

If you can't get to life drawing lessons, these drawing exercises will help to loosen you up. Drawing is the most basic form of art-making and is a skill that can be developed - and the best way to develop it is through practice. Try to draw for at least 30 minutes every day and draw as much as possible from life, no matter how uninteresting it may seem. Your observation skills will improve and so will your ability to draw well. Remember to draw what you see, not what you THINK you see!



FIGURE DRAWING EXERCISE - BLOCKING IN FORMS

Capture quick poses and movement in figure drawing by making your sketch time no longer than 30 seconds per pose. 30 seconds? Yes, 30 seconds! It sounds crazy to do a sketch that quickly, but since you haven't got time to think about unimportant details, it will force you make more decisive strokes and will add energy to your drawings.

Draw with your whole arm, standing comfortably back from the easel. If working small, use as much arm and hand movement as possible.

Ask the model to change their pose every 30 seconds. Remember, this won't become a finished piece but should capture the essentials of the pose. When you return to longer poses, remember the decisiveness as you sketched these short poses, and try to re-create some of that sensation in your future drawing.

CONTINUOUS CONTOUR LINE DRAWING

The idea here is to create a drawing where you never lift your pencil from the paper. Start at one point and follow the outline of the object or model. Focus on what you are drawing as much as the drawing itself and don't stop moving your hand when you look up.

CONTINUOUS BLIND CONTOUR LINE DRAWING

In this exercise, look only at the subject that you are drawing and not at the paper. Try to coordinate your hand and eyes to work together, recording the lines as your eyes follow them. The idea here is to train your hand and eyes to work in unison. As you do more blind contour line drawings you will get better and begin seeing some wonderful, fluid lines.

GESTURE DRAWING

In this exercise you want to get as much information down on the paper in the shortest amount of time. Make sure you have plenty of paper and a timer on hand. Start by doing your first sketch in 10 seconds. Repeat the exercise until you feel comfortable then increase the timer to 40 seconds.

Be bold and forget about the mistakes that you're making. Keep up the speed with which you drew at 20 seconds. Increase the time again to 2 minutes after you have completed about 10 drawings at 40 seconds.

You should begin to notice improvement in your line quality as you become more confident with your drawing.

DRAW THE NEGATIVE SPACE

In this exercise you will be drawing the space around the object, negative space, rather than the object itself. First try using a solid marking to create a very flat looking finished product. I would also suggest doing some where you draw the negative space more realistically. And, don't forget to focus on looking at what you are drawing as much as the drawing itself. Try this exercise in conjunction with the Continuous Contour Line Drawing and see if you can end at the correct point on the page... it's harder to do than it sounds.

VALUE DRAWING EXERCISE

Usually when drawing we begin sketching the outline of the object we are drawing. In this exercise, do not draw a single line. Instead, simply shade using your favorite drawing utensil and build the drawing up this way. I suggest using charcoal or something large that will allow you to put your shading down quickly. You can always erase or add white Conte if your shading gets too dark. You should still be looking at what you are drawing as much as the drawing itself and do not stop moving your hand when you look up.

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