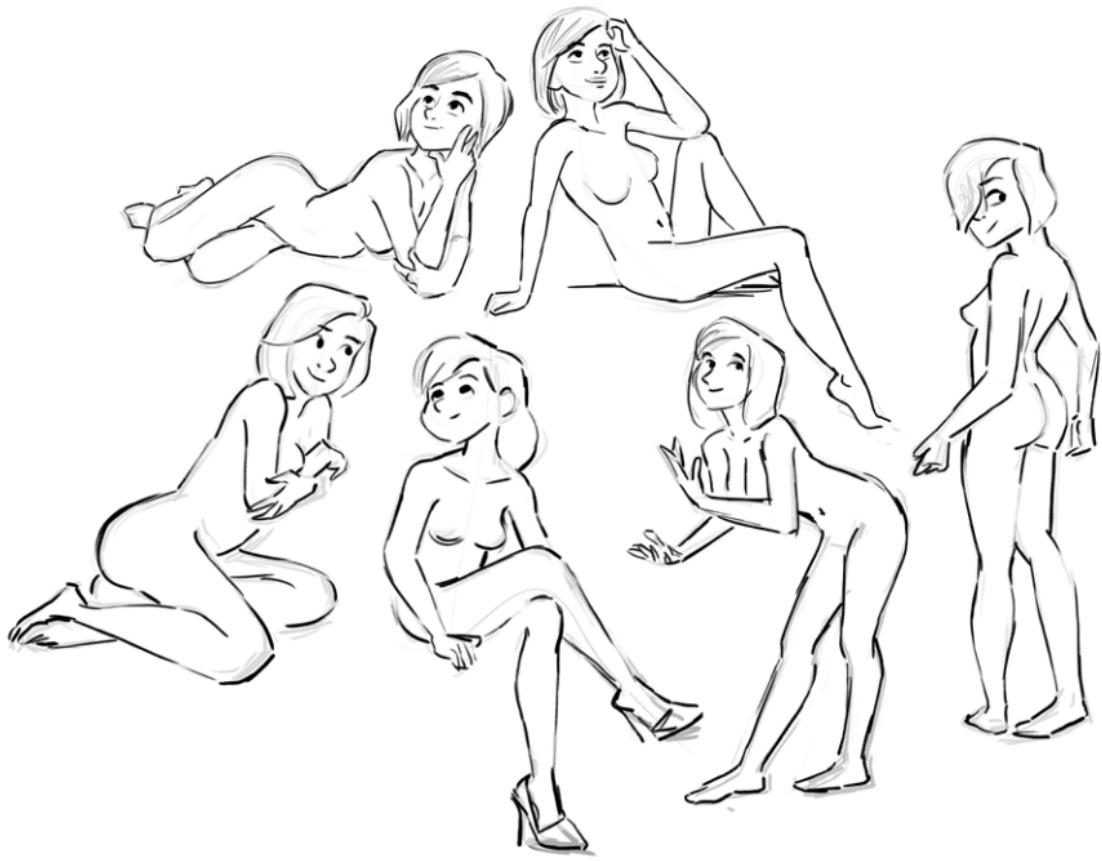
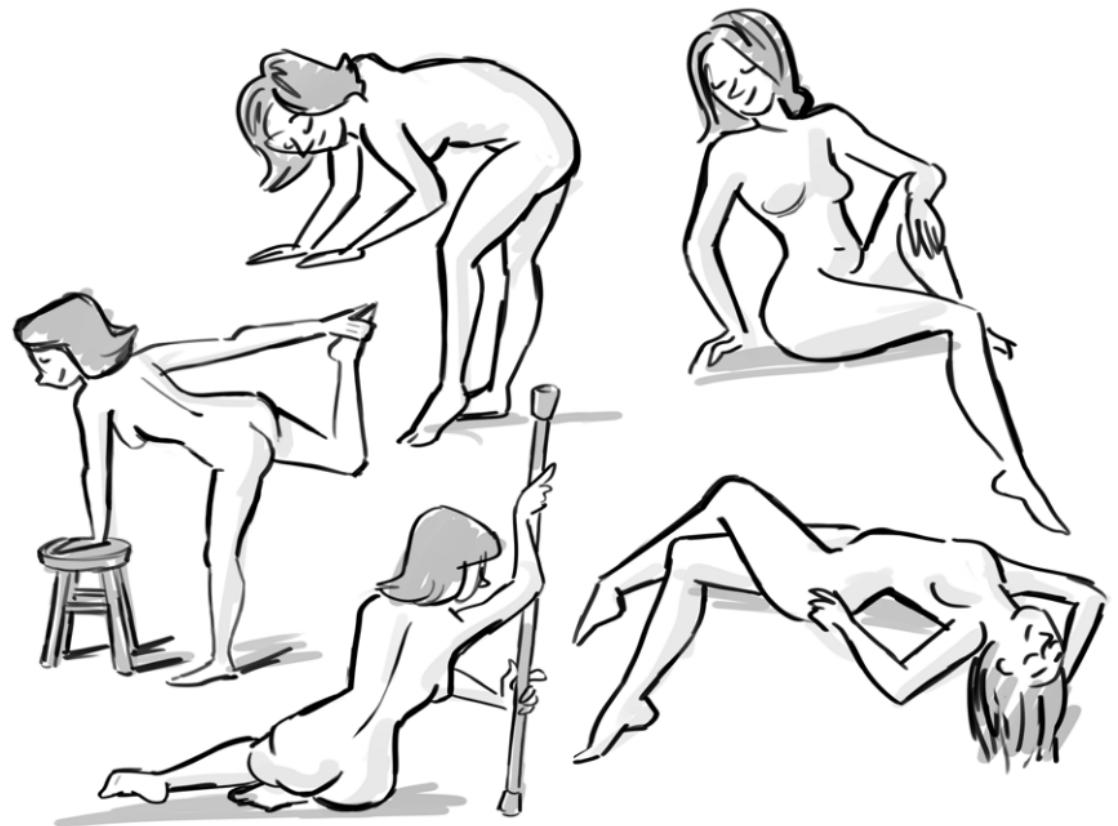
Here are some more of my drawings. Try looking at them and think about the anatomy, construction, line of action, overlap, exaggeration and more you can think of. Also look at other people's figure drawing work. A lot of artist are posting their work on instagram so find for some hastags about figure drawing

