



theDesignerStarterKit

► Learning like a child: step-by-step

by theDesignSketchbook.com

All children are artists.
The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.

- Pablo Picasso

Who is this guide for?



To any beginner passionate about design

[Learning how to draw](#) often starts as a solitary journey, full of unanswered questions. If you're searching for some advice as to where to begin, you've come to the right place. Maybe you've been considering a design career in the fields of fashion, transportation, product design, architecture, or the gaming industry, but simply don't know where to start – if so, then this is the tutorial for you.

This guide is designed for those who want to learn the basics, and learn them fast. If you have any questions, feel free to post them at [theDesignSketchbook.com](https://thedesigndesignsketchbook.com). I'll be around to answer as best I can!

What is being a designer all about?



Telling people stories

[Art is everywhere](#); this is true nowhere more than in the field of design. A great product isn't only about functionality. It's important that great products also give people a full range of emotional experiences. A designer must be empathetic; they'll work to get to know their audience. The color, shape, contours, texture, and function of a product are carefully selected for the maximum chances of customer happiness and product success. A designer is today a storyteller*.

Designers innovate every day in order to better peoples' lives. This second, designers all over the world are drafting new ideas. Ask yourself if you want to be one of them. There is no language more universal than that of the sketch. Through a basic knowledge of drawing and personal creativity, you can potentially interact with anyone on the planet. In light of this, I guess I understand why it's said that the role of a designer is to give meaning to the world we live in.

How did I start ?



By believing I can make it

As a child, I loved drawing my favorite characters from TV shows and comic books. I impressed my friends with these drawings; they thought I was a real artist! So, of course, I thought I was good. But I was wrong. What I was really doing was copying exactly what I saw and not truly creating anything myself. I grew up and put drawing aside; I studied business instead. Then I graduated and was struck by the realization that instead of selling things to people, I wanted to create for them.

I changed my life plan and applied to a design school, armed with only my clumsy drawings as a portfolio. However, what I did have was motivation to learn to draw like the designers I'd seen in magazines! I was accepted at the school, and for the first time I learned the basics. I made a lot of mistakes, but I'd begun. With that sort of determination, my progress exponentially increased. I was 22.

And now I've started the blog theDesignSketchbook.com as a way to share with you the tips and info I wish I'd had when I was a student, or even as a child.

How do you start ?



By learning the bare minimum needed.

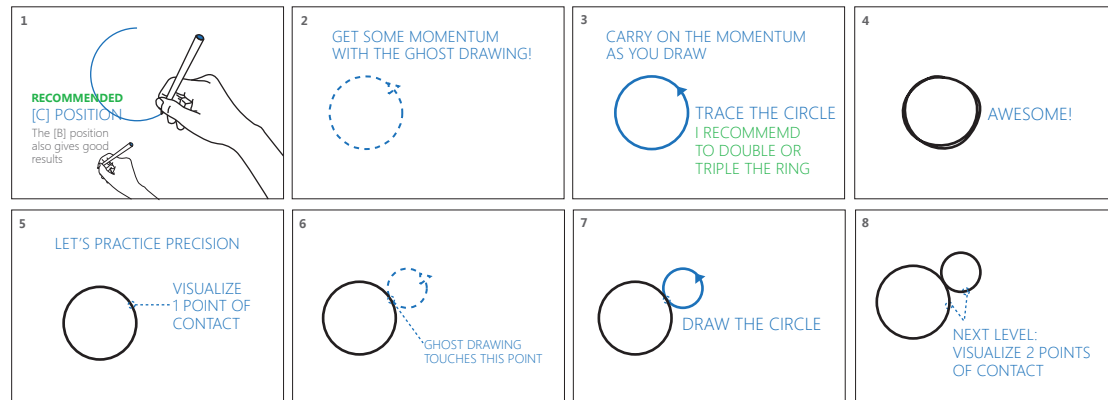
[The Designer Starter Kit](#) will produce some of the fastest results. It focuses on a few carefully selected basic lessons which are explained in a simple way. I'll show you "stroke-by-stroke" how my brain thinks while I draw. Through practice, you'll be able to absorb the knowledge I've gathered over the years and make it your own. You will prove to yourself that you too can draw.

These early lessons are so essential that they'll follow you through your whole drawing journey. And the confidence you'll gain in your skills is what will give you the drive to continue.

Is it easy to learn ?



Yes, just follow along step-by-step



PREVIEW

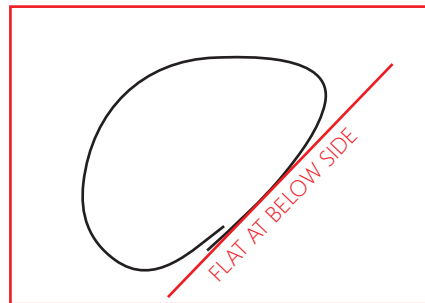
Remember learning to write your letters? You'll use guide lines in the same way, learning how to place a certain stroke after another. Each letter of the alphabet is a complex drawing, and you've succeeded in mastering 26 of them. If you know how to write, there's no reason you can't draw. Practice the basics, stay stubborn, and you'll eventually draw as naturally as you write.

But I'm really bad at drawing!



Beginner's mistakes will be rooted out

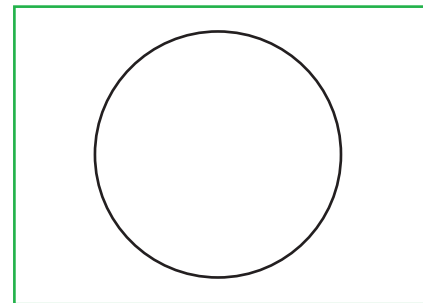
FAILED



THE POTATO CIRCLE

VS

PASS!



SINGLE RING

You will learn to recognize the usual beginner's mistakes. Even so, you may still struggle with them. But you won't have to go through this phase of frustration feeling like you've hit a wall. I'll arm you with a few tricks, as well.

Materials



A black ballpoint pen



A4 paper

START SIMPLE

- No pencil and no eraser? Does this mean I can't erase at all?
- Basically, yes.

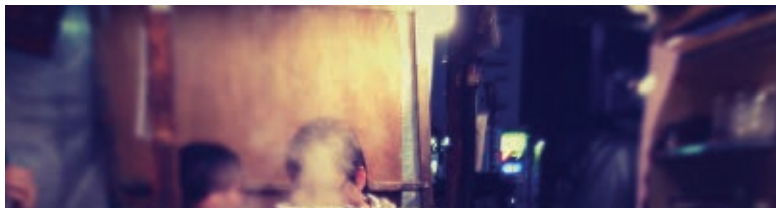
[Why am I telling you not to erase?](#) The ultimate goal of this guide is not to make nice lines or perfect circles. The real objective is that you master the correct hand movements for drawing basic shapes. If you do make a mistake, instead of erasing, re-trace the shape over again on top of the old one, or re-do it completely. Don't treat your sketches too preciously; this is only practice.

Summary



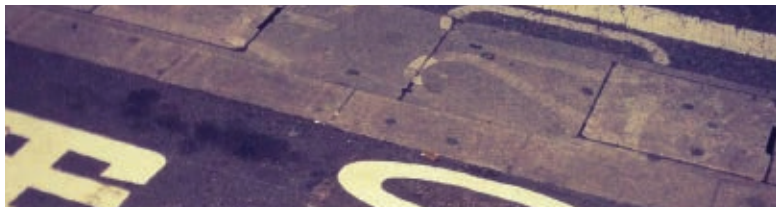
GUIDE 1

Essential tips to begin well
GETTING READY WITH 5 TIPS



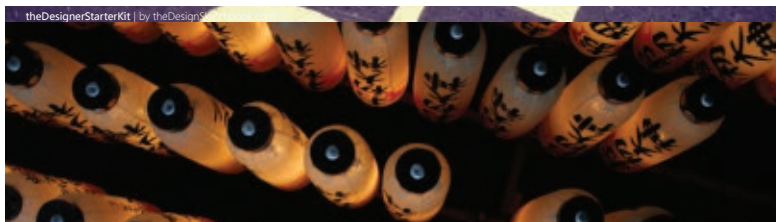
GUIDE 2

Let the game begin!
MASTERING THE PEN



GUIDE 3

LET'S FIND THE NEXT LEVEL!
GAINING A SENSE OF PROPORTION



GUIDE 4

Make your first steps forward
SEEING IN PERSPECTIVE



GUIDE 1

Essential tips to begin well

GETTING READY WITH 5 TIPS

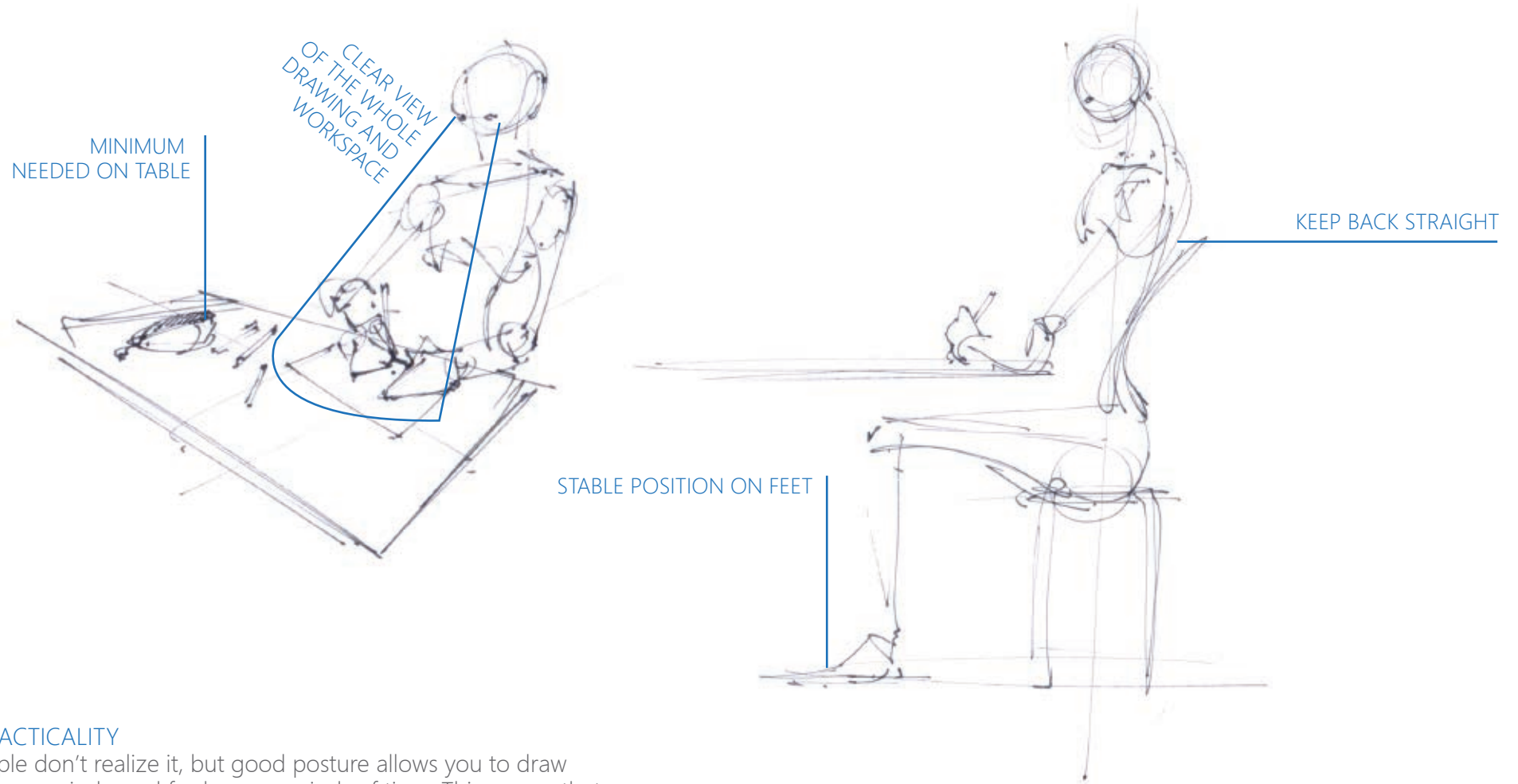
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Give me 6 hours to chop down a tree
and I will spend the first 4 sharpening the axe.

- Abraham Lincoln

TIP#1 Correct your posture? 1/2

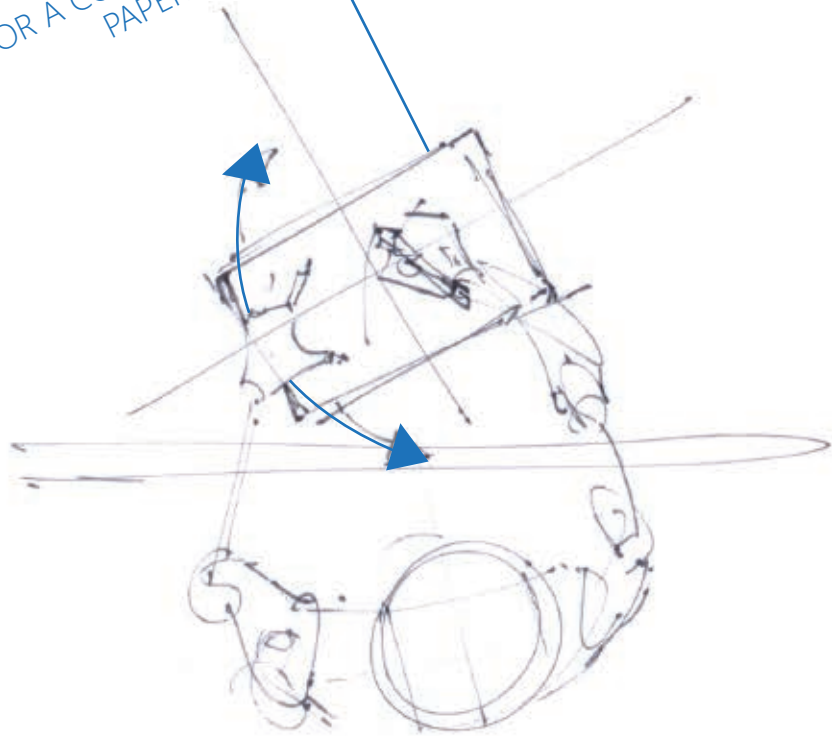


THINK PRACTICALITY

Most people don't realize it, but good posture allows you to draw faster, more precisely, and for longer periods of time. This means that you'll be able to draw longer and with better focus. Good posture will definitely allow you to improve at a faster rate.

