

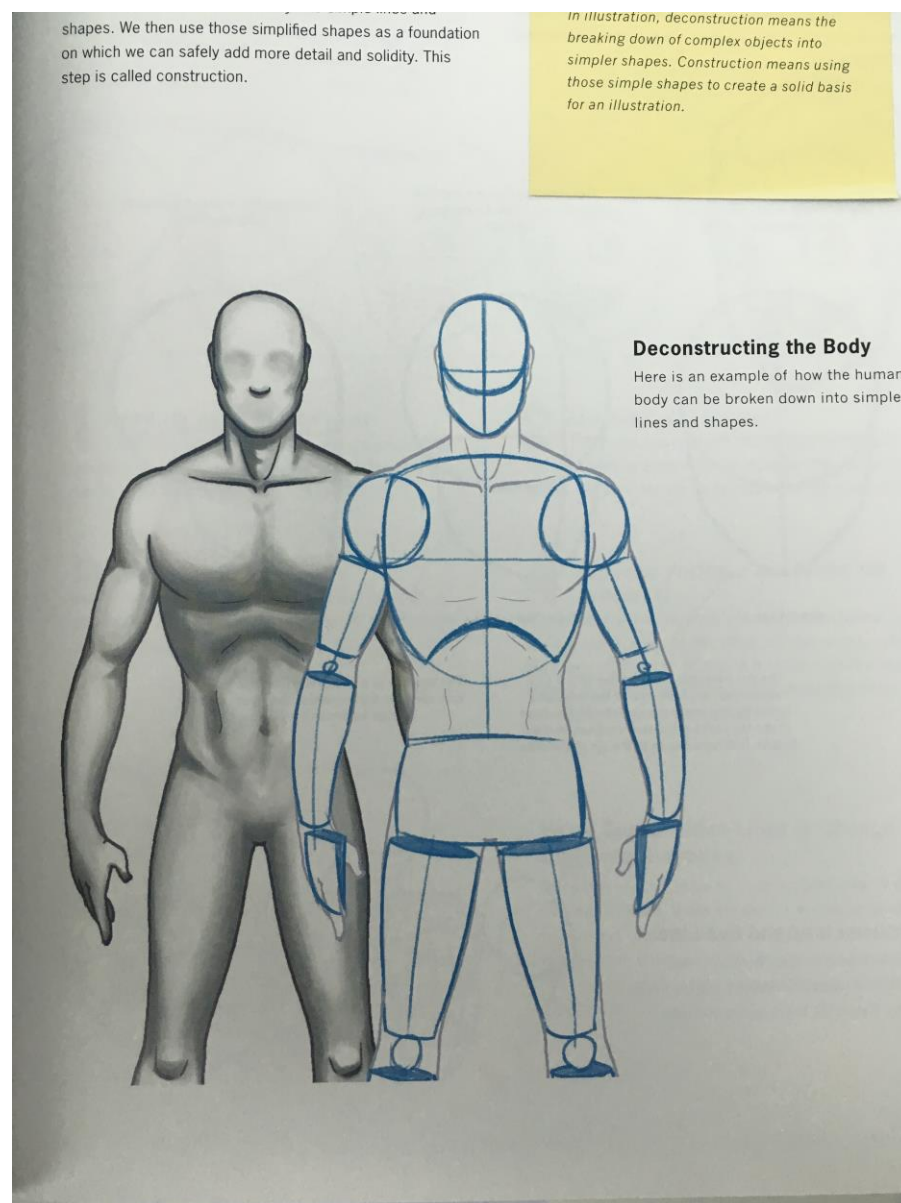
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Pages 25-45