to follow. It's also good to make a habit of sharing your work on social media so you can meet and connect with other people who are doing the same. I hope you enjoyed this book and show me some figure drawings you have made! Also let me know if you have any questions about drawing.

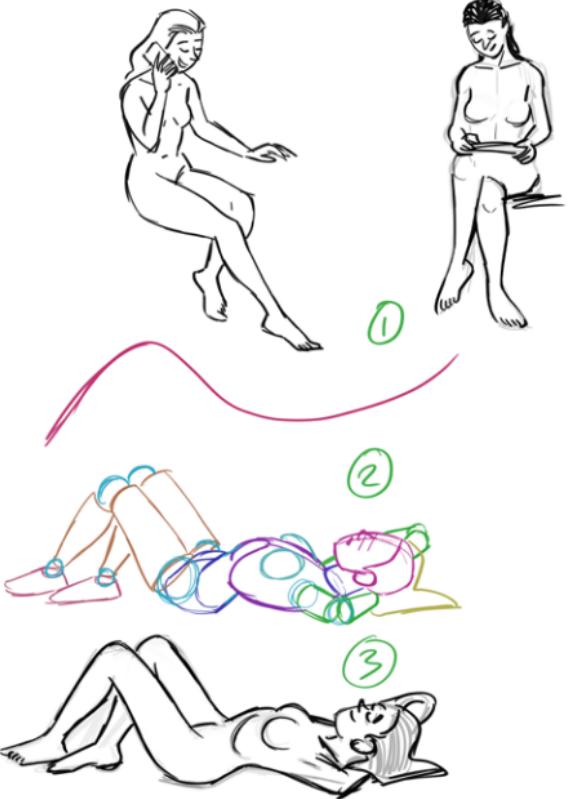
**Tip: Analyze other people's figure drawing**











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