

CARTOON DRAWING

101



Karpour

www.ohnitsch.net

Yamavu

yamavu.artspots.com

Henrieke

henrieke.deviantart.com

HANDOUT

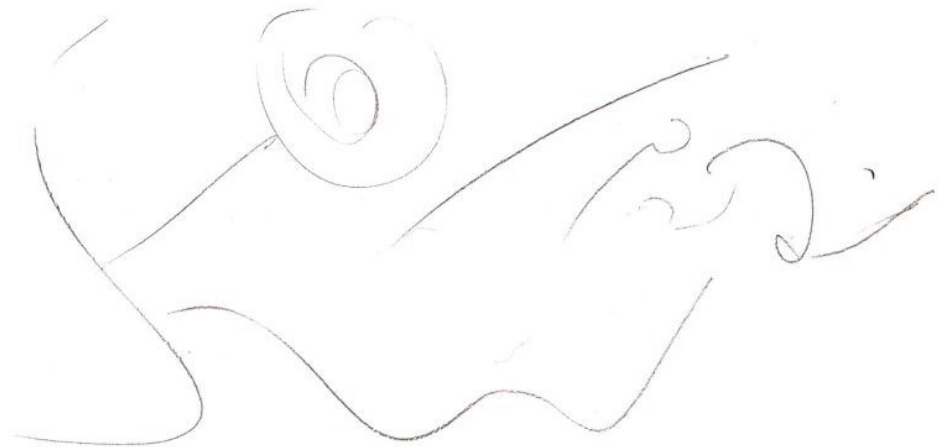
EUROFURENCE 14, 2008

Basics

Starting to draw is not too difficult, grab a sheet of paper and a pencil and lets begin.

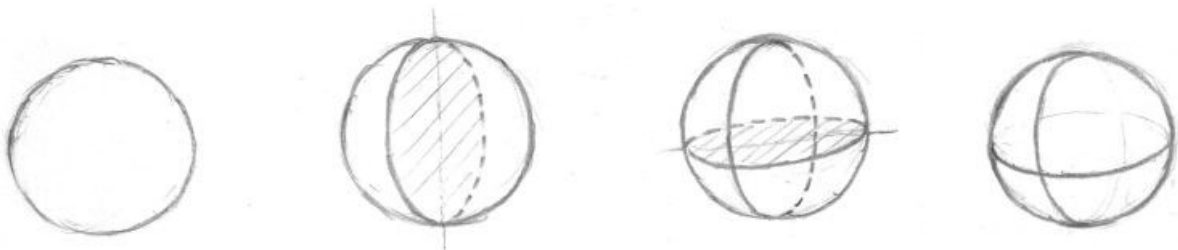
Start doing scribbles and get used to drawing forms. Just in case you haven't used a pencil for drawing since school. **Doodle some random forms**, straight and curvy lines.

It shouldn't take you too long to **draw a circle**. Doesn't need to be a geometrically perfect one. Try to sketch loosely instead of making the circle out of one flawless line.



The most important thing you need to learn when you start drawing is to **think in 3D**. When you're drawing, you're not just putting plain lines on your paper - think of real shapes, which you could hold and see from all sides!

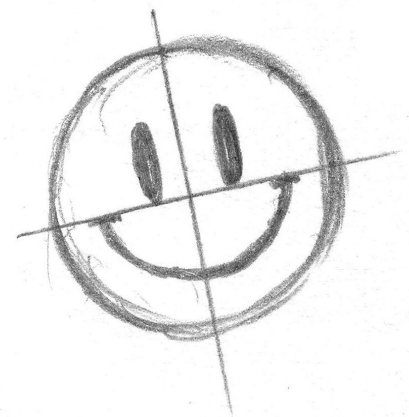
This will help you to make your characters appear real, instead of just a flat piece of paper. There are some basic methods and guidelines to help you with getting this three-dimensional feel to your drawings. It might take a while to learn, but once you manage to imagine the shapes, it will be a good start for all your drawings.