Designing a Human Character

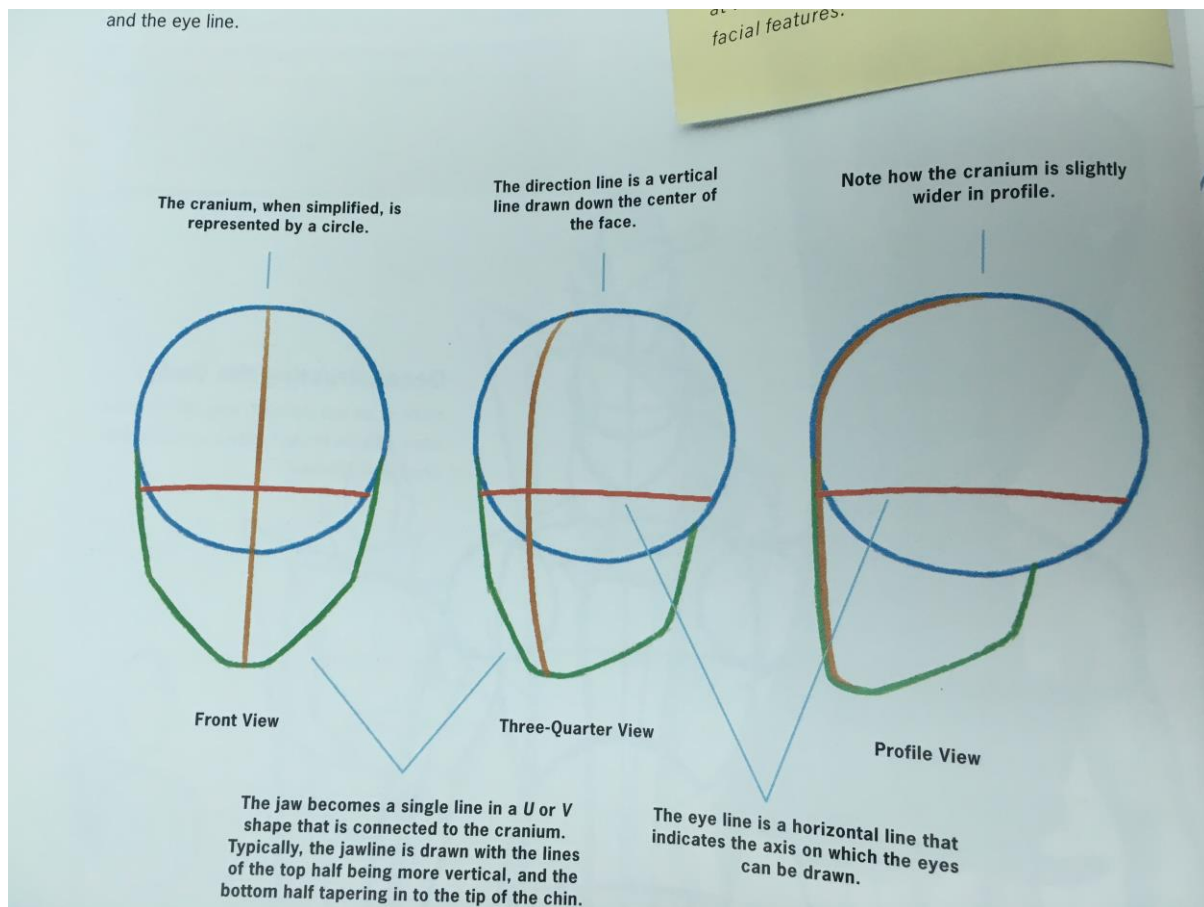
Deconstruct, then Construct

Simply the complex human anatomy by deconstructing it into simple lines and shapes. When drawing start with the construction lines and add detail and solidity.



Deconstructing the head

A common method for deconstructing the head is to use four parts, the cranium (blue), the jaw (green), the direction line (gold), and the eye line (orange)

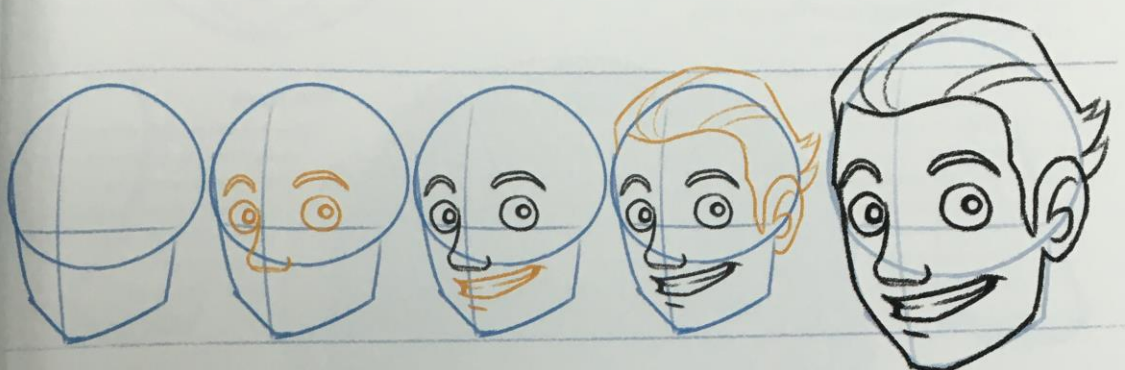


CONSTRUCTING THE HEAD

The use of simple construction lines as a foundation for drawing is common practice. Most artists draw characters at every angle, and construction lines streamline the process a great deal by keeping characters consistent and in proportion. They are easy and fast to draw, provide a clear

understanding of the visual plan for an illustration and are much less frustrating to make changes to or discard than solid drawings.

Here are the steps I normally follow to build a face on top of construction lines:



1 DRAW THE CONSTRUCTION LINES

Draw the head's construction with the proportions you want and facing the direction you want the character facing in the finished version.

2 ADD THE EYES AND NOSE

The first features to add are the eyes and the nose. The nose acts as a pointer in the direction the character is facing, and the eyes are the foundation of the expression.

3 ADD THE MOUTH

Next comes the mouth. Along with the eyes, it plays a crucial part in making your character expressive and appealing.

4 ADD FINAL FEATURES AND REFINE THE SILHOUETTE

Add the rest of the character's features, such as hair, ears and any facial props. At this stage, it's also wise to refine the shape of the facial silhouette from the solid flat shapes of the construction to a more natural shape that works well with the features you've added.



Using Construction Lines to Change Character Features

Once you're used to using construction lines to draw the human head, there are worlds of possibilities to explore! You can change the size and shapes of the cranium and jaw, or the vertical position of the eye line, to create completely unique and interesting characters.

What makes a masculine face

The Nose

A typical leading man will not have a prominent nose, but the nose will still have a strong shape with a slightly squared and blocky look. But feel free to have fun with noses. With some manipulation, they can make your character really interesting!



The Mouth

Less is more in the case of masculine mouths. Don't draw too much detail in the lips, as that will make them look fuller and more feminine. Also, too many lines in the teeth will make the mouth look dirty rather than detailed.

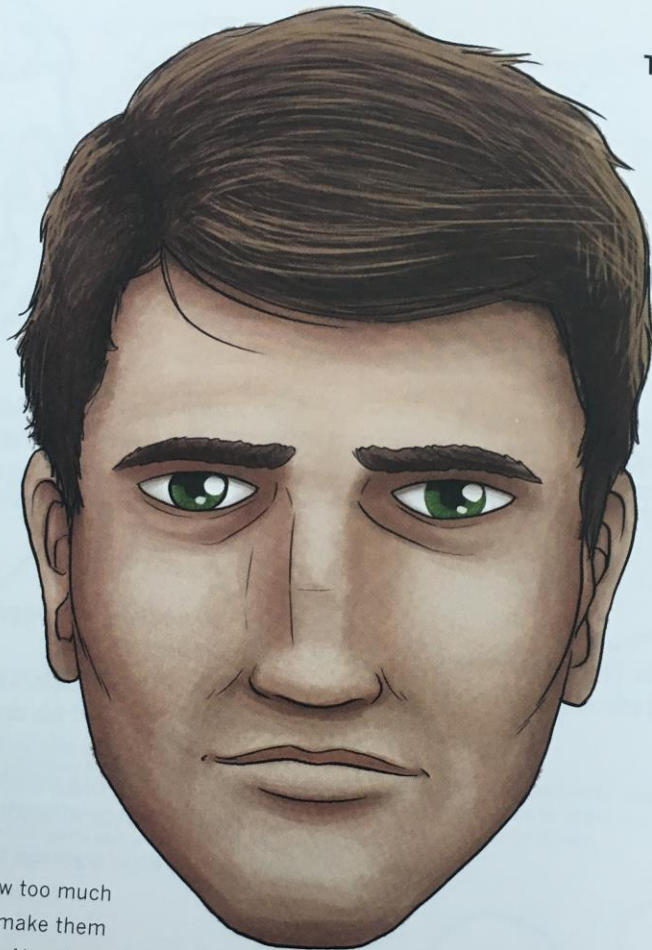
Facial Hair

Beards add a real sense of character to your design and are a clearly identifiable feature. Best of all, they come in all shapes and sizes, so there's a lot of playing around you can do!