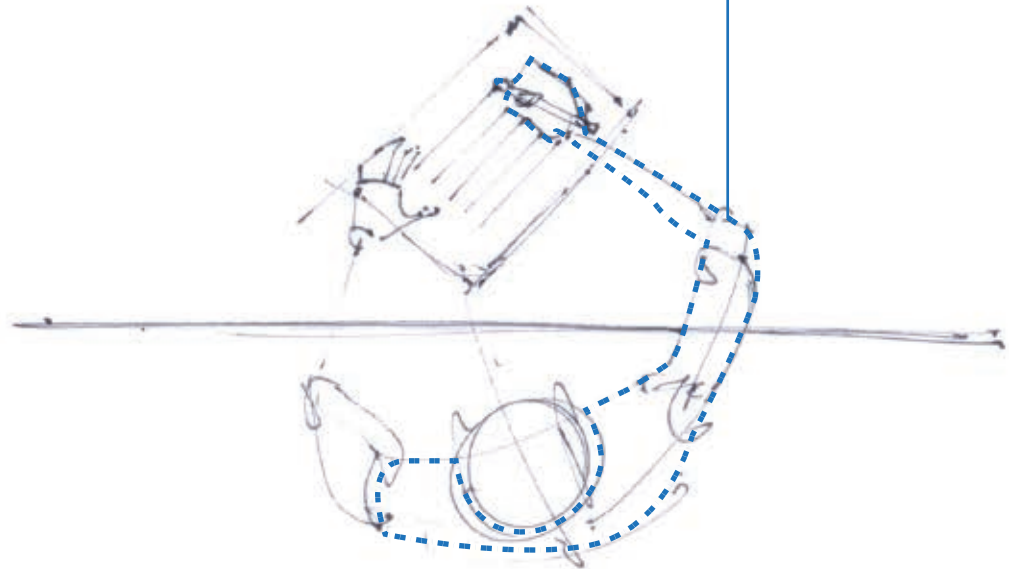
TIP#1 Correct your posture? 2/2

LOOK FOR A COMFORTABLE
PAPER ANGLE



DRAW WITH THE FULL ARM,
ELBOW NOT RESTING ON TABLE

For drawing long lines,
the chest may also move forward a bit.