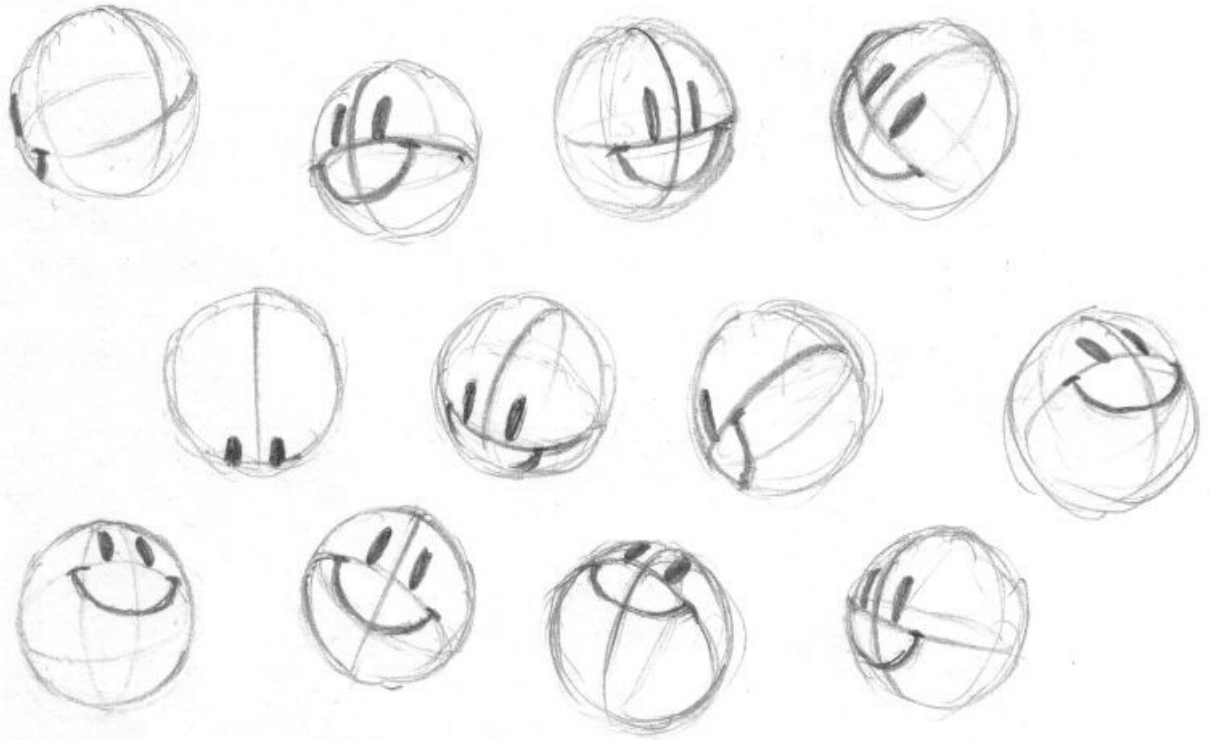
1. Draw a circle.
2. Now try to think of this circle as a sphere. Draw a line around the length of it, like it would be cut in half. The ellipse you've drawn is always precisely in the middle of the circle.
3. Now draw a line the same way, but this time to cut the sphere horizontally in half.
4. Now you have a drawing of a 3D sphere. The lines you've drawn on the circle are helpful guidelines to understand the shape. By changing the shape of the ellipses, you'll change the way the sphere is tilted. Try it out!

Take the sphere and draw it right from up front. Yep, that's a circle with a cross through it. (but we were imagining it was a sphere, right?)

Draw something simple on the sphere, like this smiley. Use the guidelines you've created to make the drawing easier!