The Eyes

Male eyes work well when using thick, solid shapes. They are generally narrower with fewer details in the eye itself, such as eyelashes and shine highlights.



What makes a feminine face

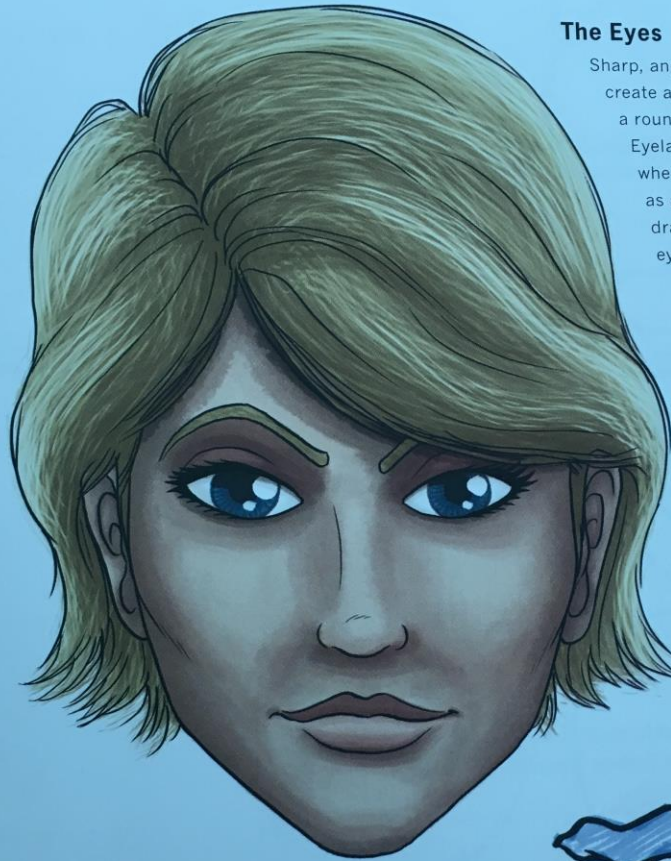
The Nose

A small, slightly upturned nose (with minimal detail) is a popular look for a feminine nose. Don't put too much solidity around the bridge of the nose, and when drawing the nostrils and tip of the nose, hint at or allude to their shape rather than outlining them heavily.



The Eyes

Sharp, angled eyebrows help create a feminine look, as does a rounder, almond-shaped eye. Eyelashes look more appealing when drawn in a cluster or as a silhouette instead of drawing each individual eyelash.



The Lips

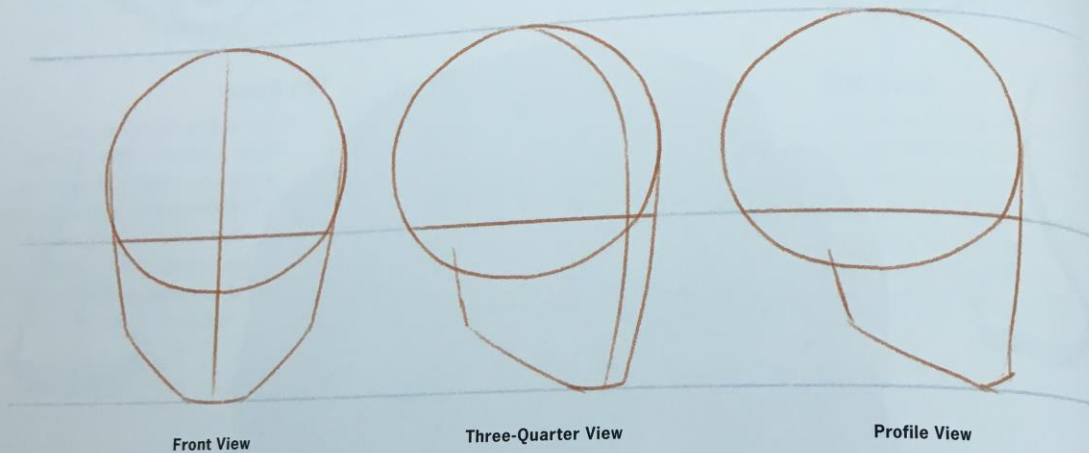
Feminine lips are full and curvy. When drawing comic-book-style lips, think of the top ridge of the lip as following an *m* shape. When shading or coloring lips, the top lip is always darker because it's angled away from high light sources. Lips can be made more feminine by adding some shine.



Drawing the stereotypical male face

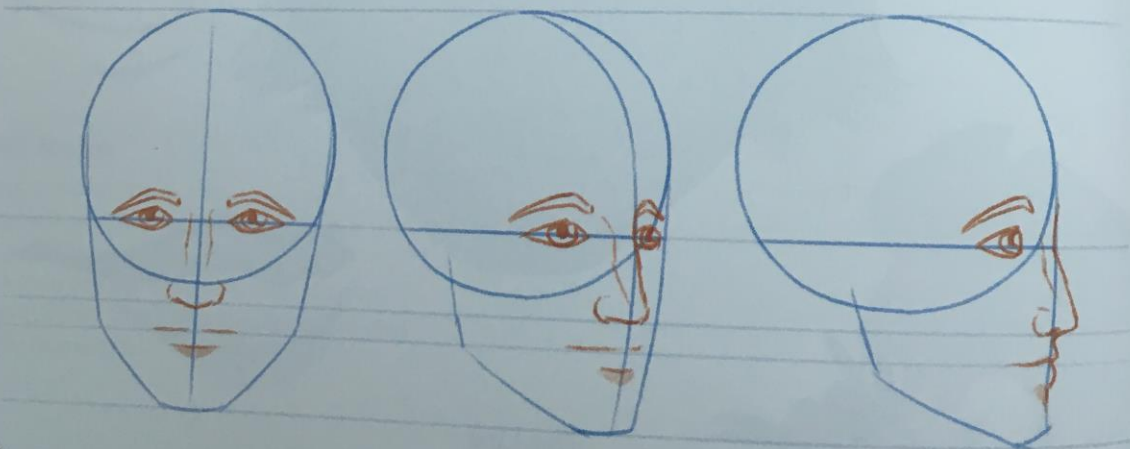
Any forensic anthropologist will tell you that a human skull provides a good indication of a person's gender. Therefore, we need to keep certain attributes in mind when drawing a

male or female head. For instance, males typically have squarer jaws and solid, square noses. Their necks and eyebrows are often thicker than a female's, too.