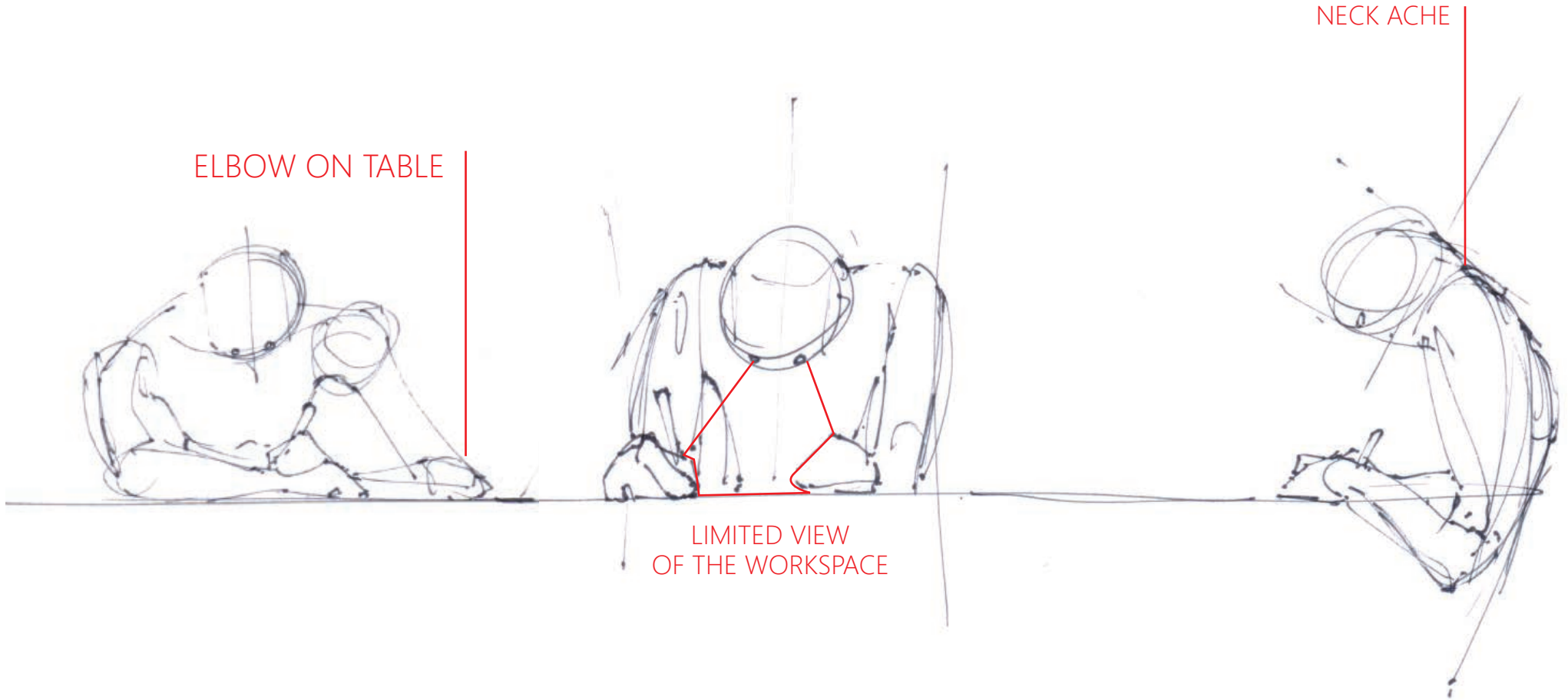


Examples of bad posture? 1/3

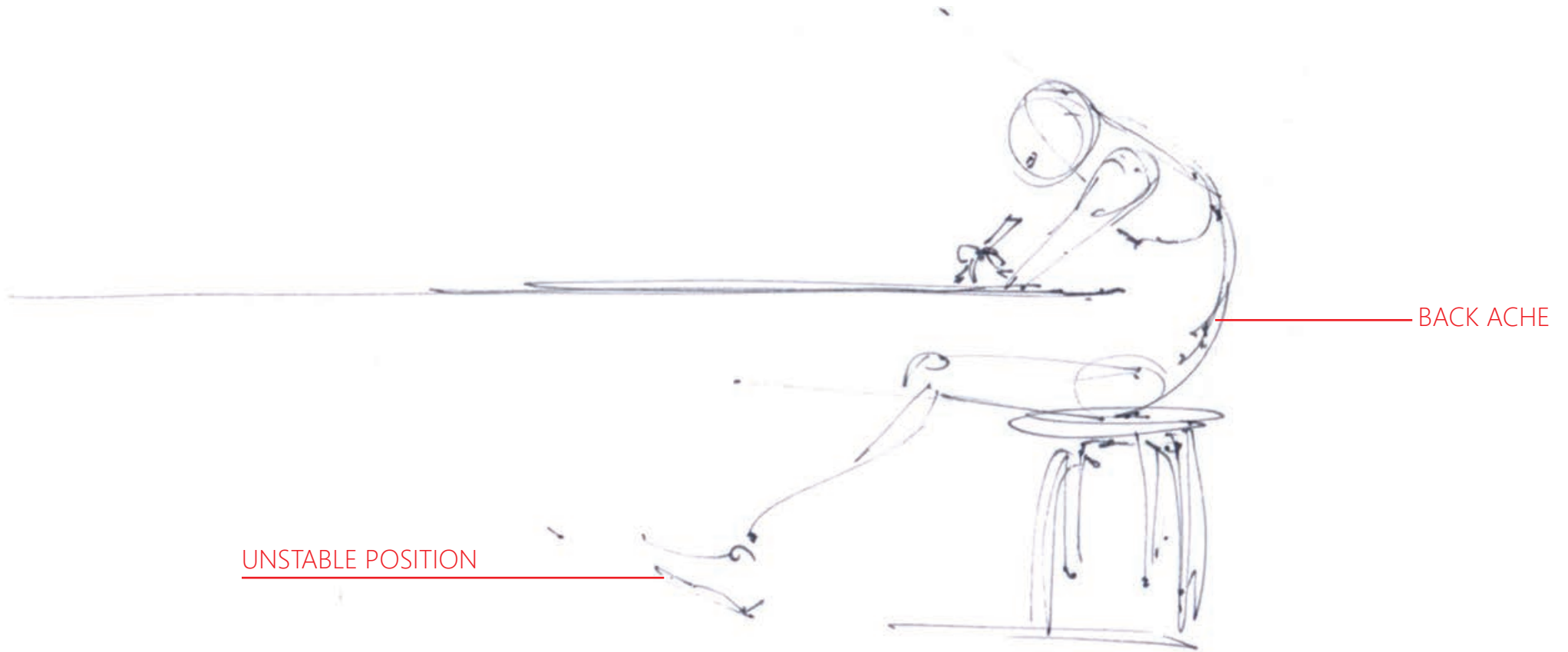
ELBOW ON TABLE

NECK ACHE

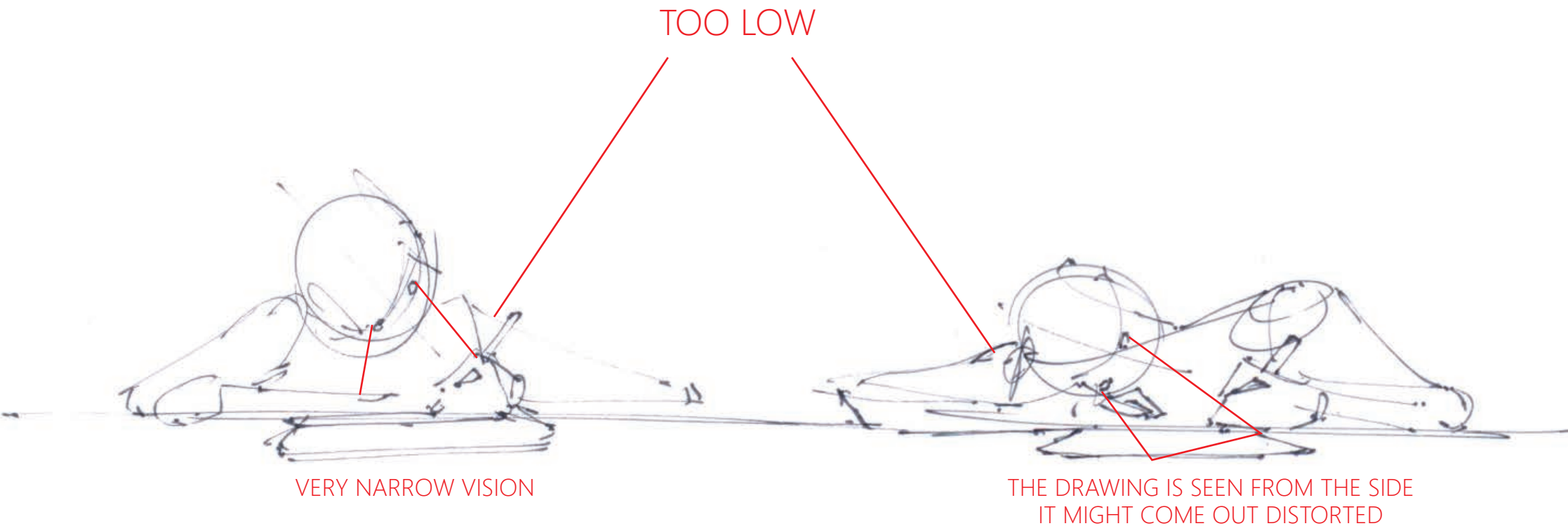
LIMITED VIEW
OF THE WORKSPACE



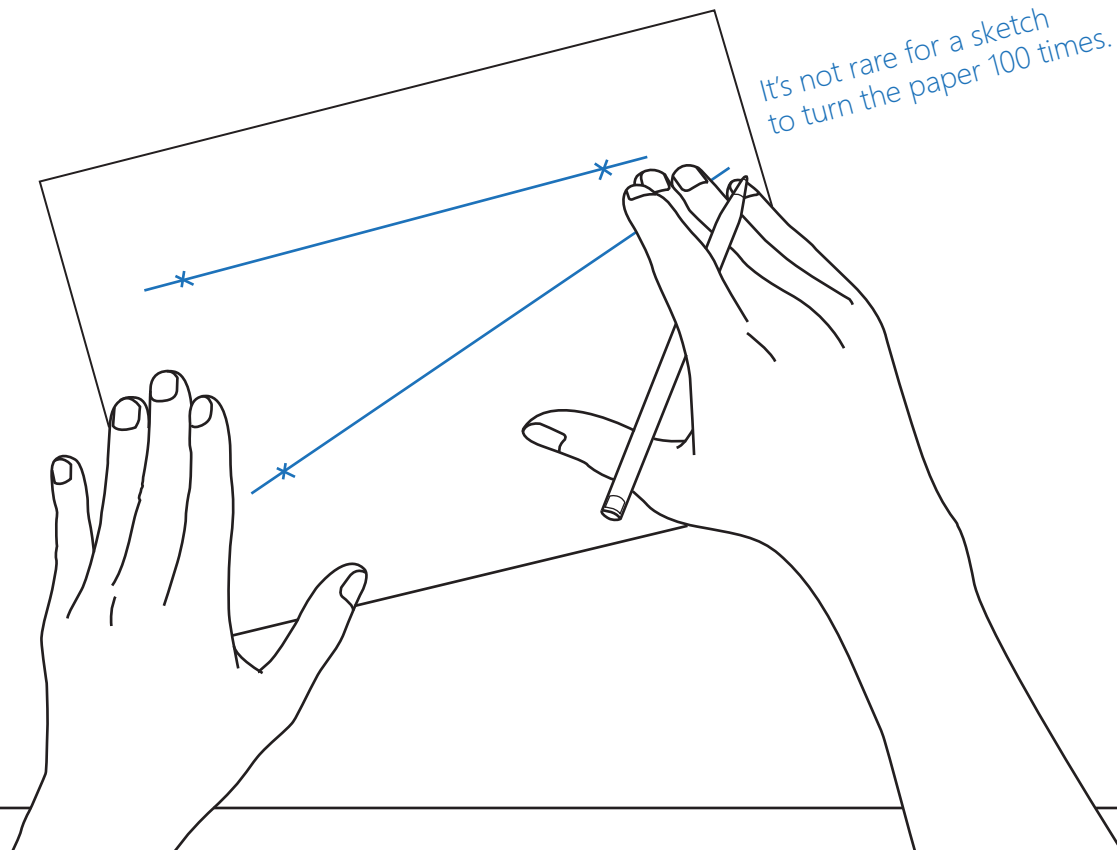
Examples of bad posture? 2/3



Examples of bad posture? 3/3



TIP#2 Turn your paper



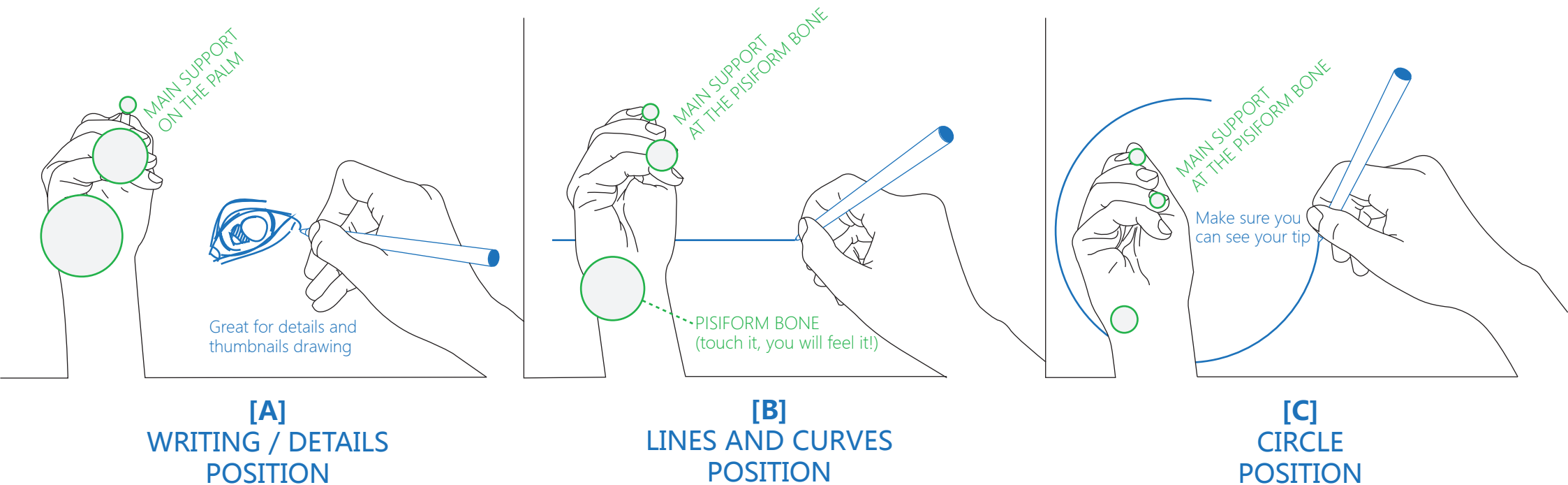
THINK TURN YOUR PAPER, NOT YOUR BODY

This will make your drawing more precise and much faster.
To keep your brain calibrated, do not focus on your paper when you turn it, but on your next line.

Video example with a small notebook here:

<http://thedesigntsketchbook.com/y-3-yohji-yamamotoadidas-mid-wedge-sneaker-sketch/>

TIP#3 Diversify your pen grip

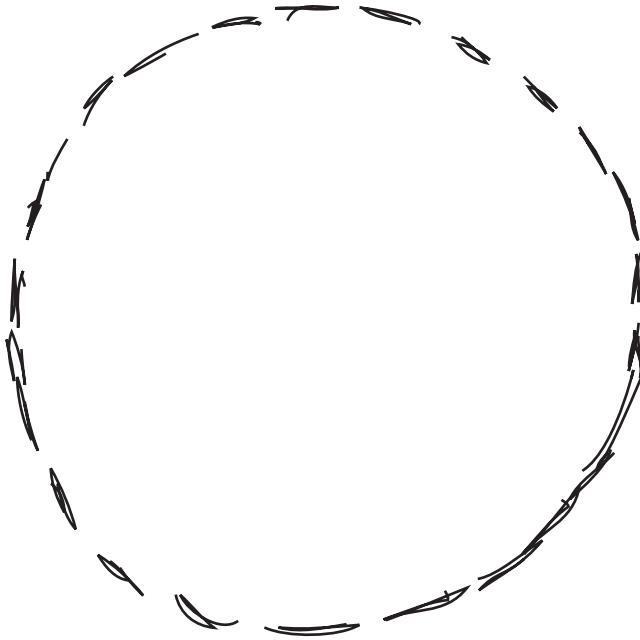


THINK STEADY MOVEMENT

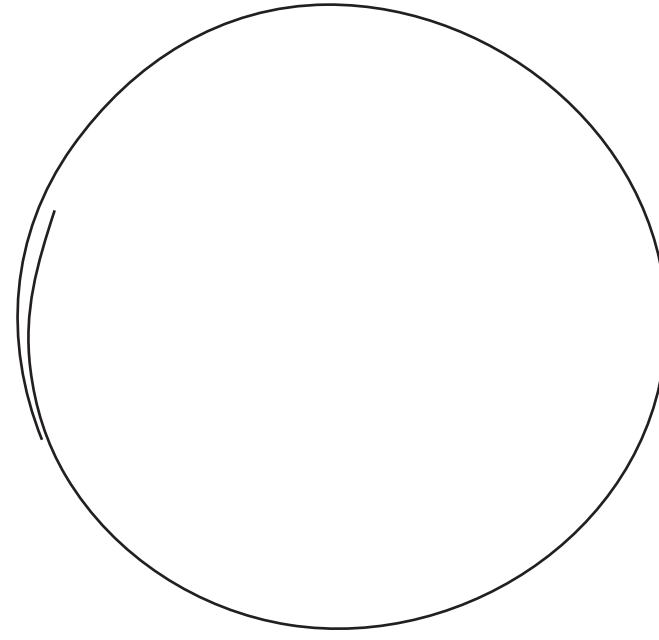
Basically, any type of drawing can be done from the standard writing position. However, there are different ways to gain comfort and precision. These positions are the ones I personally use and which give me the best results. You don't need to re-create these hand positions in exact detail (like you would for, say, learning to use chopsticks).

Think of this TIP more as general guidelines than an instruction manual. Get familiar with these pen grips, and your brain will automatically adjust to the best position for you while you draw. Once you achieve stability, you can try drawing without your palm touching the page. This is a technique that will allow you to do free sketches.

TIP#4 Make fluid lines



FAILED

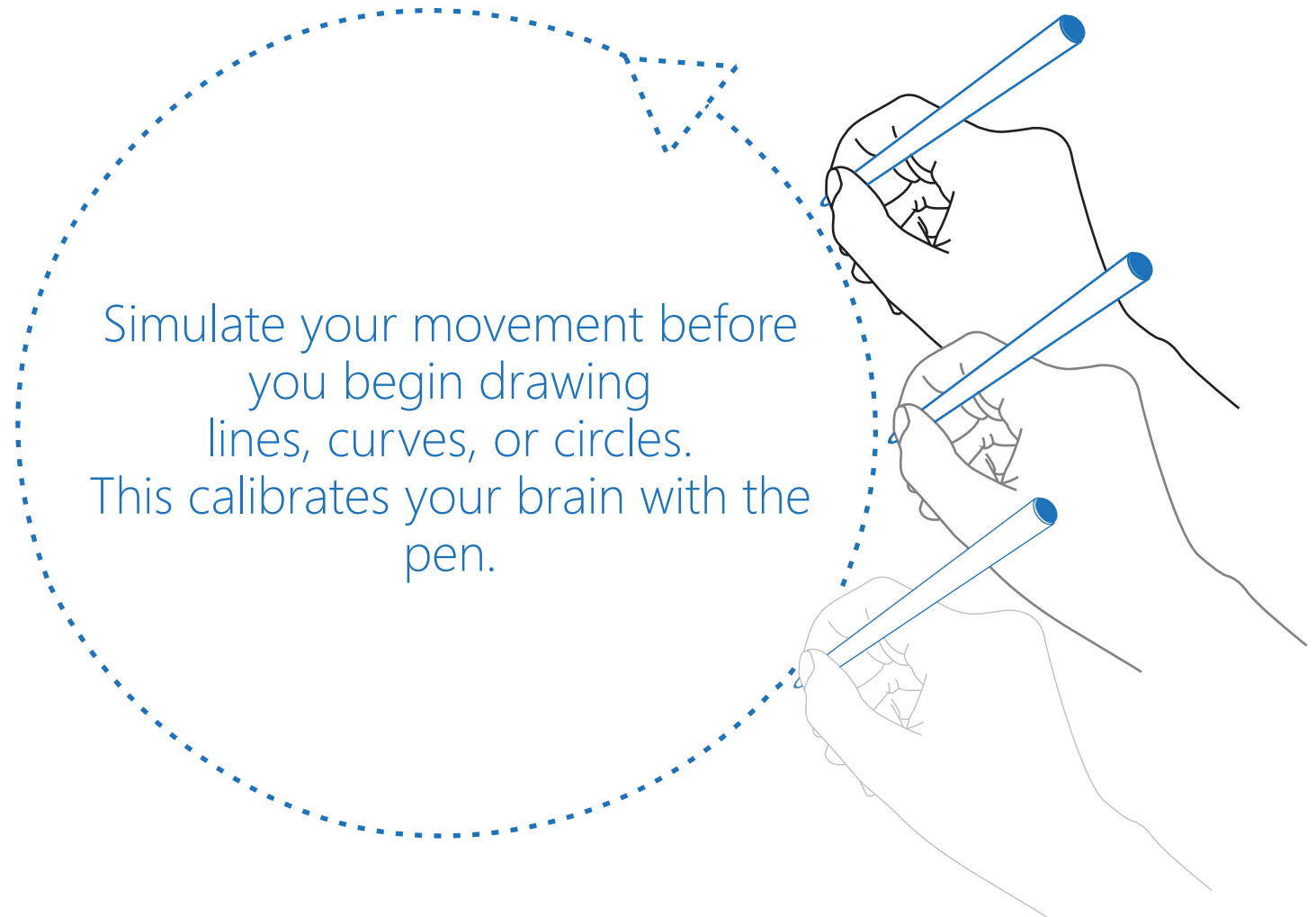


PASS!

THINK "I WILL MAKE IT!"

Draw fluidly. Don't worry much about messing up; work on the ghost drawing, then start your actual stroke with a light wrist.

TIP#5 Adopt the Ghost drawing



THINK Momentum

Use this movement to better visualize your drawing. Touch the pen-tip to page when you feel confident.

THAT'S ALL FOR THE GUIDE 1!



GUIDE2

Let the game begin!

MASTERING THE PEN

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Have no fear of perfection, you will never reach it.

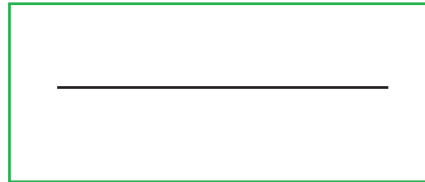
-Salvador Dali

Straight lines



The straight line is the most basic element of drawing after the single point (since a line is a moving point). It's an essential tool for drawing construction lines, such as perspective grids. Relax and work on accuracy.

PASS!

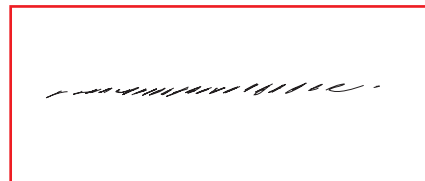


THE ZEN MASTER

You don't have to draw fast; just keep a constant speed.

>> Touch the paper – draw – stop – lift off paper

FAILED



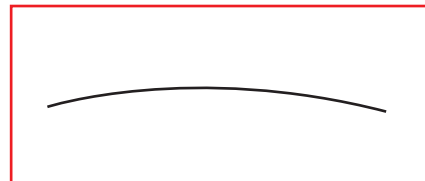
THE FURRY LINE

You're trying to imitate the way artists seem to draw.

>> Work on drawing fluid lines.

If you're afraid of making mistakes, draw with a light wrist.

FAILED

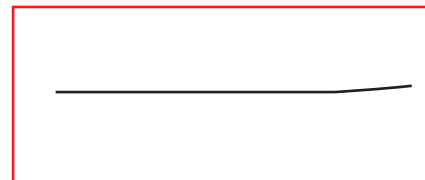


THE CURVED LINE

Either your elbow or your wrist is resting on the table.

>> Draw with your whole arm

FAILED



THE TAILED LINE

You didn't end the line with a full stop; instead you drew a line quickly, accelerating at the end.

You did: >> Touch the paper – draw – NOT STOP – lift off the paper

>> Refer to the Zen Master

FAILED



THE SHY LINE

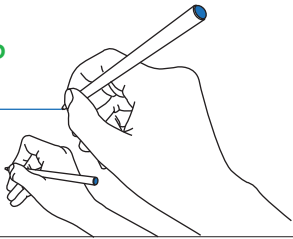
You're trying to do well by going slow, but it's too slow.

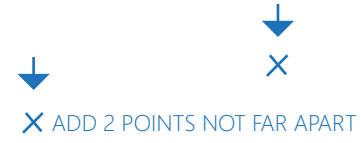
>> Find a minimum speed where you're comfortable but you still get good momentum. You'll get confident with practice.

1


RECOMMENDED
[B] POSITION

The [A] position is also suitable.