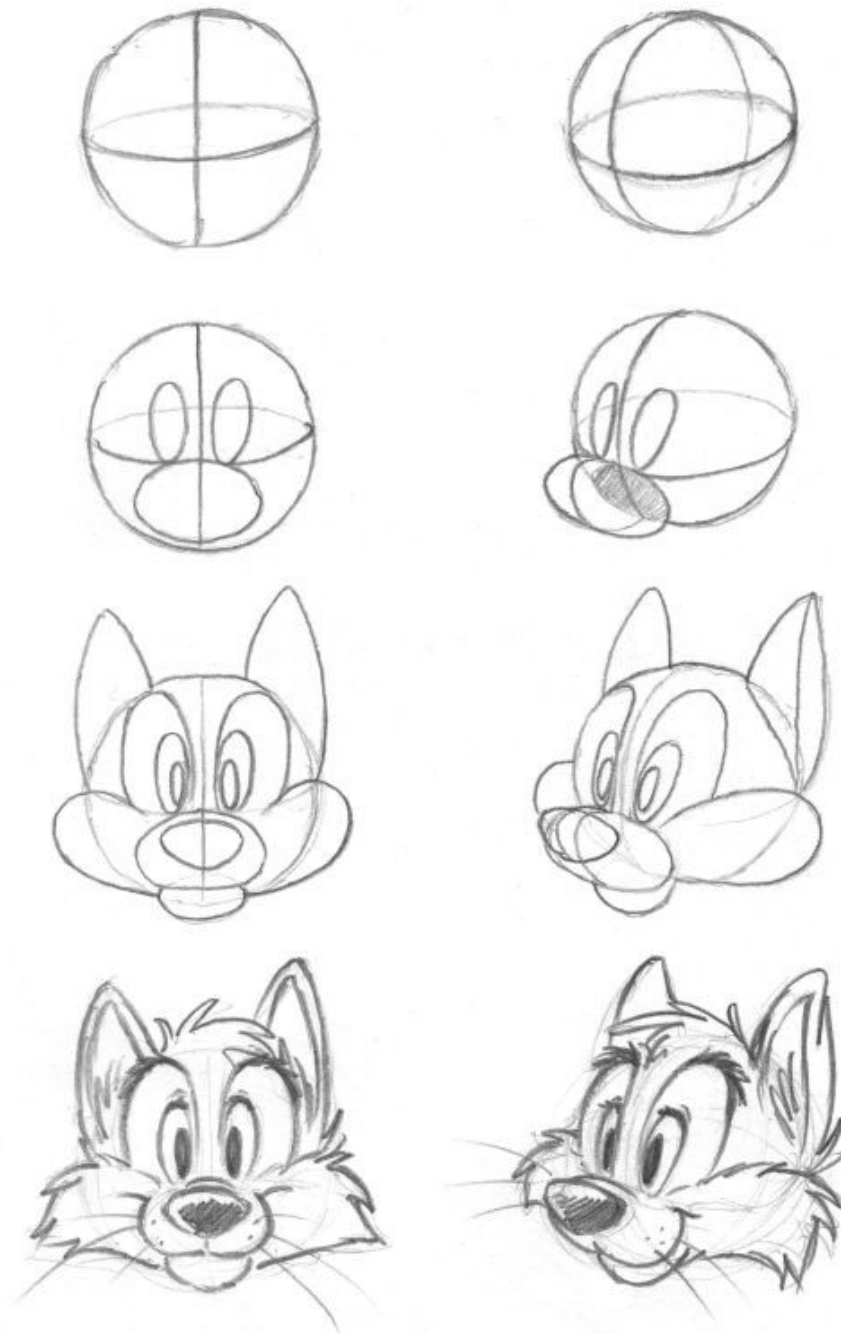
Now take this smiley, and draw it in any position you can think up. Build the spheres up the same way as you did before. Use the guidelines to find out where to put the smiley!



Character Construction

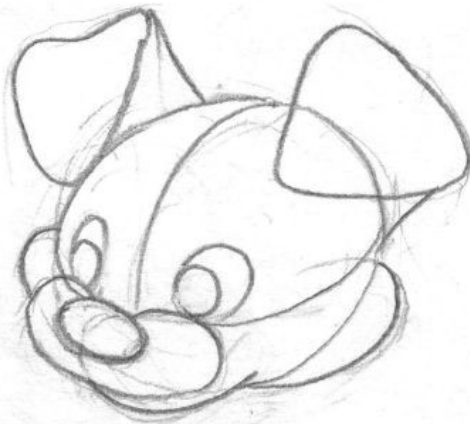
Here's where the fun starts. As you guessed it, cartoon characters are built up from shapes like the sphere.