1 CONSTRUCT THE HEAD

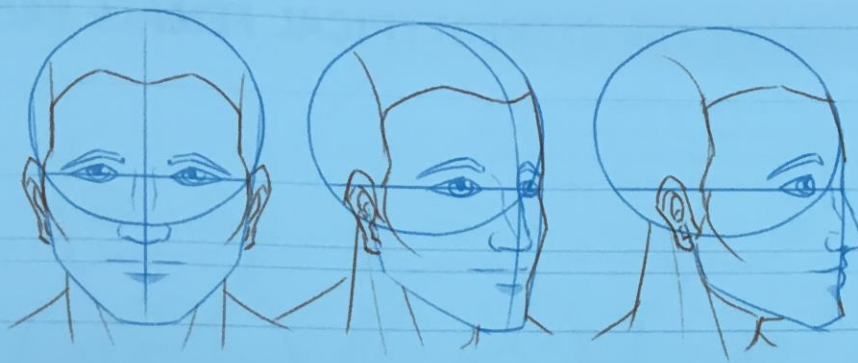
Draw construction lines for the basic head first, using a few simple lines and shapes, to act as a foundation for the rest of your drawing.



2 DRAW THE CORE FACIAL FEATURES

Add the core facial features: the eyes, nose and mouth. Note how their proportions change depending on their angle. For example, the eyes are an almond or round shape in the

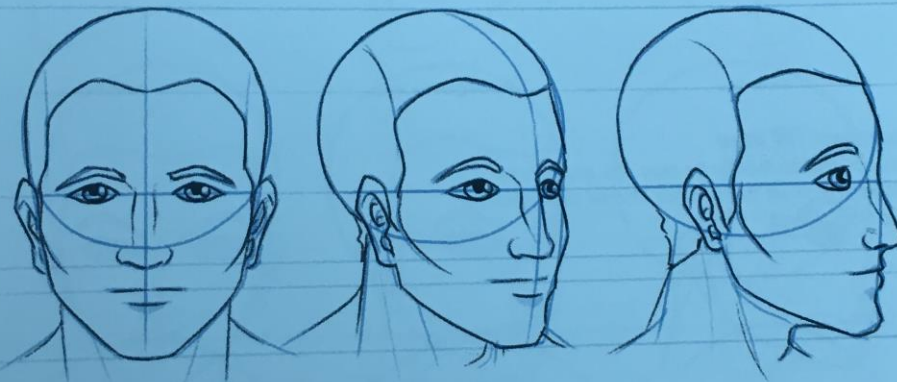
front view, and they graduate toward a cone shape when the head is in profile. Also note how, when the head is in profile view, we break past the construction lines of the face to show the nose protruding and the angles of the mouth lines.



3 REFINE THE HAIR, EARS AND FACIAL SHAPE

Add additional features to the face, including ears and hair. Refine the shape of the face to work with the features

you've chosen. At this point, add any additional features or props that will be part of the character's face.



4 CREATE YOUR FINAL IMAGE

Finish by refining the lines. The lines of your final refined image will need to be cleaner than your construction

sketch, and you'll need fewer of them. In this stage, every line makes a big difference, so don't overuse them!

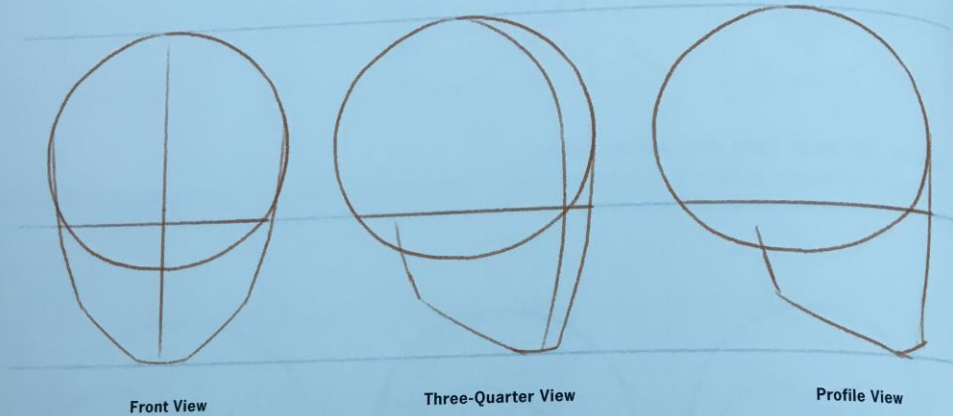


Masculine Details

When drawing a particularly masculine man, blocky lines and edges work well. Drawing lines for detail in the main areas of the face, such as the cheeks, eyes and nose, can add a look of age and masculinity.