2


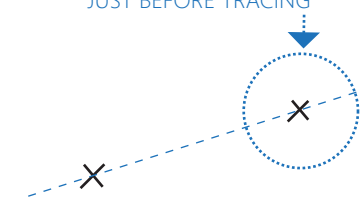
ADD 2 POINTS NOT FAR APART


3


GHOST DRAWING

4

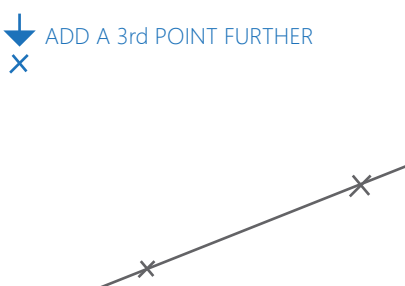
STARE AT THE END POINT JUST BEFORE TRACING



5


JOIN THE DOTS

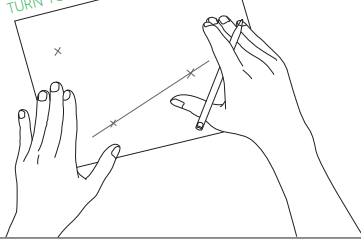
YOU CAN STOP YOUR LINE AFTER THE DOT. IT'S OK

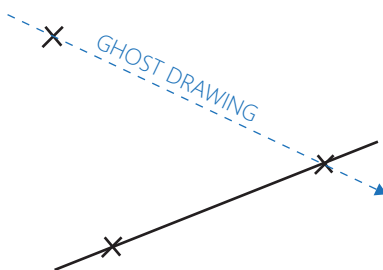
6


ADD A 3rd POINT FURTHER

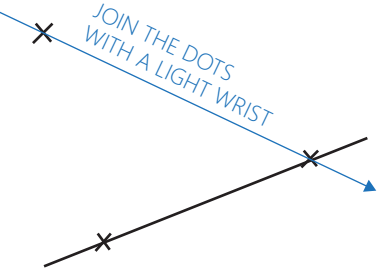
7

REMINDER
TURN YOUR PAPER WHEN NEEDED

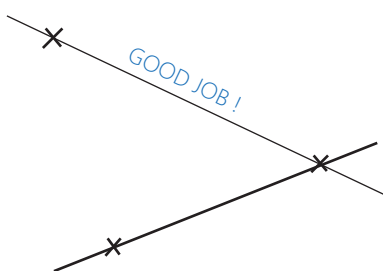


8


GHOST DRAWING

9


JOIN THE DOTS WITH A LIGHT WRIST

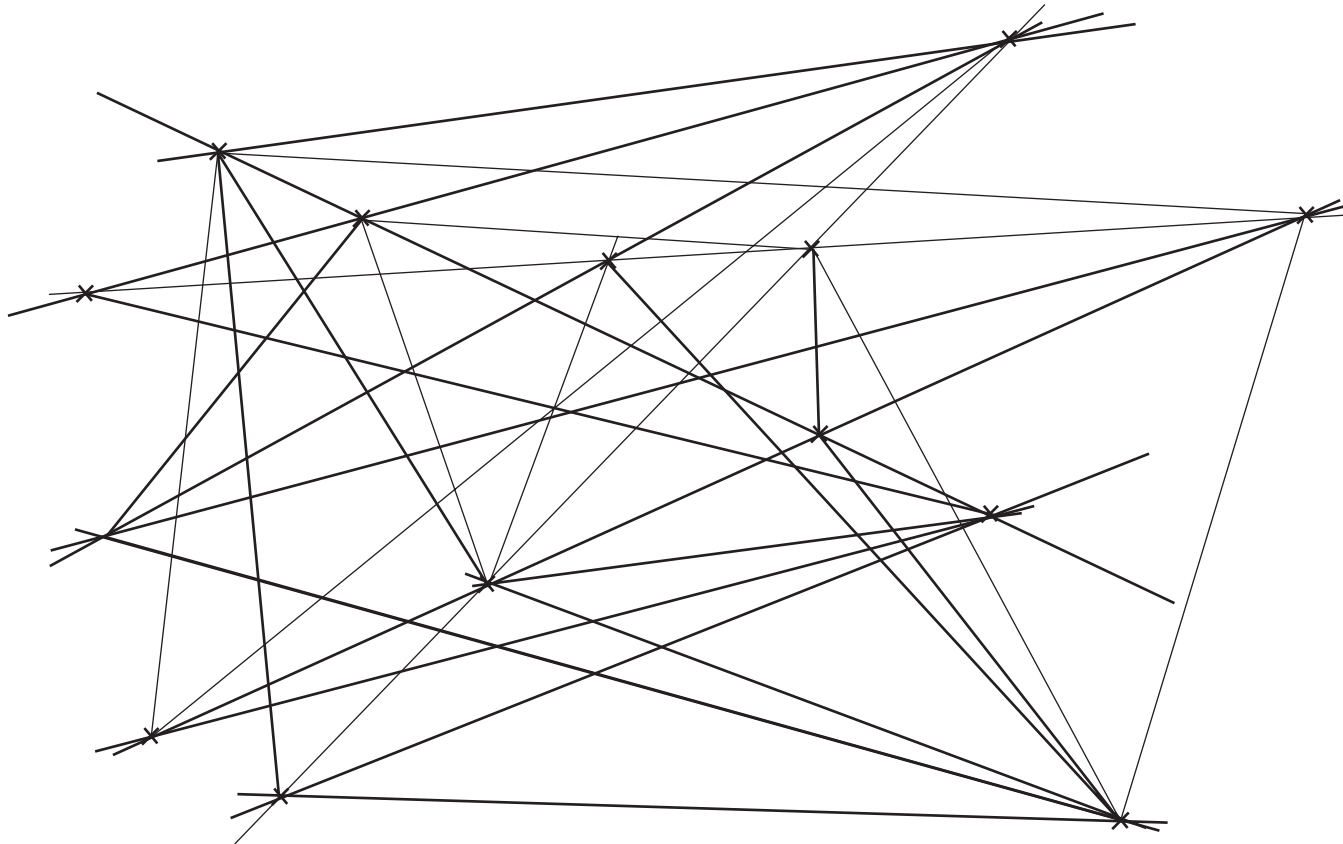
10


GOOD JOB!

11

REPEAT THE CYCLE x 30

TRAIN TRACING YOUR LINES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, VICE VERSA

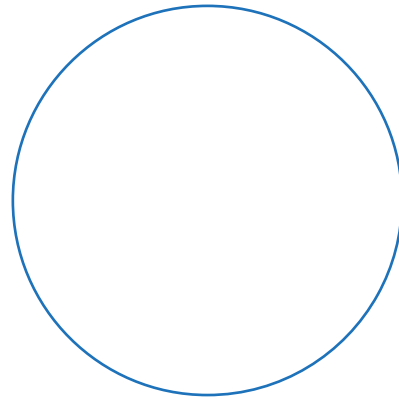


Eventually you should produce something like the above.
When you're satisfied with it, date and archive the sketch.
Redo this exercise every once in a while. It works best as a warm-up session.

On the path to becoming a Zen Master,
your brain and your pen will begin to harmonize.

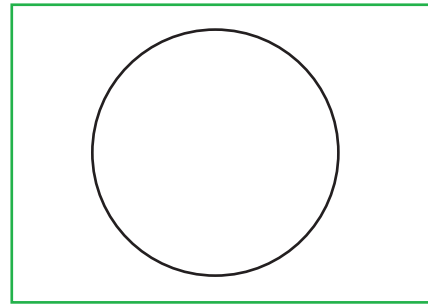
TAKE A BREAK - GREEN TEA TIME

Awesome circles



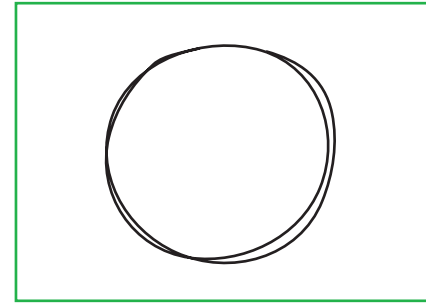
Making a circle is not a natural movement for the body. Many of you have said that you think this ability comes from practice; that's great. I'll show you some tricks on how to achieve it.

PASS!



SINGLE RING

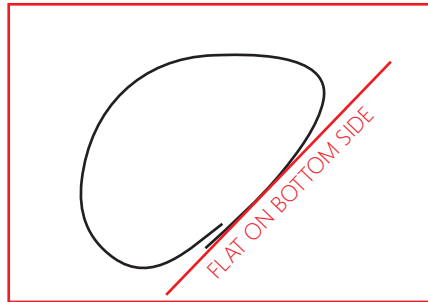
Simply awesome!
Master the double or triple ring
before trying this one.



DOUBLE or TRIPLE RING

Recommended
Aim for the momentum to perfect
your circle in the 2nd and 3rd rings.

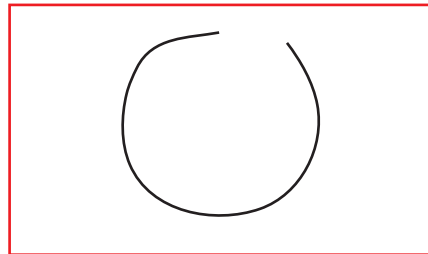
FAILED



THE POTATO CIRCLE

An elbow or a wrist might be resting on the table; or, your elbow could be knocking against your ribs.
>> Your elbow shouldn't be pressed against your body. Extend your arm and elbow a bit like you're pretending to have chicken wings, and make yourself comfortable!

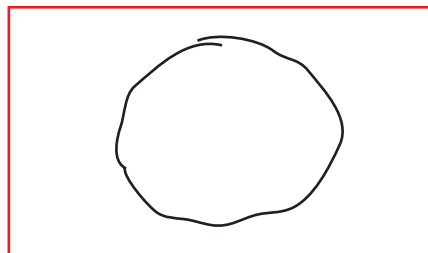
FAILED



THE UNFINISHED CIRCLE

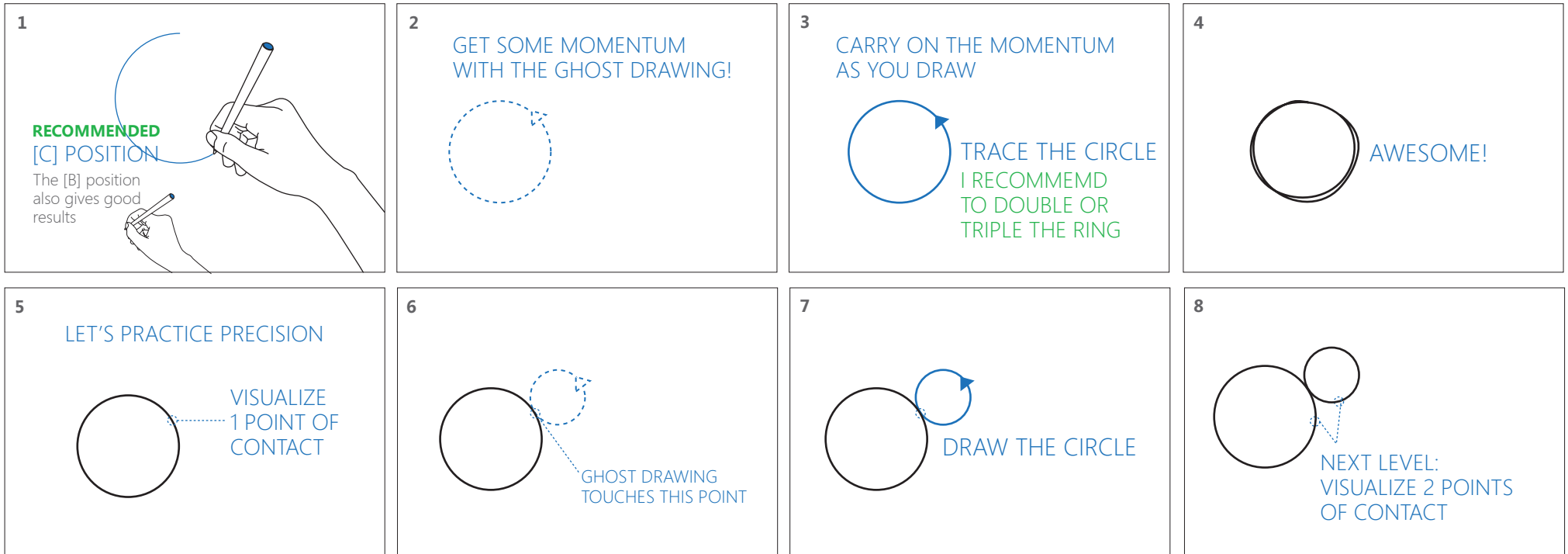
Too fast!
>> Double or triple the amount of loops you trace around the circle. This will stabilize your movement. When you find your momentum through the ghost drawing, carry that momentum through into the actual drawing.

FAILED



THE SHY CIRCLE

Hesitant and slow; the lines become irregular
>> Focus on the ghost drawing, then make the first two loops of the circle with very light pressure, and the third with a more solid hand.



9

REPEAT x 4

9

REPEAT x 4

10

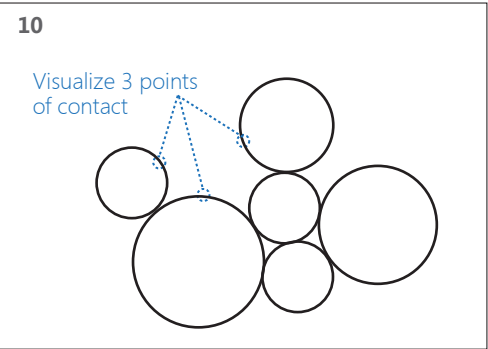
Visualize 3 points of contact

The diagram shows a cluster of seven circles of varying sizes. Three dashed blue lines originate from a single point at the bottom, representing a surface, and extend upwards to touch three different circles: the bottom-left circle, the bottom-middle circle, and the bottom-right circle. This illustrates the concept of three points of contact.

10

Visualize 3 points of contact

The diagram shows a cluster of seven circles of varying sizes. Three dashed blue lines originate from a single point at the bottom, representing a surface, and extend upwards to touch three different circles: the bottom-left circle, the bottom-middle circle, and the bottom-right circle. This illustrates the concept of three points of contact.