The sphere is an easy base to use for a cartoon head, like this tomcat below:



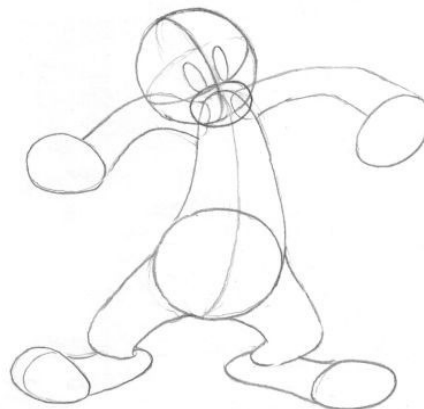
As you can see, this character is actually composed of multiple basic shapes. Using this "recipes" for each character, it's easy to draw the character in any perspective and pose you want. Once again, just like with the sphere, you have to think of all the shapes as being three-dimensional. Try to imagine where the snout attaches to the face, and how the eyes are placed on the 'skull'. This is where the guidelines you drew come in handy. Mostly, the eyes are placed right on top of the horizontal line, and the muzzle is right under it.

Besides a sphere, all sorts of shapes can be used for the base of the head. Egg-like shapes and ovals are often used. By adding different shapes to these bases, you can create every character you can imagine. The basic shape is always used to put the eyes and the main features on.



Building up the body works the same way as with the head- use different, solid shapes to create the body. Try to imagine the floor the character is standing on, just like you've imagined the shapes to be three-dimensional.

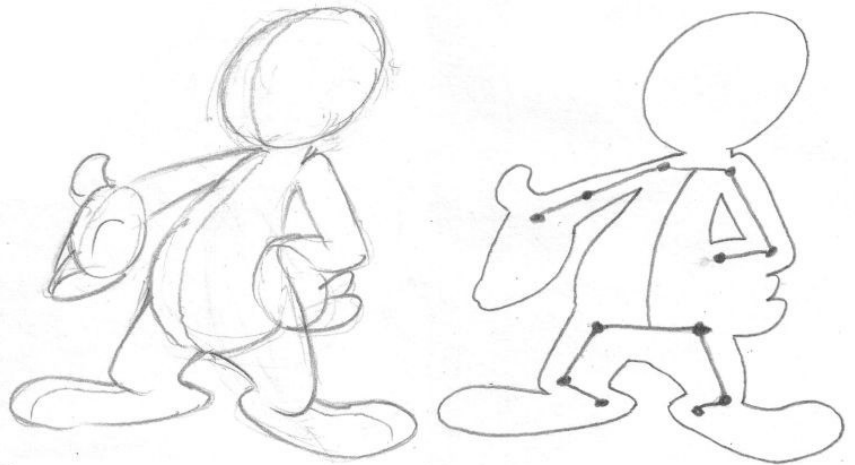
Don't lose your mind on details, before you've worked out the basic construction!



Cartoon anatomy

Even though cartoons aren't exactly realistic, they have to be believable somehow. To make a character look like a living being and not like a heap of lines or rubber hoses, you need to know a few things about the anatomy of real creatures.

Even a cartoon character has a skeleton. In general, like with in a real skeleton, it only bends at the joints. You won't have to learn every single bone a skeleton has out of heart, but keep in mind that everybody has a spine, elbows, and knees. It's very useful to study real animals and the way they're built, you can even simply look at the way your arm is attached to your body. A lot of good cartoon artists can draw realistic animals as well, because they need to know how real anatomy works, if they want to apply it to their cartoon characters.