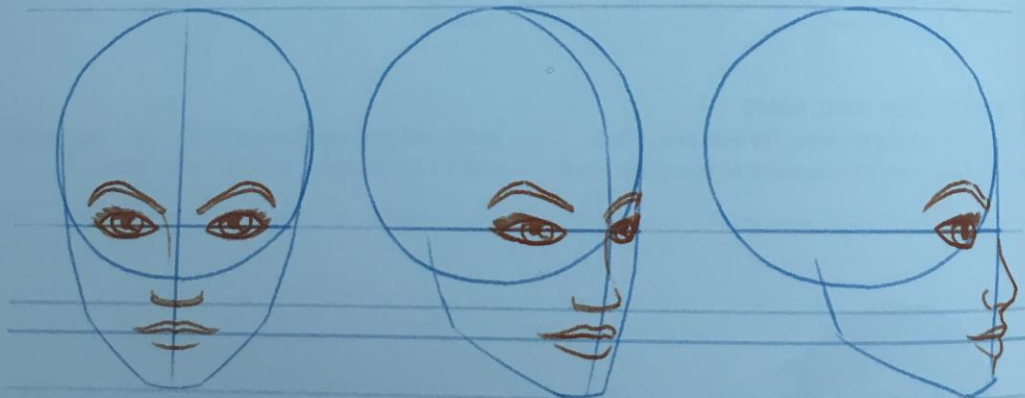
Drawing the stereotypical female face

In general, shapes are softer and slightly more angled on a feminine face, and the face itself often works best with less detail. If you add too much detail around the nose and face, your female character will look weathered or aged.



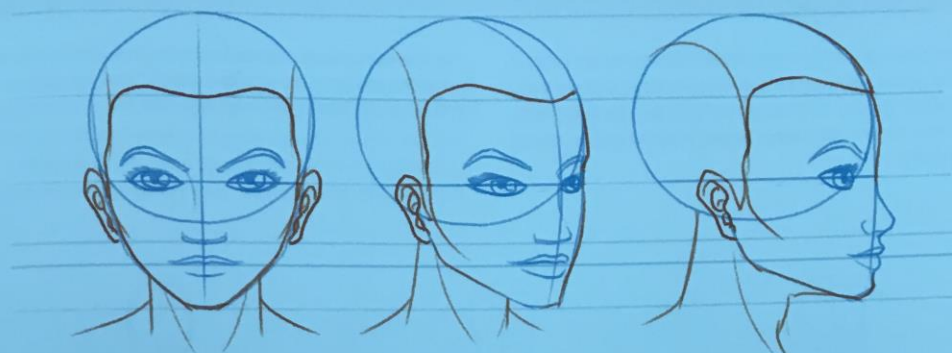
1 CONSTRUCT THE HEAD

Draw construction lines for the head. The geometry for a feminine head is curvier than a male's. The jaw angle is less blocky and more tapered.



2 DRAW THE CORE FACIAL FEATURES

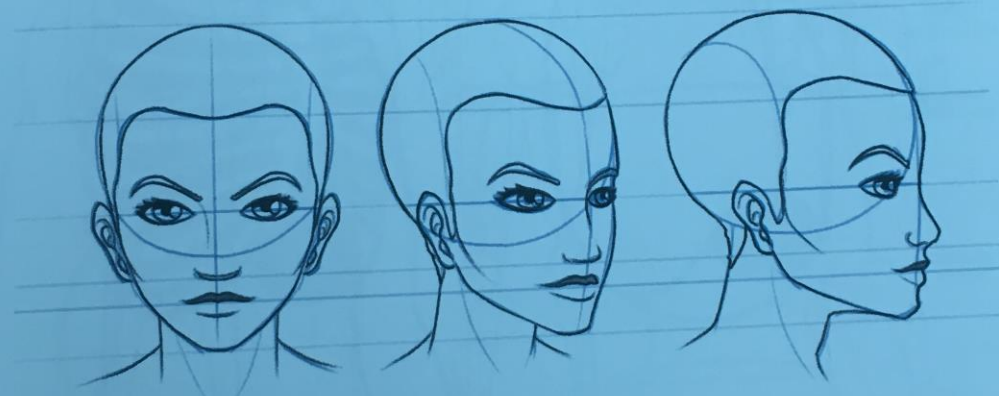
Add the core facial features: the eyes, nose and mouth. Typical feminine faces have larger eyes with a slight angle to them, with a smaller nose and mouth.



3 REFINE THE HAIR, EARS AND FACIAL SHAPE

Add additional features to the face, including ears and hair. Refine the shape of the face to work with the features

you've chosen. At this point, add any additional features or props that will be part of the character's face.



4 CREATE YOUR FINAL IMAGE

Finish by refining the lines. Remember that the more lines in a particular area (and the thicker they are), the more attention they draw. This can be used effectively by having

bolder lines in the eyes and lips to create a feminine look, while using minimal lines in the nose and other details of the face.

Feminine Details

Comic-style heroines often have a feline look. Soft, round cheeks make for an appealing feminine face, as does a slight slant to the eyes and a longer, thinner neck.



Basic body construction

The techniques used to simplify the head can be applied in the same way to the rest of the body. It's a little trickier, however, since the body is more complex. To make the process easier, we can draw the body in stages of solidity.

this stage of the process



1 CREATE THE SKELETON

Draw the body with simple lines and shapes to represent the human skeleton. The largest areas of a skeleton are the skull, the torso (rib cage) and the pelvis (hips). Draw the limbs with simple lines and circular shapes for the joints.

2 ADD MEAT TO THE BONES

Once we're happy with the skeletal construction, we can build up the silhouette (or outline) of our figure by drawing simple shapes that represent the largest areas of mass. The meat of the arms, legs and neck can be drawn as cylinders to help us plan how the body will be built up.

3 REFINE THE SHAPES

With the foundations in place, it's much easier to give shape to the figure and add details.