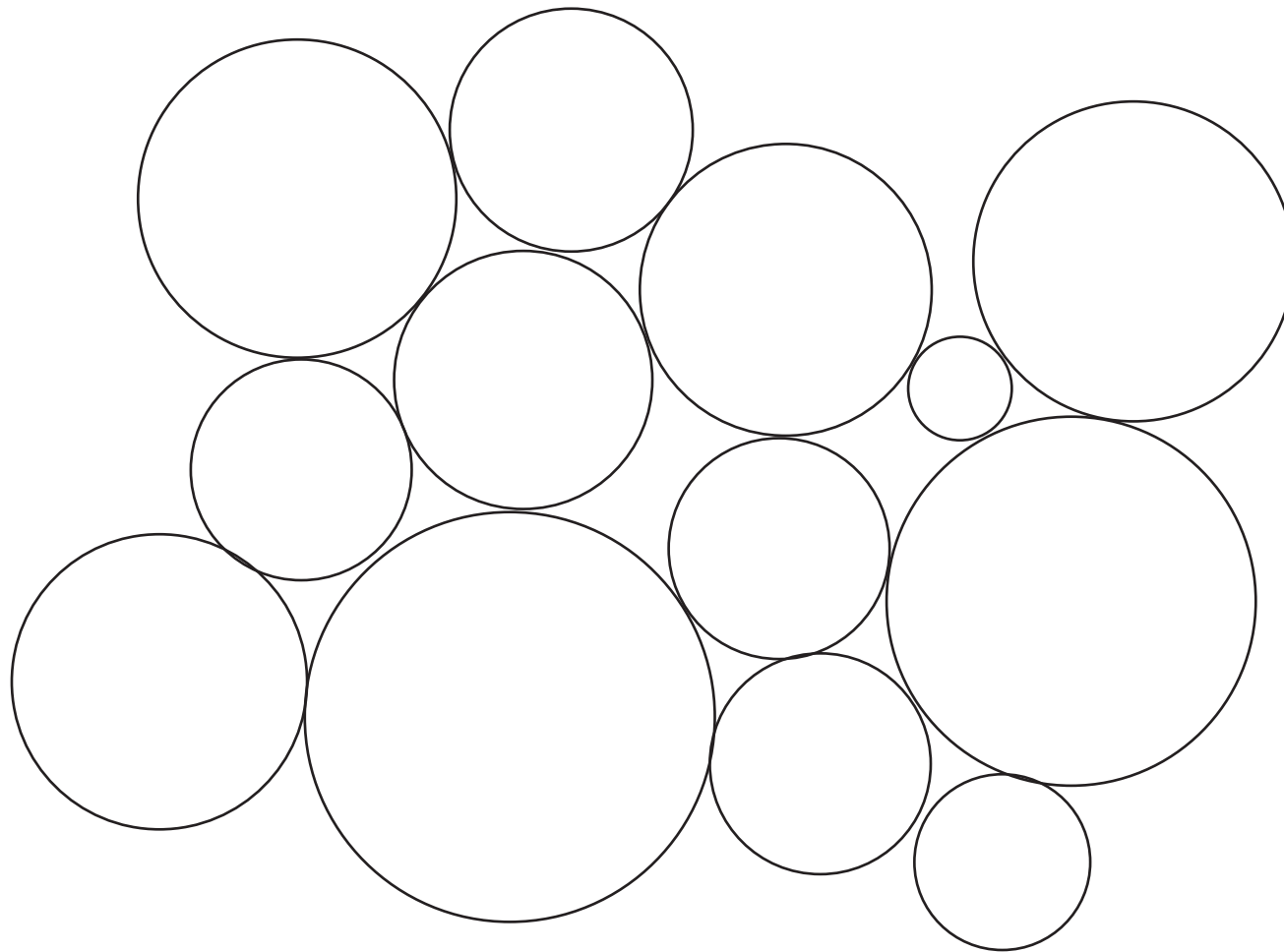


11

TRY A FEW MORE

11

TRY A FEW MORE

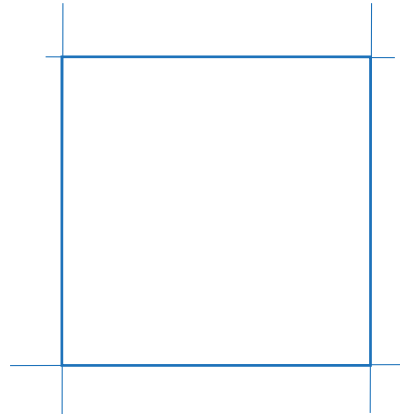


Keep this in order to show yourself how much you've improved farther down the line.

Doodle anywhere when you're bored; on the subway, in history class.
Anywhere.

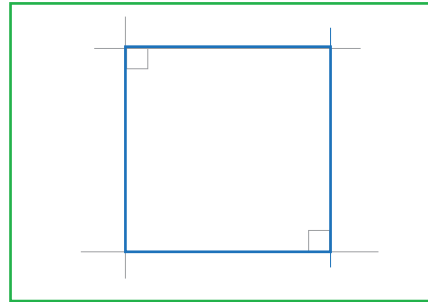
TAKE A BREAK - STRETCHING YOGA TIME

The perfect square



Drawing a square is actually more difficult than drawing a circle. You have to consider the 90° angle and make sure your lines are parallel. To improve your chances of making a perfect square, let me show you a nifty sketching trick.

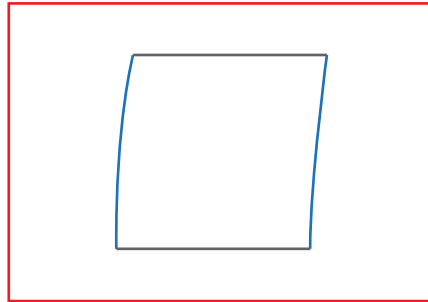
PASS!



THE ARCHITECT

Build your square by sketching light lines first. Then bold the square.

FAILED

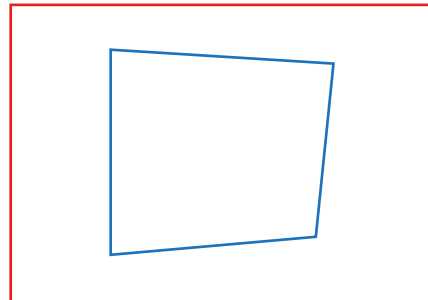


THE CURVY CASE

You might be drawing with your elbow or wrist on the table

>> [Review how to master the straight line](#)

FAILED



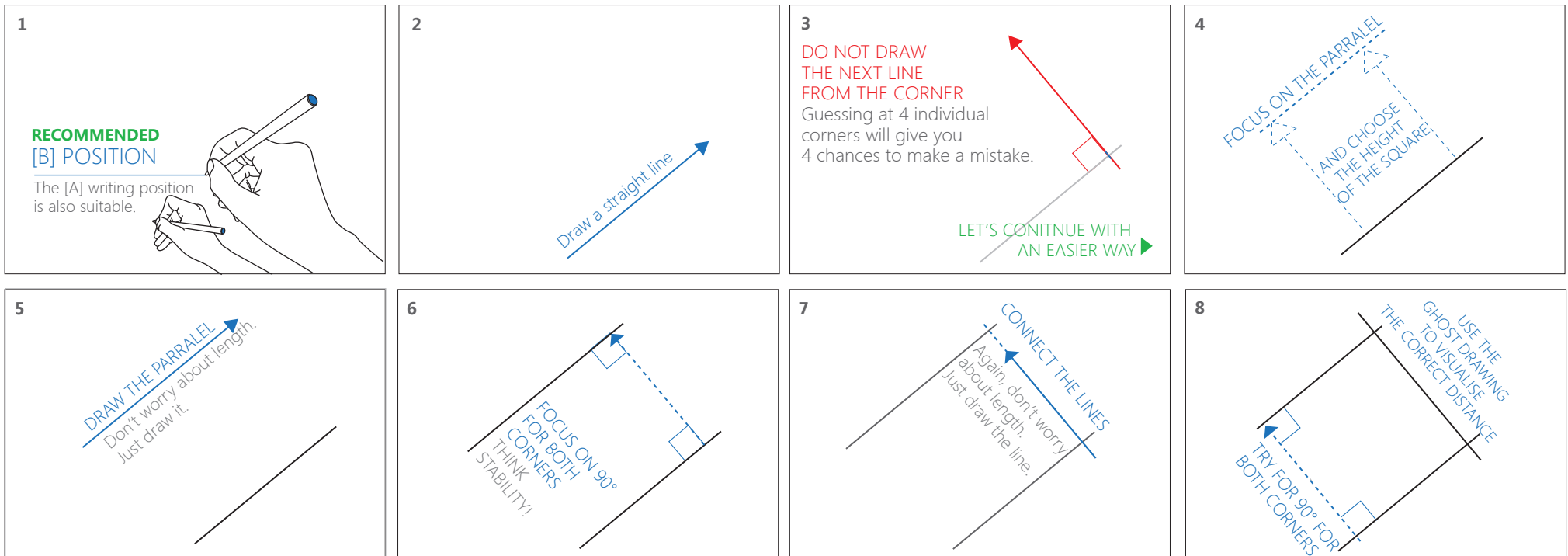
NON-PARALLEL LINES

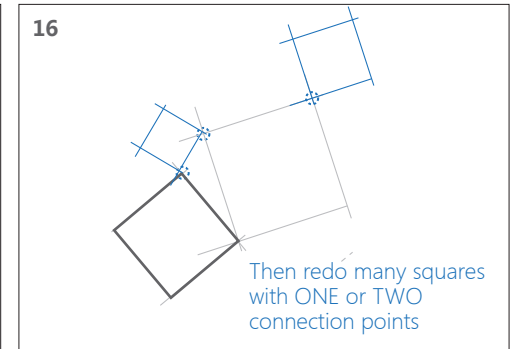
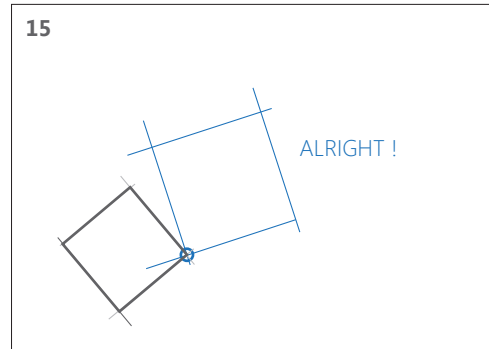
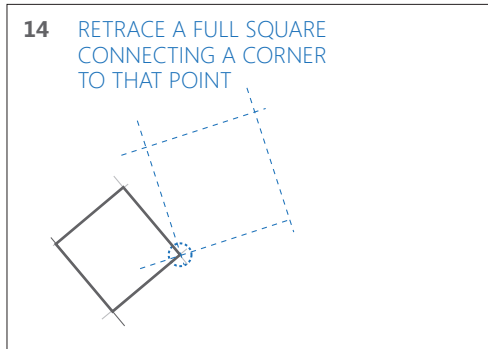
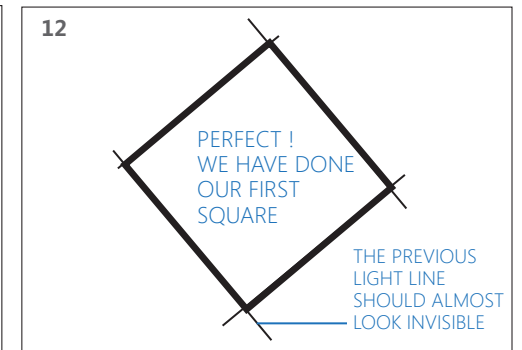
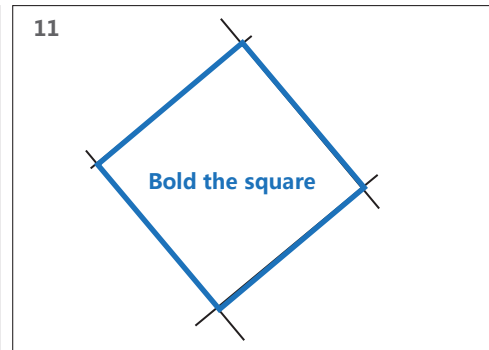
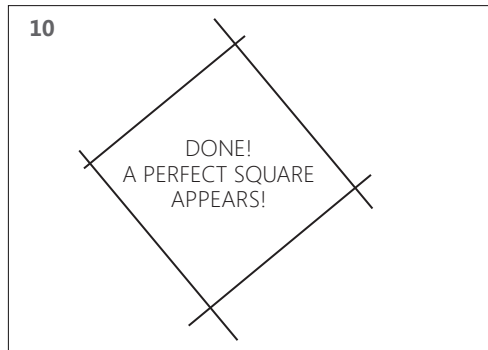
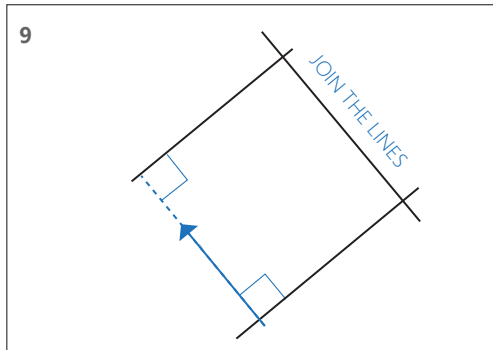
You felt like you were doing well when you traced the lines, but it still comes out awkward.

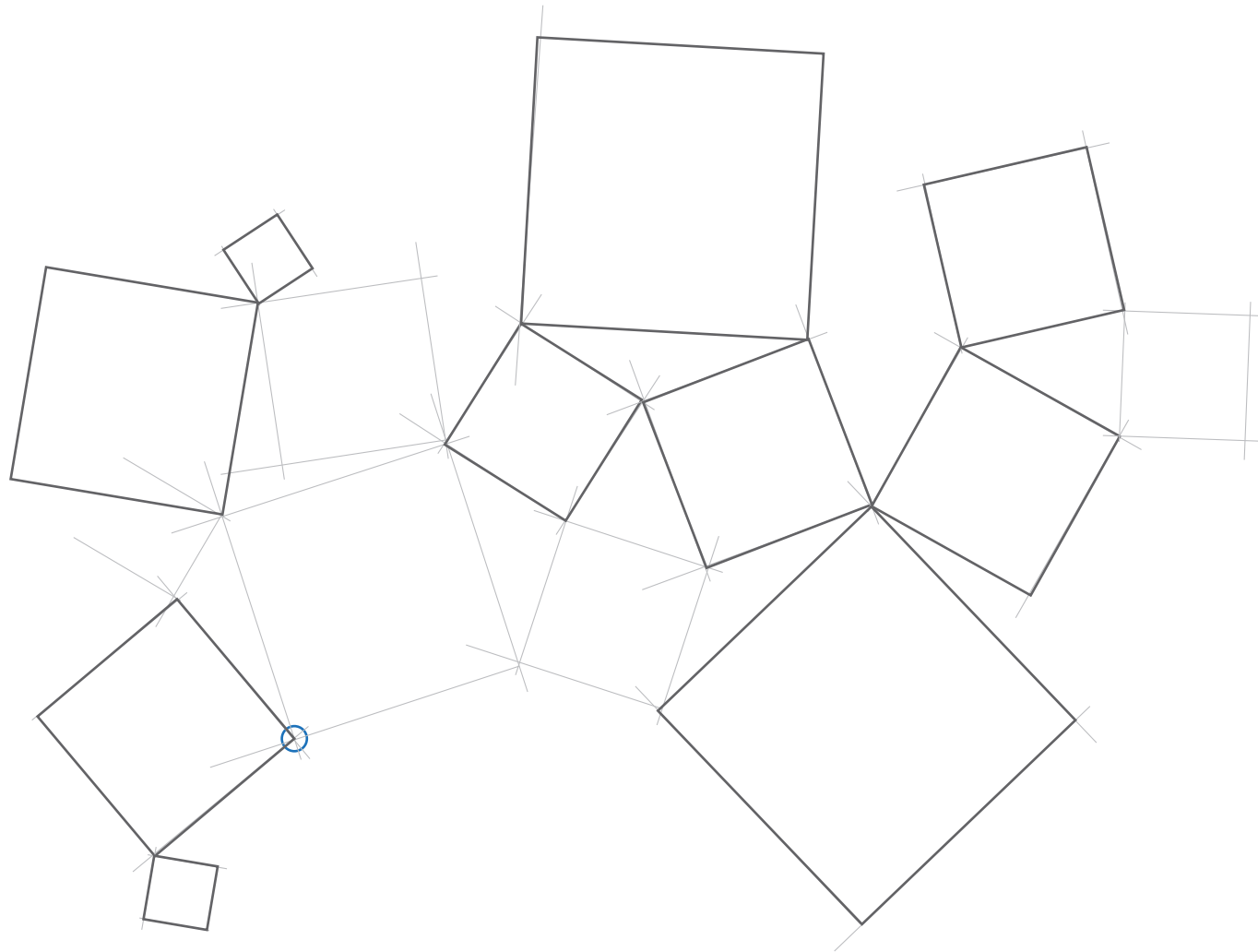
>> Sometimes your vision's been skewed, especially if there are already other lines on the paper. Relax, focus, and take your time.