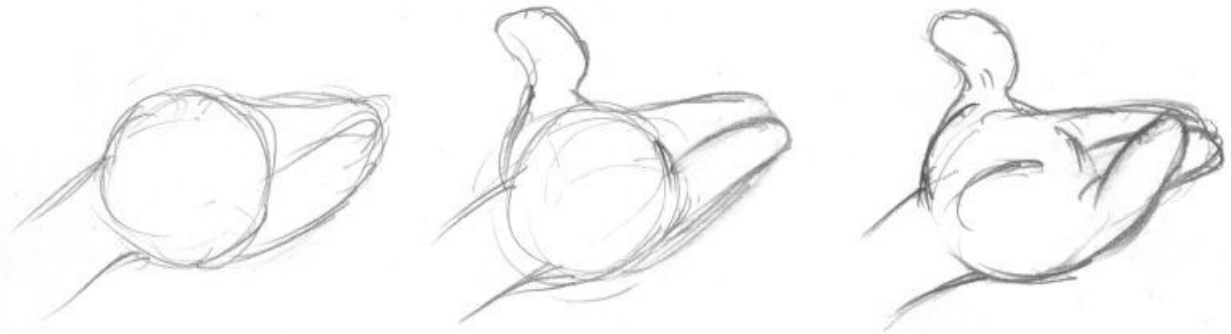


Here you see how a character is built up from both a skeleton and round shapes. When you practise more you will be able to draw characters, without having to work out an entire skeleton first. It is always very useful for practise or difficult poses! Note that the tail and the neck are a part of the spine. The spine is bendable, but don't break it! Drawing a simple line for a spine will help you to find out where to put the neck and the tail.

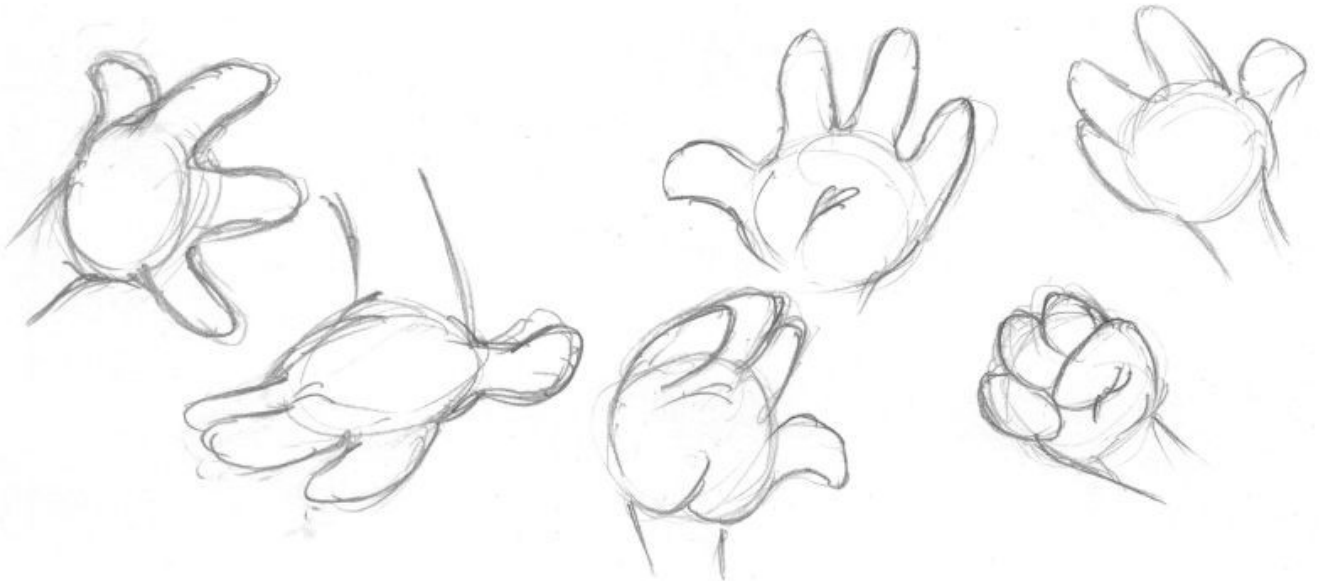
This character has a more realistic animal anatomy. Note that the number of joints stays the same! A more humanized character mostly walks on flat feet, but the basic way the legs and paws are constructed stays the same.