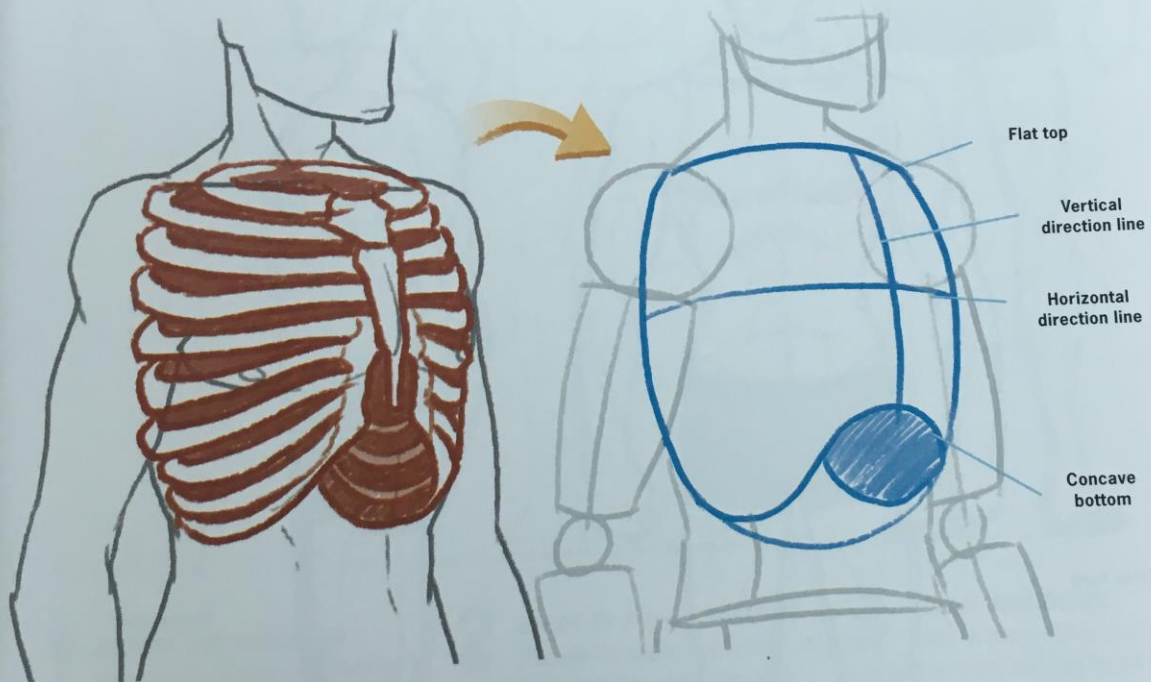
Deconstructing the torso

DECONSTRUCTING THE TORSO

The torso can be confusing to draw, but the process becomes easier when we draw figures using a construction skeleton first. The rib cage can be represented with very few lines and shapes while still clearly communicating its form.

Shown here, the rib cage is drawn with both vertical and horizontal direction lines. These help to indicate which

direction the torso is facing and give it a three-dimensional feel. Making the ellipse concave at the bottom of the rib cage is optional, but it can be helpful when drawing people on difficult angles or in complex poses.



Simplify the Torso

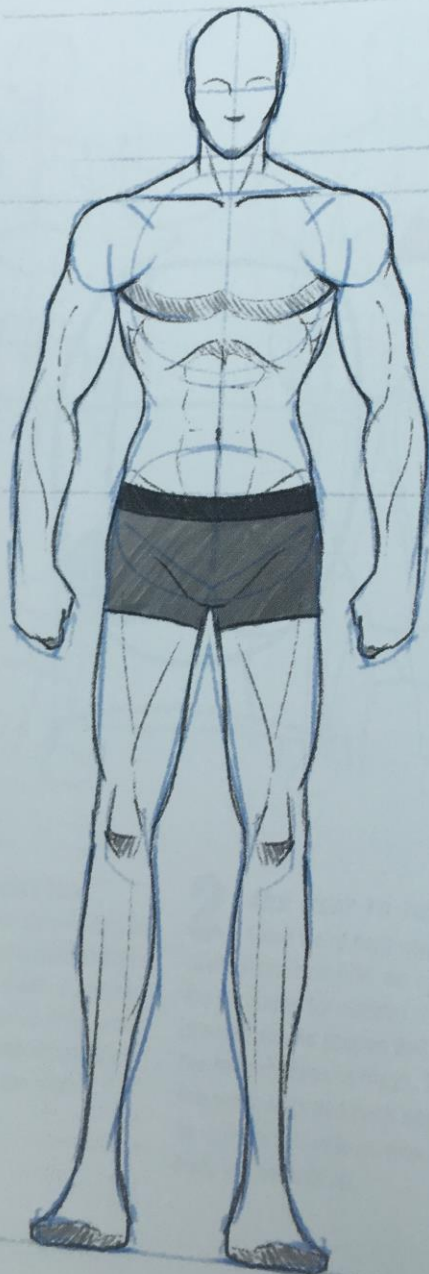
The rib cage can be simplified by drawing an ellipse with a flat top, making it concave at the bottom and adding some direction lines.

Drawing the stereotypical male body

The average masculine adult male is tall with broad shoulders and thick limbs and torso. As with the face, solid, blocky lines and shapes create a strong visual aesthetic. There are, of course, all shapes, sizes and body types, but

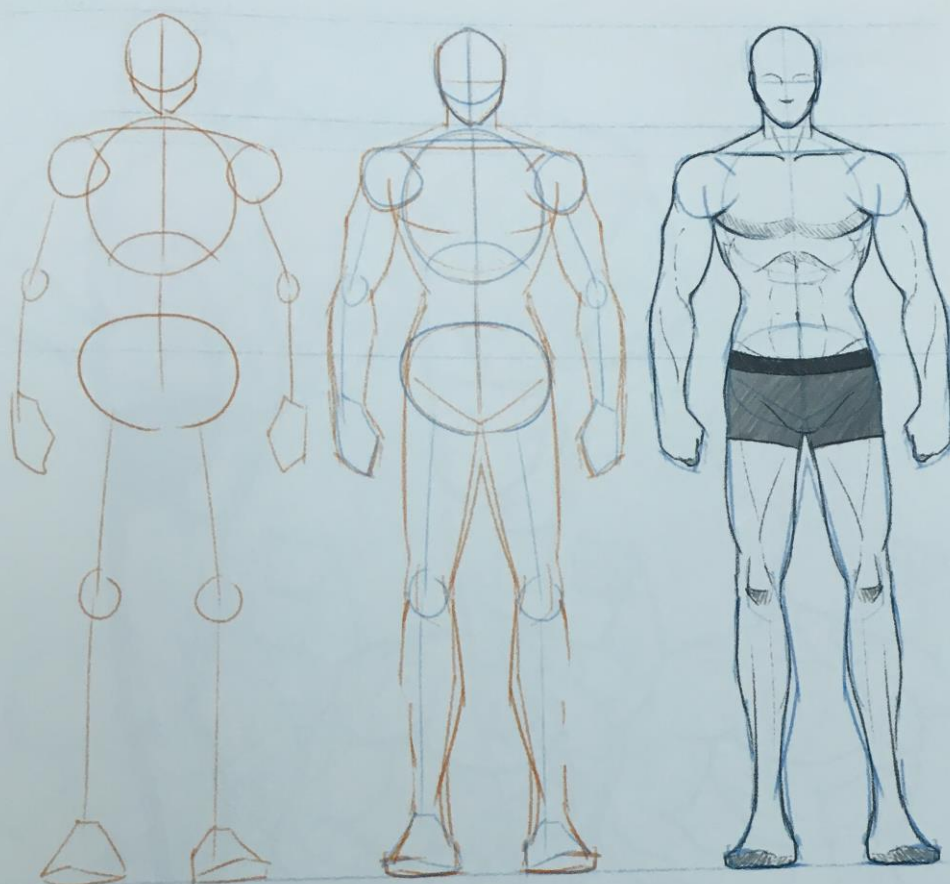
this will be our foundation example. We'll get to play with some fun variations later in this chapter!