>> As you turn the paper, keep visualizing the next line. Do not look elsewhere. Doing so may disconnect your brain from the shape. Keep focus, and your speed and precision will benefit.

>> If your line is parallel to your paper edge, use it as reference.







You do not have to bold every single square. Try to make a nice composition.

Draw lightly; you'll allow yourself both more mistakes and more changes.

THAT'S ALL FOR THE GUIDE 2!



GUIDE3

Let's find the next level!

GAINING A SENSE OF PROPORTION

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It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.

- Henri David Thoreau

Gaining a sense of proportion



MY COMMENTS

The human brain isn't naturally good at measuring things by eye. However, it's pretty good at dividing things into equal parts. When I sketch I never use a ruler. Instead, it's all about simple geometry; dividing things by 2, 4, and 8. Nothing complicated; it's a simple trick, but essential.

BEFORE GOING
FORWARD
TRY TO SOLVE THIS
SPONTANEOUSLY



Divide this line into 4 equal parts



TIME TO BE HONEST

HAVE YOU TRIED?

◀ NOT YET

YES! ▶

WHICH METHOD DID YOU USE?

Divide this line into 4 equal parts

RULER TECHNIQUE

FAILED

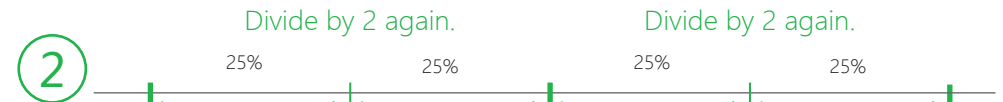
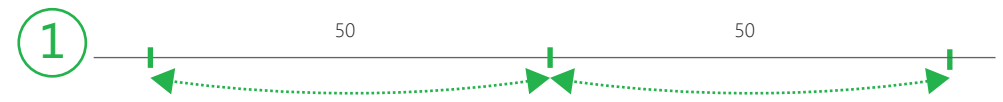
GUESSING TECHNIQUE

DIVIDING TECHNIQUE



FAILED

DO NOT BE MAD,
ALL OF US DID THAT ONCE.



PASS!

KEEP THIS TRICK IN MIND,
IT IS A MUST HAVE TOOL FOR DESIGNERS !

Practice until you can divide any object instantaneously.

Anytime, anywhere. Mentally divide anything you see.

For example, your pen, your desk, even passersby.

Divide these by finding equal halves, quarters, and even smaller divisions.

THAT'S ALL FOR THE GUIDE 3!



GUIDE 4

Make your first steps forward

SEEING IN PERSPECTIVE

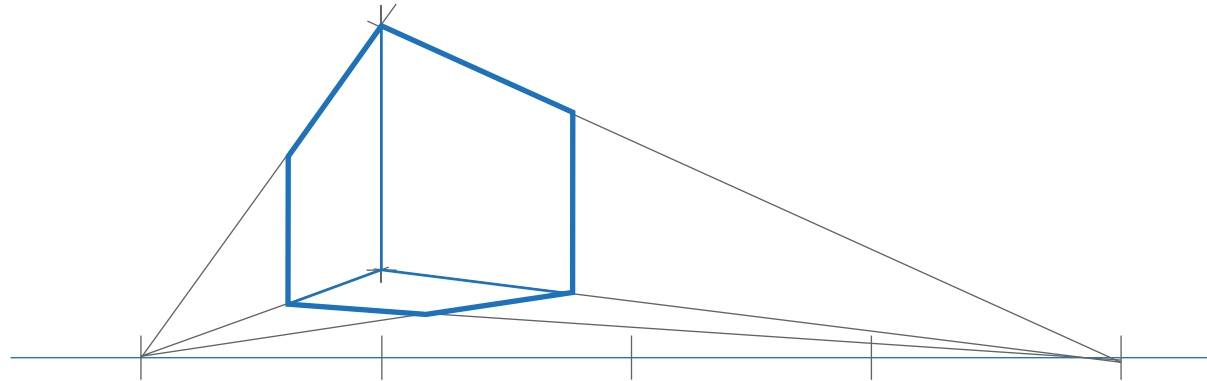
theDesignerStarterKit | by theDesignSketchbook.com



Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.

- Vincent Van Gogh

The first step of Perspective



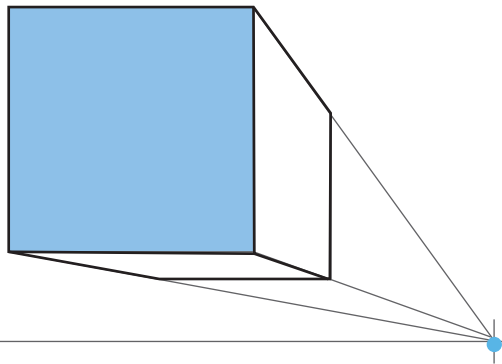
MY COMMENTS

Perspective always looks unfriendly to learn. However, it is a major part of a designer's skillset. Imagine how many more options you have to represent things if you can do it from multiple angles. Plus, learning perspective will help your imagination and conceptualization skills. Keep it up! One and two-point perspective are actually quite easy (for this guide, I'll ignore 3-point perspective).

There are two major challengers beginners normally face. These can be solved easily as long as they are well-identified. Beginners are often confused by the order in which different parts of perspective lines are drawn. Thus, they don't understand the logic behind perspective. This tutorial will walk you through a drawing step-by-step. The second difficulty stems from the inaccuracy of beginners' lines. As you should now have a grasp of straight lines, your drawing will be more precise, and you'll be ready to study perspective in drawings.

PERSPECTIVE = PERCEPTION

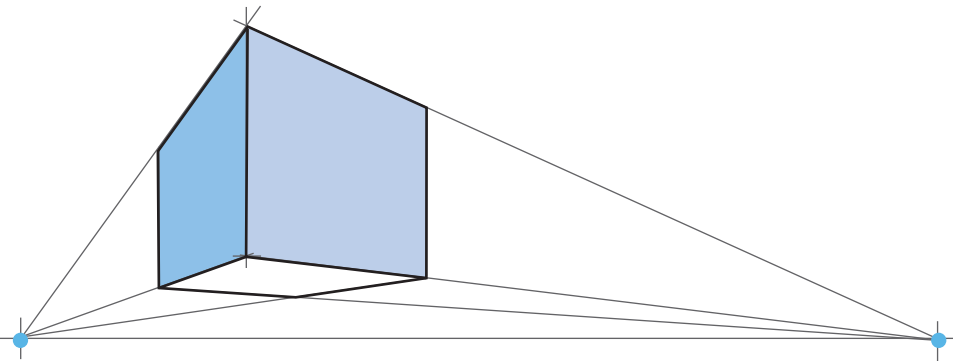
WHEN DO I NEED A 1 OR 2 POINTS PERSPECTIVE ?



1 POINT PERSPECTIVE



THE CUBE FACES THE VIEWER



2 POINT PERSPECTIVE

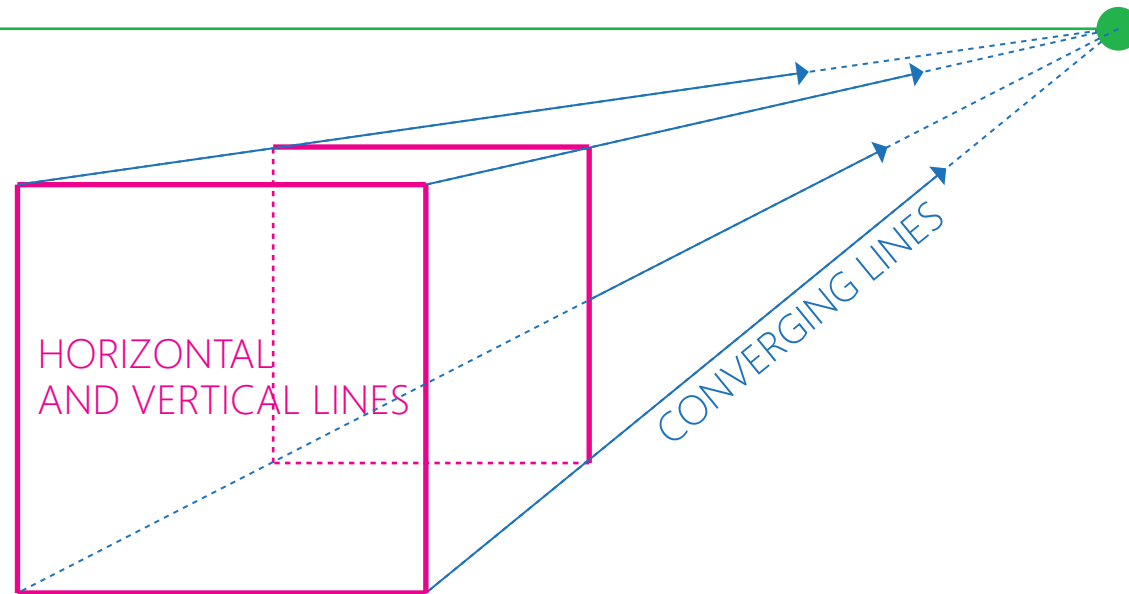


THE CUBE DOESN'T FACE THE VIEWER

LET'S START WITH ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

HORIZON LINE / EYE LEVEL

VANISHING POINT



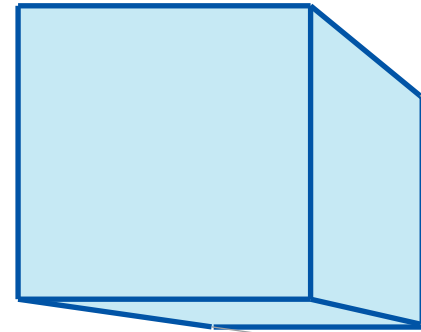


SKY



ABOVE

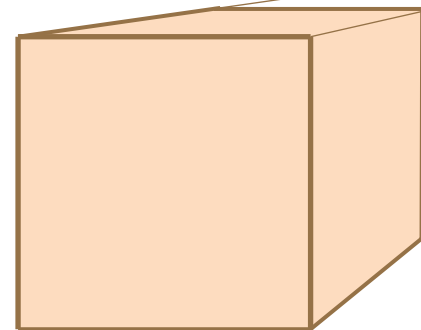
THE HORIZON LINE/EYE LEVEL
THE CUBE IS **ABOVE** OUR HEADS

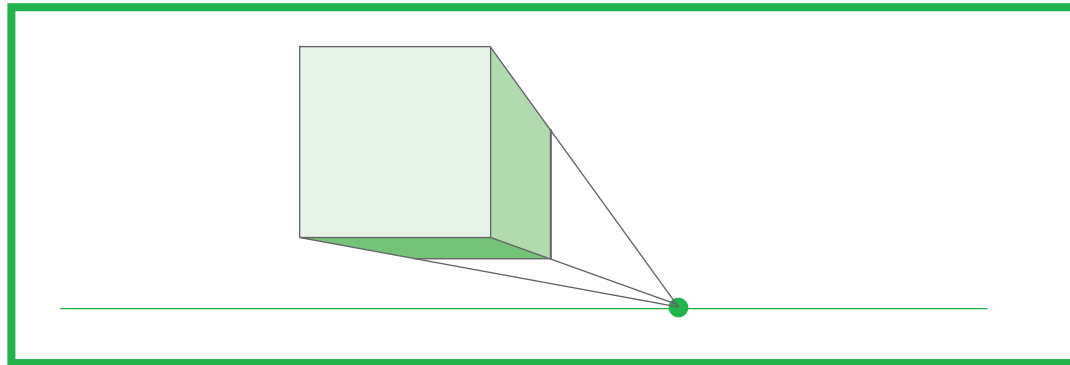


BELOW
THE HORIZON LINE/EYE LEVEL
THE CUBE IS **BELOW** OUR HEADS

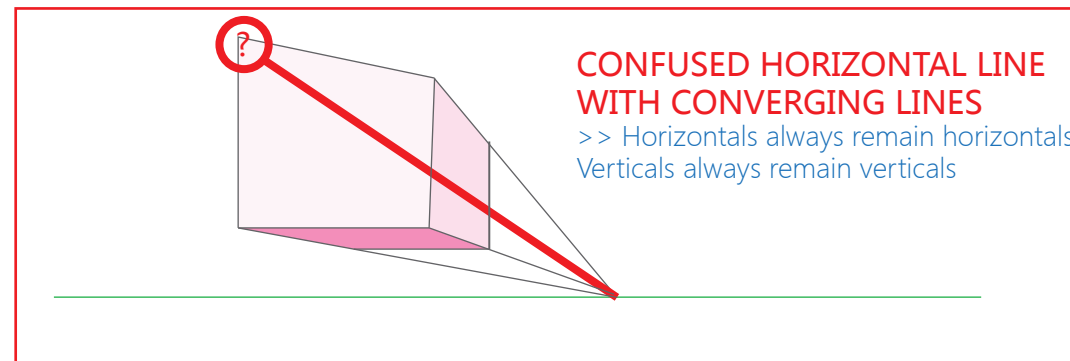


GROUND

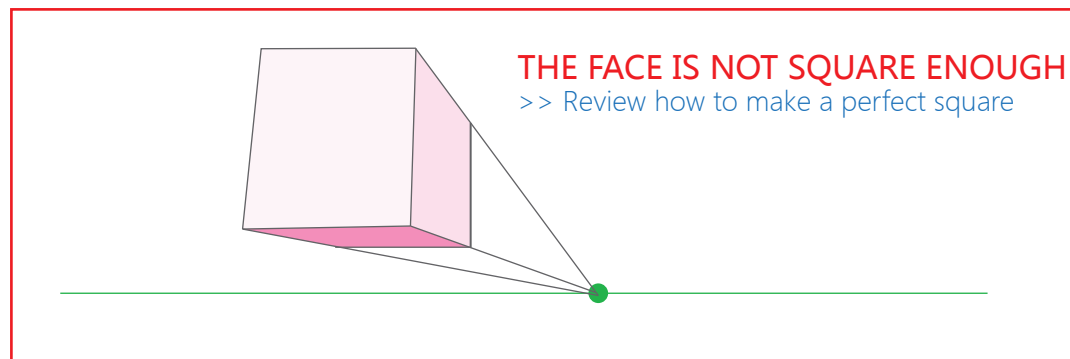




PASS!