Hands and Feet



Hands are not very difficult to draw. As with the whole body, they're a collection of basic shapes connected by joints. There are many ways to draw hands, but most cartoon characters have pudgy fingers, and so only four of them. These simplified hands are much easier and quicker to draw, and so used a lot in animation.



If you don't get hands right for the first time, keep trying. Try to train with 3-5 hand poses you might often use.

Feet basically work the same way as hands. Draw a base and put the toes on them. Since characters mostly stand on the ground with their feet, it's very important to imagine how these should be placed on the floor. If you do this right, the character will appear to be standing on a solid ground, instead of floating in space. Try to keep in mind that the feet hold up the entire weight of the character!



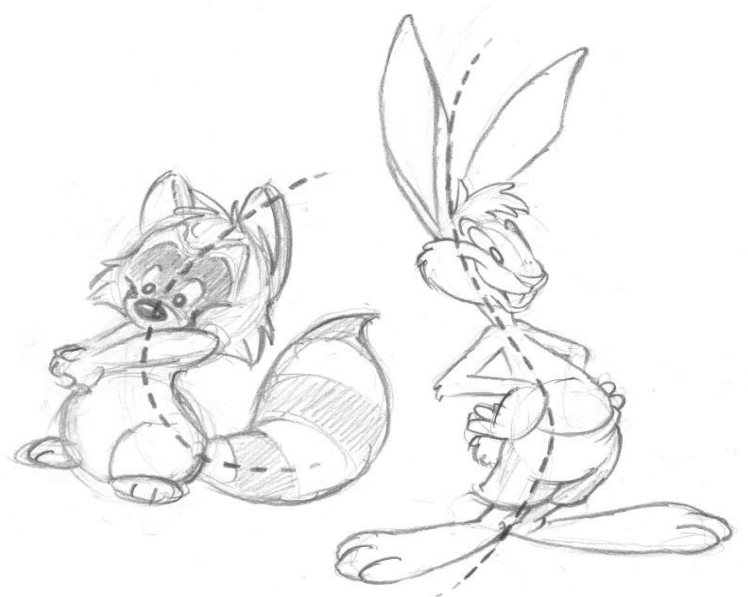
Advanced Methods

Once you know the basics to construct cartoon characters, here are some good methods so make them more lively!

Line of Action

The line of action is an imaginary line flowing through the body of the character you're drawing. This line shows the 'direction the action is following', and makes the poses and actions stronger when used the right way. Even though it's called line of action, the line will also improve drawings of characters who are just standing still.

The line should always be flowy- with no more curves in it than a simple S-shape as shown above. When constructing a character, draw the line first, and build the body around it.



Silhouette



Silhouettes are a great way to check a character's uniqueness and recognizability. When the character is filled with black, is it still clear who it is and what he is doing?

This is also related to the concept of negative space, if you ever read about it.

Other tips on drawing

- Look at your drawing in a mirror. This will give you a fresh look on your drawing, and you'll notice errors easily. It also helps to hold your drawing upside down, or to lay it away and work on something else for a while.
- Another good way to use a mirror, is to put it on your desk so you can see how your face acts when you're making different expressions.
- Try to make quick sketches with a (ballpoint)pen instead of a pencil every now and then. Because you can't use an eraser, it helps you to look better at the main shape instead of details.
- Try to recreate a picture from a cartoon or comic by constructing it from scratch. This way you'll learn to understand how the picture was built up. Tracing lines won't help you improve!
- Experiment a lot!
- Etc etc

Further Reading

Cartoon Animation by Preston Blair, published by Walter Foster

Drawing the Looney Tunes by Warner Bros.

The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards

And most important-- watch a lot of cartoons, read a lot of comics! Practise a lot and have fun with drawing!