Front View



Profile View





1 CREATE THE SKELETON

The primary purpose of starting your drawing with a construction skeleton is to test the posture and pose of your character (this is also referred to as gesture drawing). For example, a typical leading man will often have wide shoulders, straight legs and an upright chest. This creates the appearance of confidence and strength.

2 BLOCK IN ROUGH ANATOMY

Thicken the skeleton into what will be the final silhouette of the character's physique. This is a key part in effectively communicating the core physical attributes of the character. For example, there are a few areas on a male body where having solid blocks of mass will make them look particularly masculine: the shoulders and the chest, primarily, and the upper arms and upper legs, secondarily.

3 REFINE AND DETAIL

When drawing refinement lines of a character's anatomy, try to use lines as efficiently as possible. Too many lines will make your character look busy and unrealistic, while not enough will make him feel unfinished. Prioritize the aspects of your character that best communicate their personality and traits. For example, a fat character will need extra lines under the areas of largest mass to show the weight on their body, while a muscular or athletic male will need lines in the areas mentioned in step 2 (the shoulders, chest, upper arms and upper legs).



1 CREATE THE SKELETON

When in profile, a masculine pose works best when the head is upright, the chest is high and pushed forward, the back is slightly arched and the feet are straight and in a strong position.



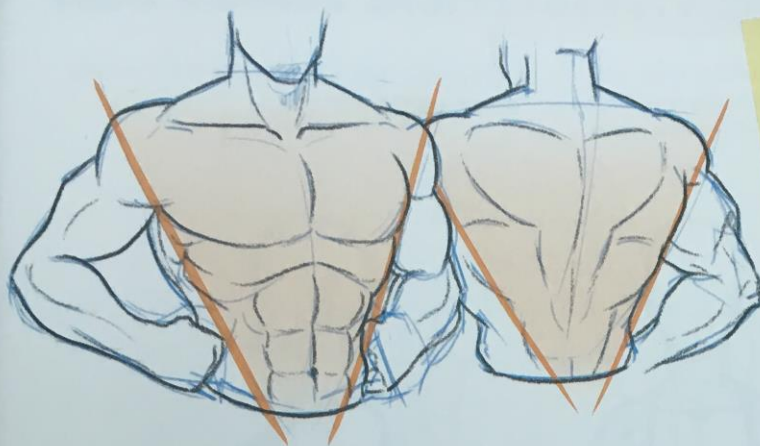
2 BLOCK IN ROUGH ANATOMY

When the arms are pulled back and the chest is puffed out, it looks like the person being depicted is ready for action, either to leap in and attack or to defend. It is the opposite of a neutral or relaxed pose, which is slumped in the shoulders with arms forward and legs bent.



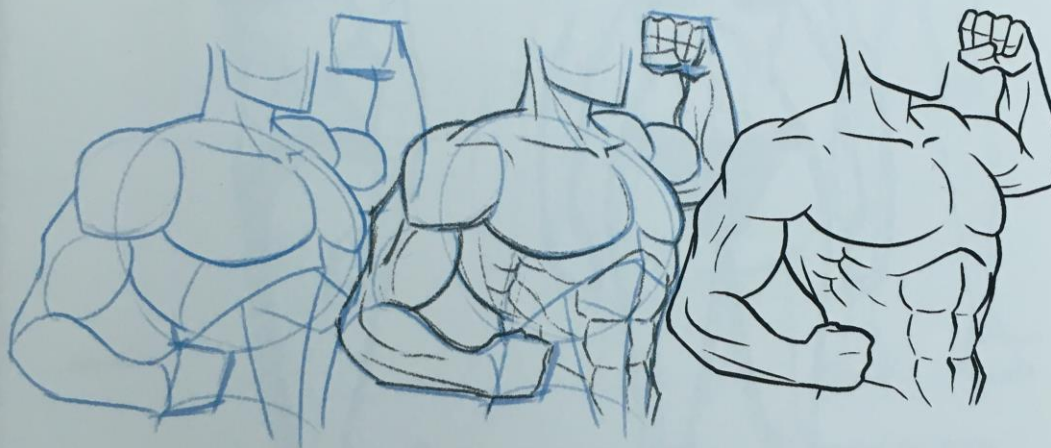
3 REFINE AND DETAIL

A character's silhouette refers to the shape and outline of the figure and what the image would be communicating if it were a solid, flat, single color. For a masculine posture, the silhouette should show the lines of the jaw and upright head, and the shapes of the chest, shoulders, arms and legs clearly, which accentuate the visual strength of the pose.



The V-Taper

A highly masculine look can be achieved by thinking of the torso and shoulders as following what's called a V-Taper. This is a particularly popular look for superheroes or meatheads.