FAILED



FAILED

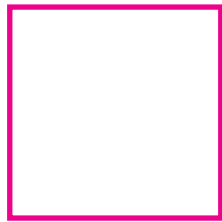
LET'S MAKE OUR FIRST CUBE
ONE POINT PERSPECTIVE IN ONLY 6 STEPS!

1

DRAW THE HORIZON LINE

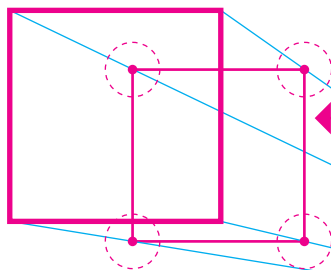


3



← ADD A SQUARE

5



DRAW AN OTHER SQUARE
FOR THE BACK FACE
The corners touch the
converging lines.

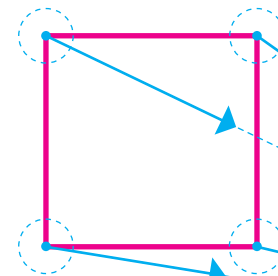
CAN YOU SEE THE PREMISE OF A CUBE ?

2

ADD 1 VANISHING POINT

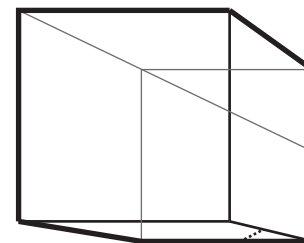


4



JOIN EACH CORNER
TO THE VANISHING POINT

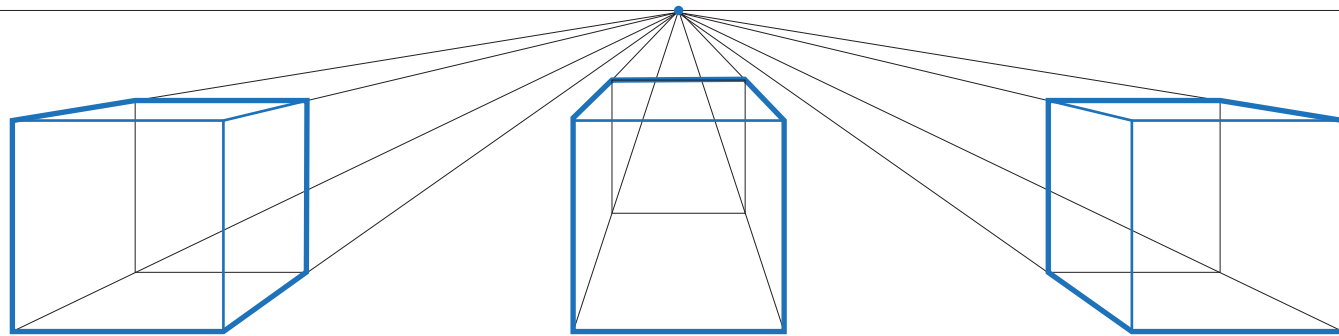
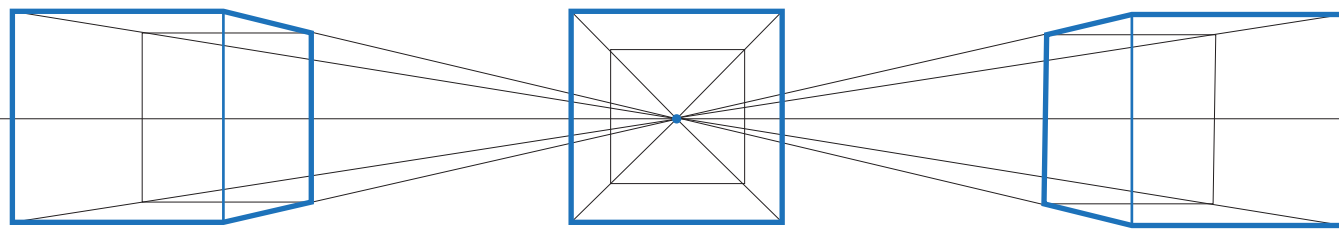
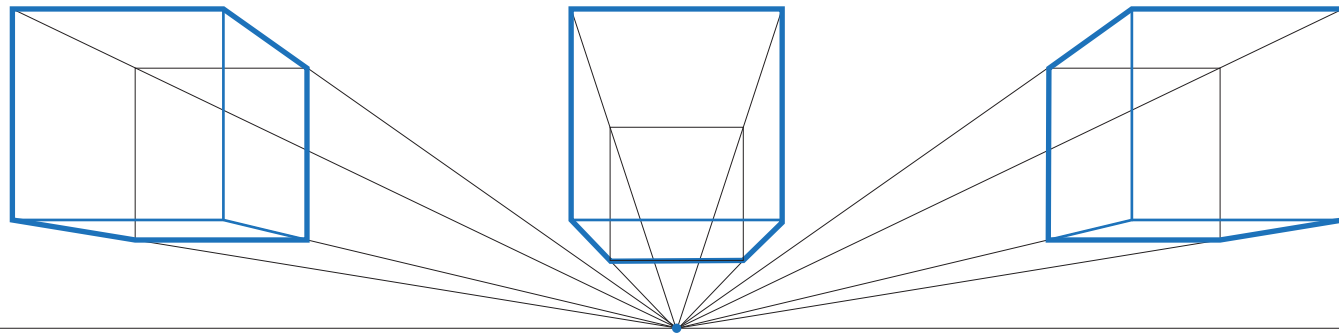
6



TO MAKE IT OBVIOUS
BOLD THE SQUARE

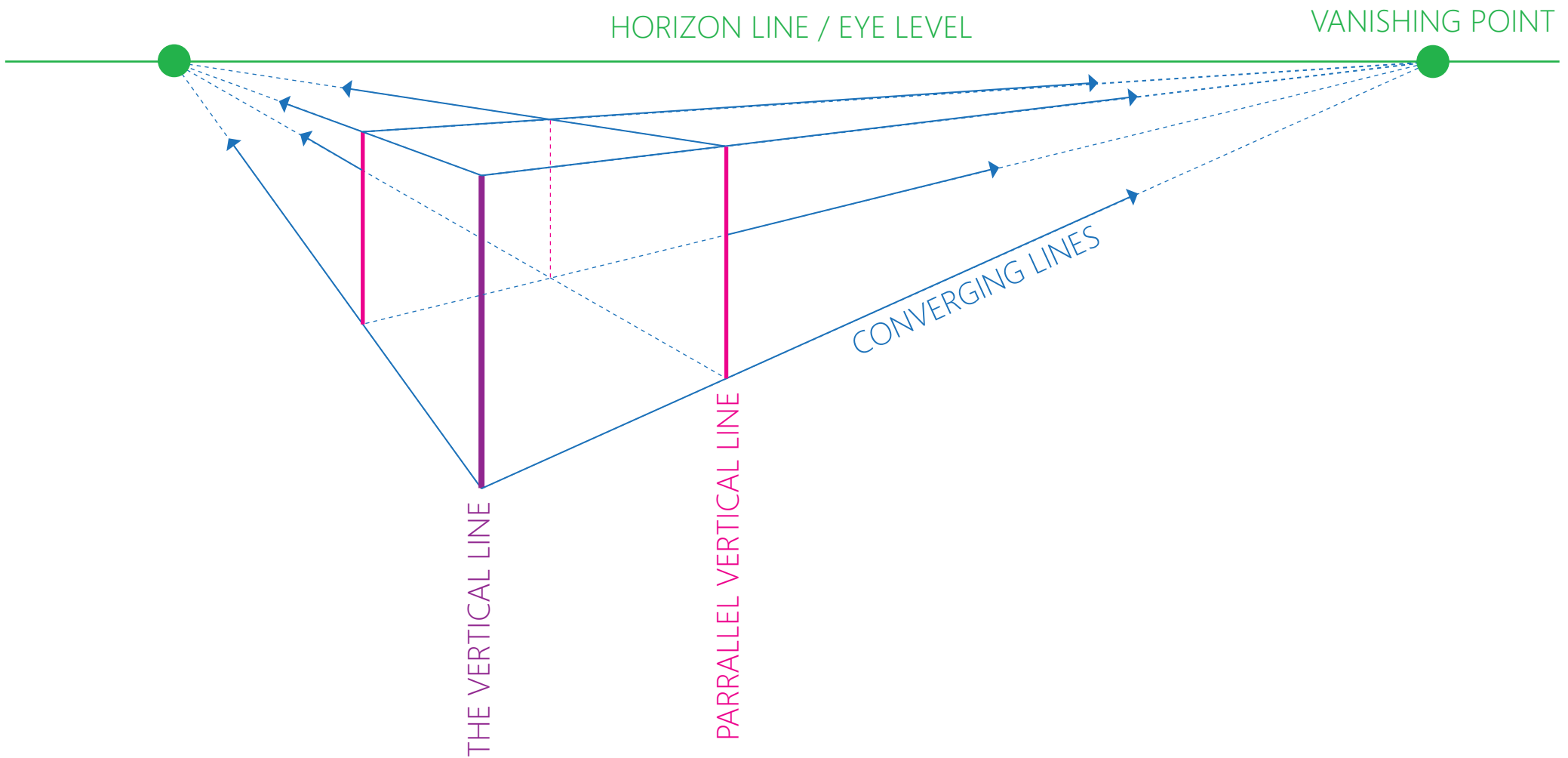
OUTSIDE LINES
ARE BOLDER

NOW YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE A CUBE.
DRAW THE CUBE FROM EVERY ANGLE AT LEAST ONCE.



TAKE A BREAK - TAKE A NAP

LET'S CONTINUE WITH TWO-POINT PERSPECTIVE

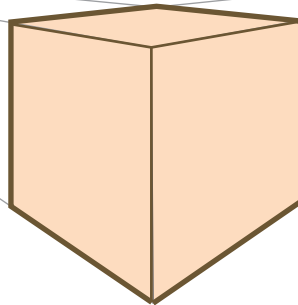
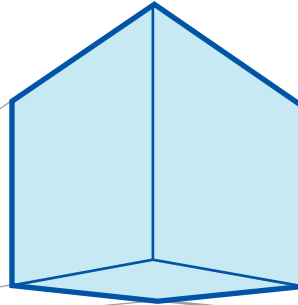


SKY



ABOVE

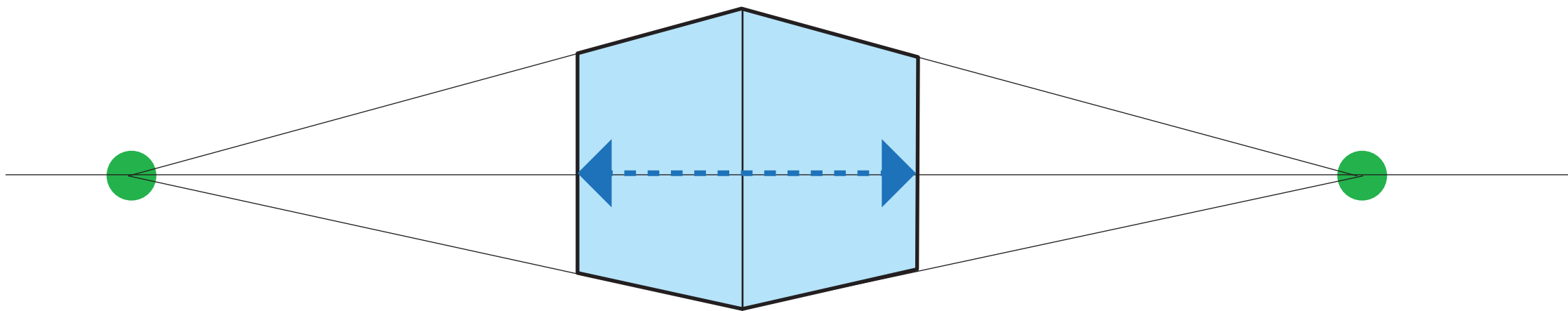
THE HORIZON LINE/EYE LEVEL
THE CUBE IS **ABOVE** OUR HEADS



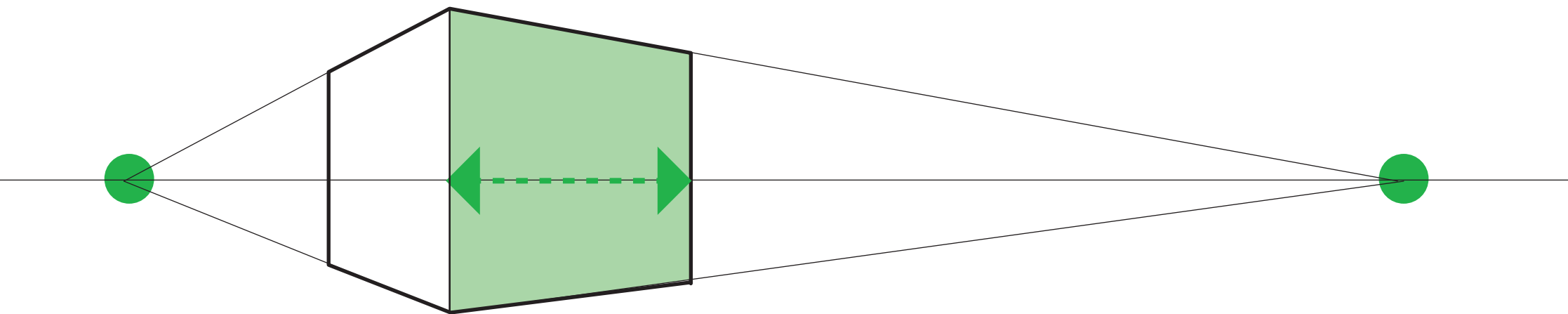
BELOW THE HORIZON LINE/EYE LEVEL
THE CUBE IS **BELOW** OUR HEADS



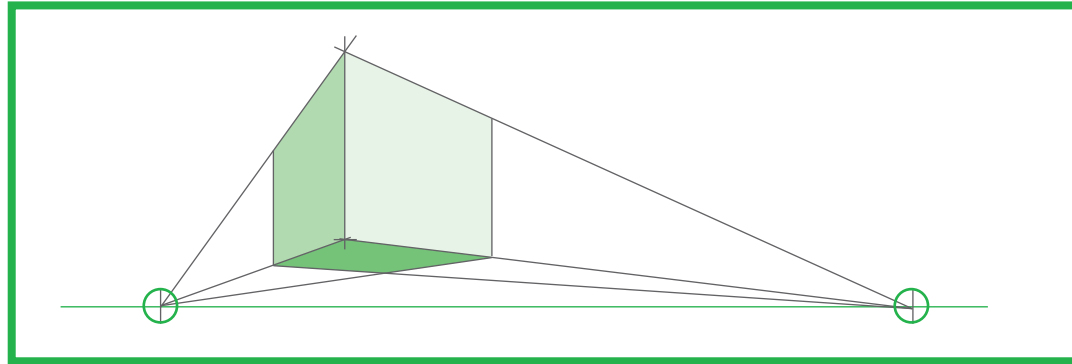
GROUND



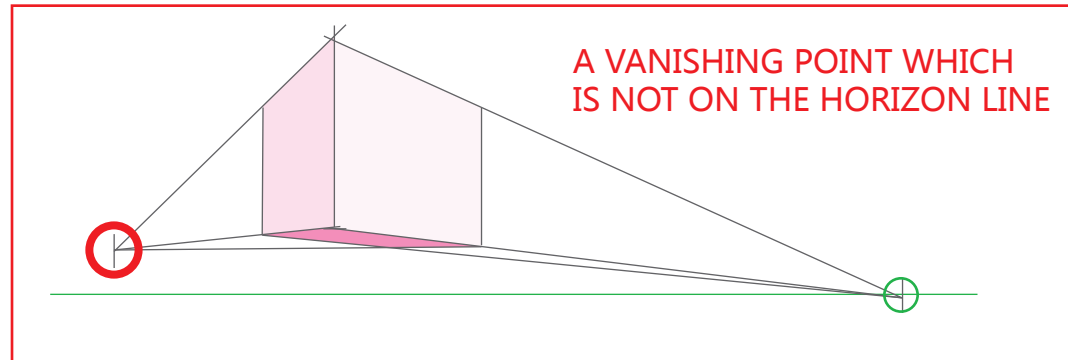
IN THE MIDDLE OF BOTH VANISHING POINTS
BOTH SIDES OF THE CUBE APPEAR EQUAL



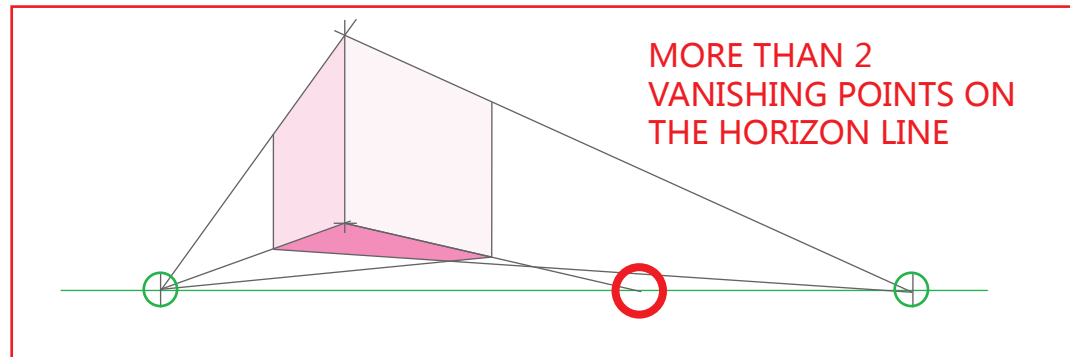
THE MORE THE CUBE SHIFTS TO THE LEFT
THE MORE WE CAN SEE THE RIGHT SIDE, AND VICE VERSA.



PASS!



FAILED



FAILED

THAT'S IT FOR THE THEORY!
LET'S DRAW A CUBE IN 12 SIMPLE STEPS

1

DRAW THE HORIZON LINE



2

ADD 2 VANISHING POINTS



3

← ADD THE VERTICAL LINE

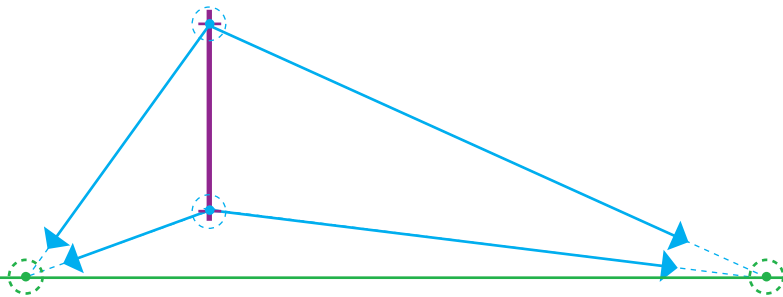


4

SET UP THE HEIGHT
BY ADDING 2 POINTS

5

JOIN THESE 2 POINTS TO BOTH VANISHING POINTS

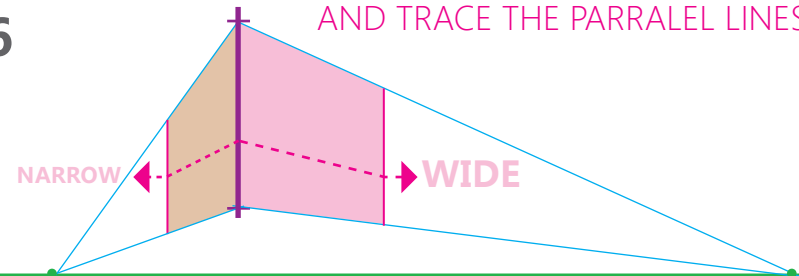


6

ESTIMATE THE WIDTH OF
THE CUBE FOR BOTH SIDES
AND TRACE THE PARRALEL LINES

NARROW

WIDE

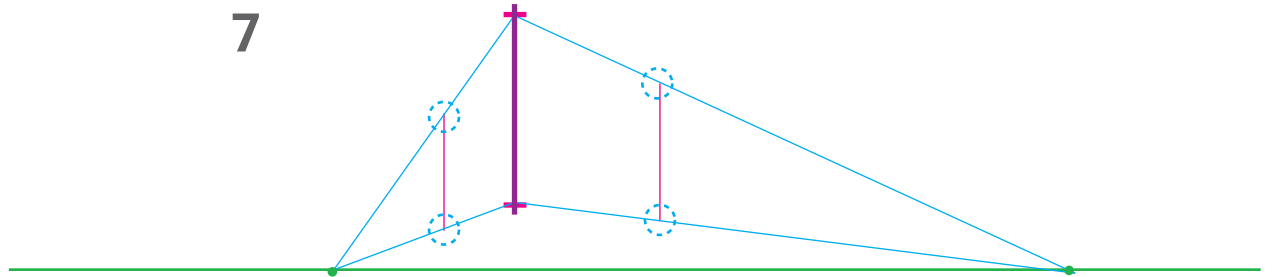


REFERENCE VIEW

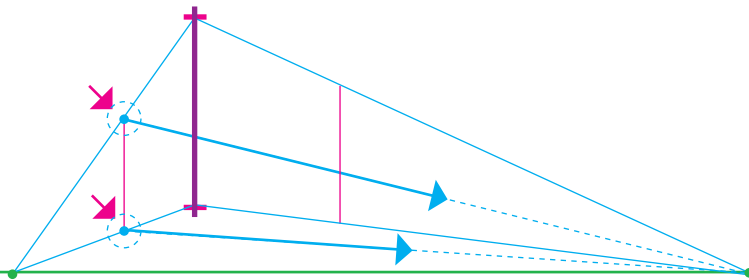


7-8-9
CONNECT EACH EDGE OF
EACH VERTICAL PARRALLEL LINE
TO ITS OPPOSITE VANISHING POINT

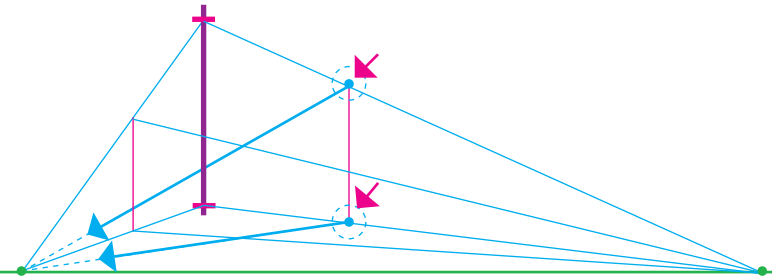
7



8

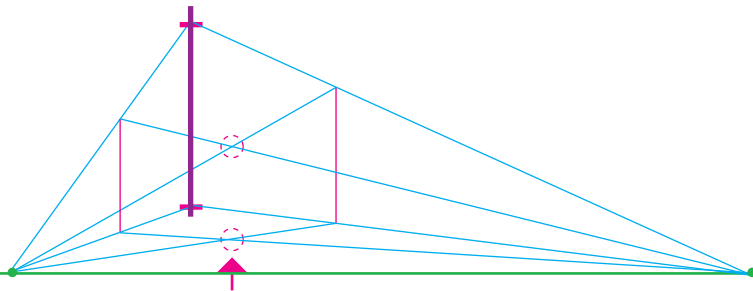


9



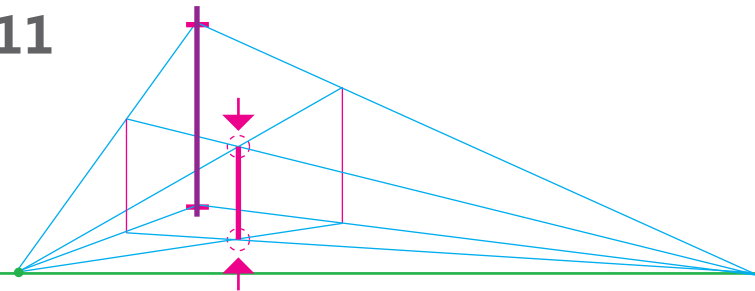
10

OBSERVE THESE TWO POINTS
HIDDEN BEHIND THE CUBE
THAT'S THE LAST STROKE



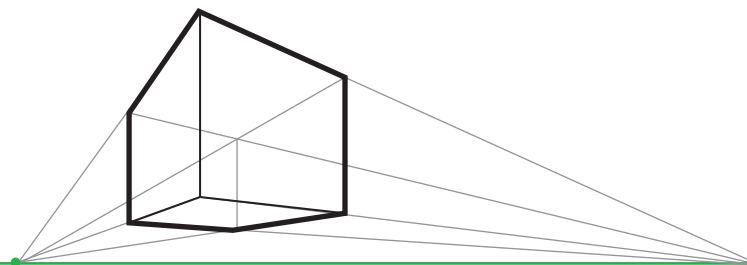
11

JOIN THEM.
ULTIMATE TEST !
If the line is perfectly vertical, it means
you have done a great job !

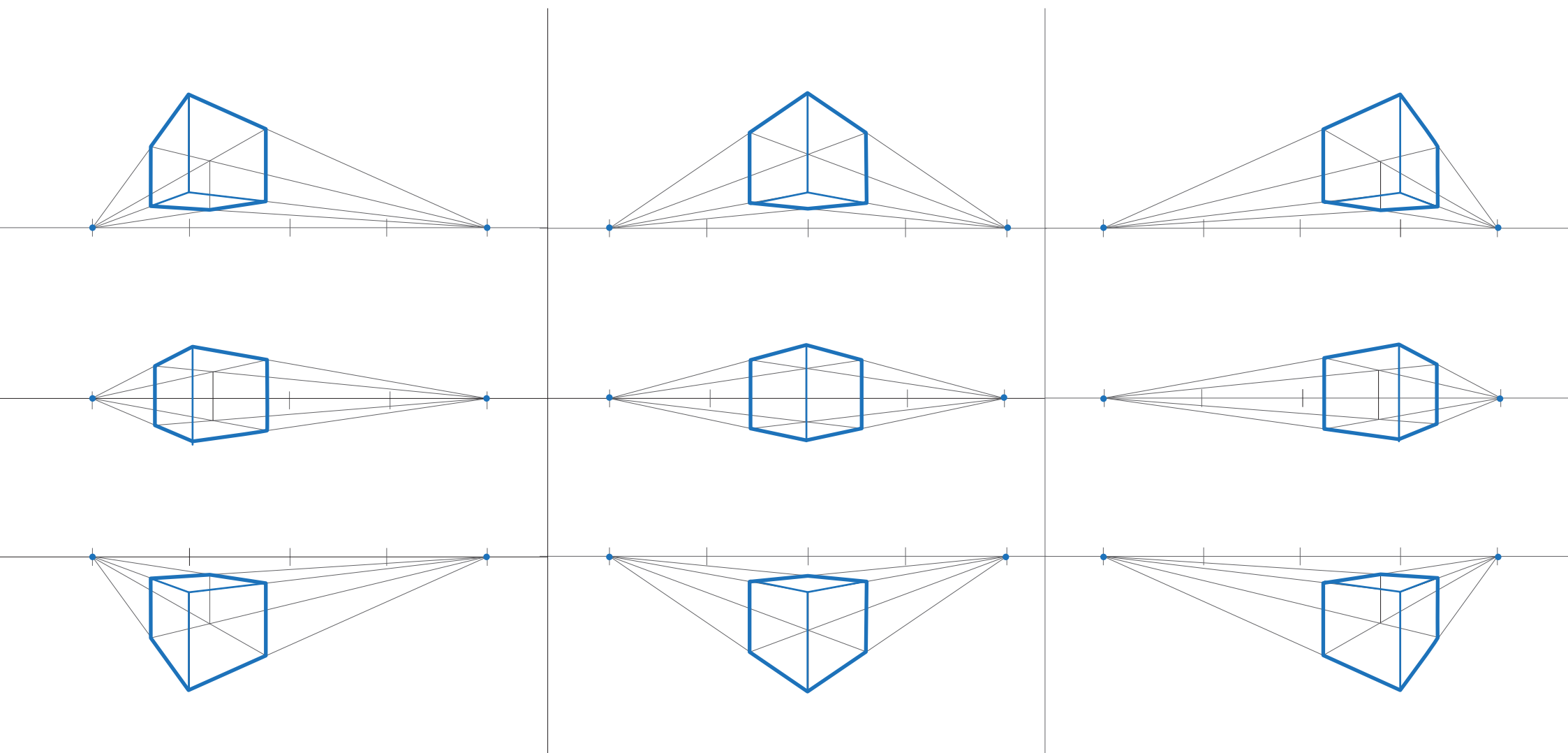


12

FINAL TOUCH: BOLD THE SQUARE !



ALRIGHT. YOU DID WELL WITH THIS ONE. TAKE A BREAK AND COME BACK;
BE READY TO DRAW THE 9 DIFFERENT ANGLES.



THAT'S ALL FOR THE GUIDE 4!

THANK YOU ALL | I'D LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK

theDesignSketchbook.com | choutac@thedesignsketchbook.com

THERE IS ONLY PASSION WITH DETERMINATION

- theDesignSketchbook

theDesignerStarterKit | theDesignSketchbook.com | by Chou-Tac Chung