Construction Sketch

Refined Sketch

Final Lines

Muscle Construction

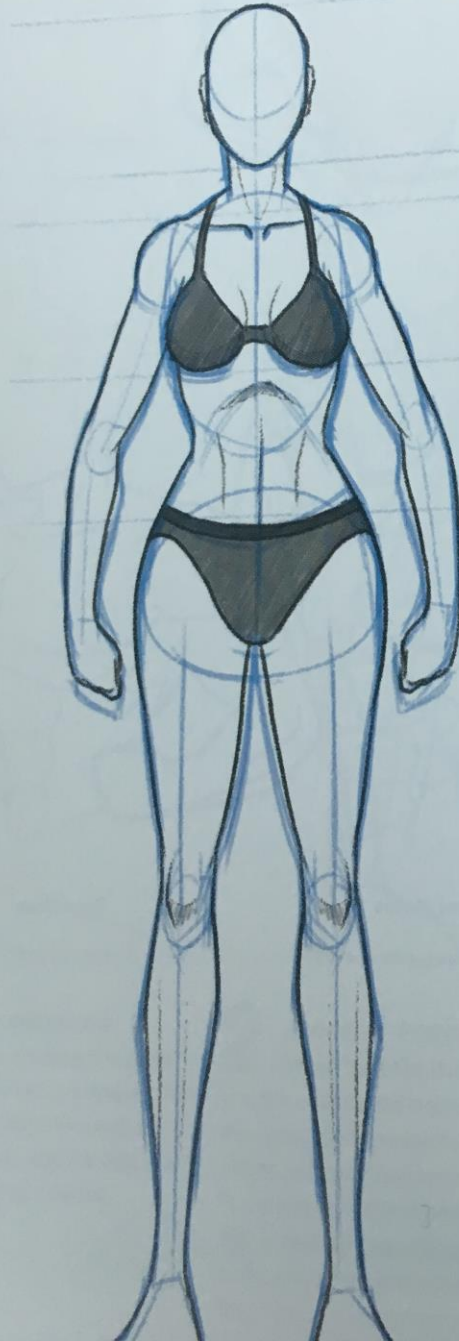
Muscles, like everything else, are drawn using basic shapes first. The largest shapes will always be used for the primary construction (in this case, the shoulders, biceps and triceps), around which the smaller and more intricate muscles can be constructed if the character you're drawing requires more detail. Once the construction is complete, think of the final lines as drawing the skin on top of the raw muscles. You won't need to draw every dividing line and shape. Just signify where the largest muscle groups connect by drawing lines in the connecting corners of these shapes, where the folds and creases would be deepest.

Drawing the stereotypical female body

DRAWING THE STEREOTYPICAL FEMALE BODY

The stereotypical female body has elegant curves, with an hourglass shape in the torso, and dainty or soft-looking limbs. This is, of course, not what every woman does or

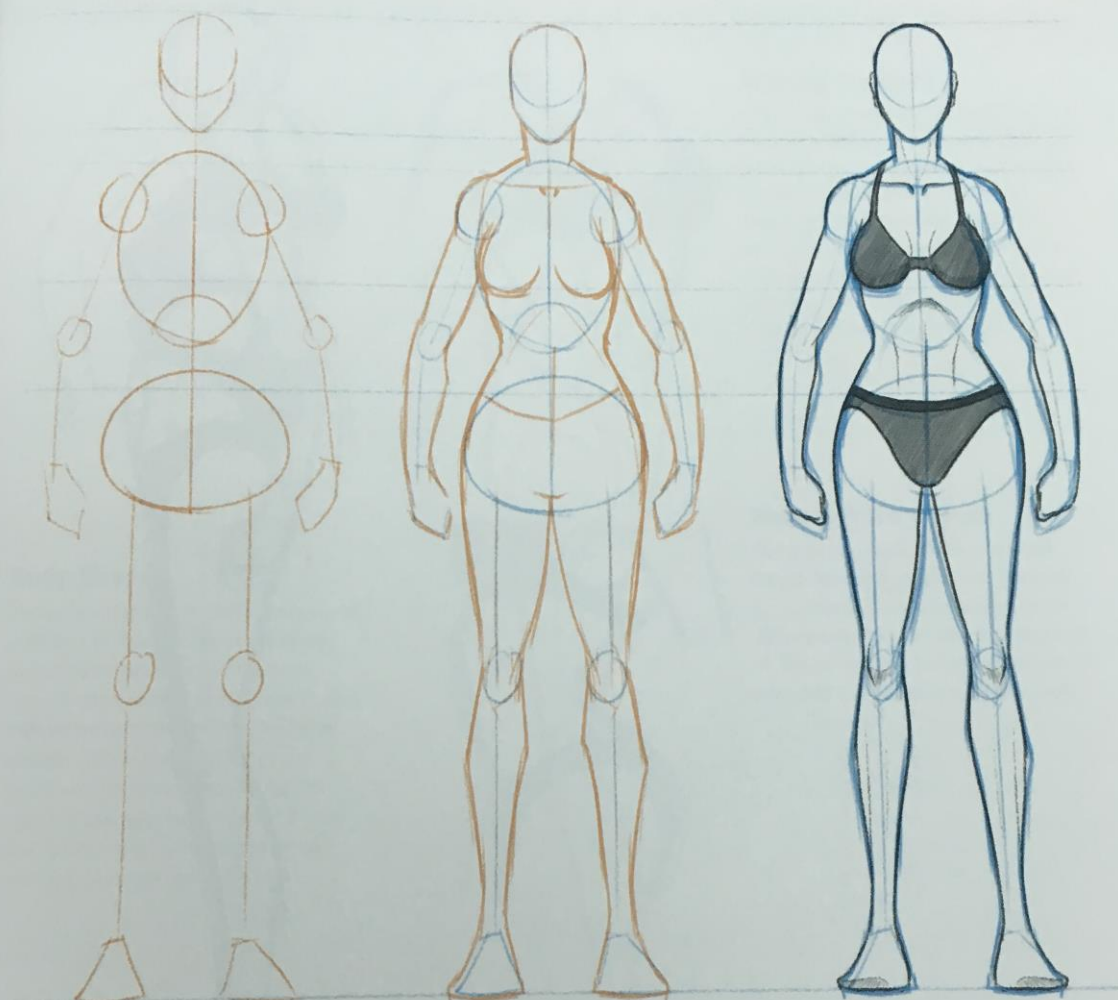
should look like, but it is a general approach for a leading lady, and a good starting point.



Front View



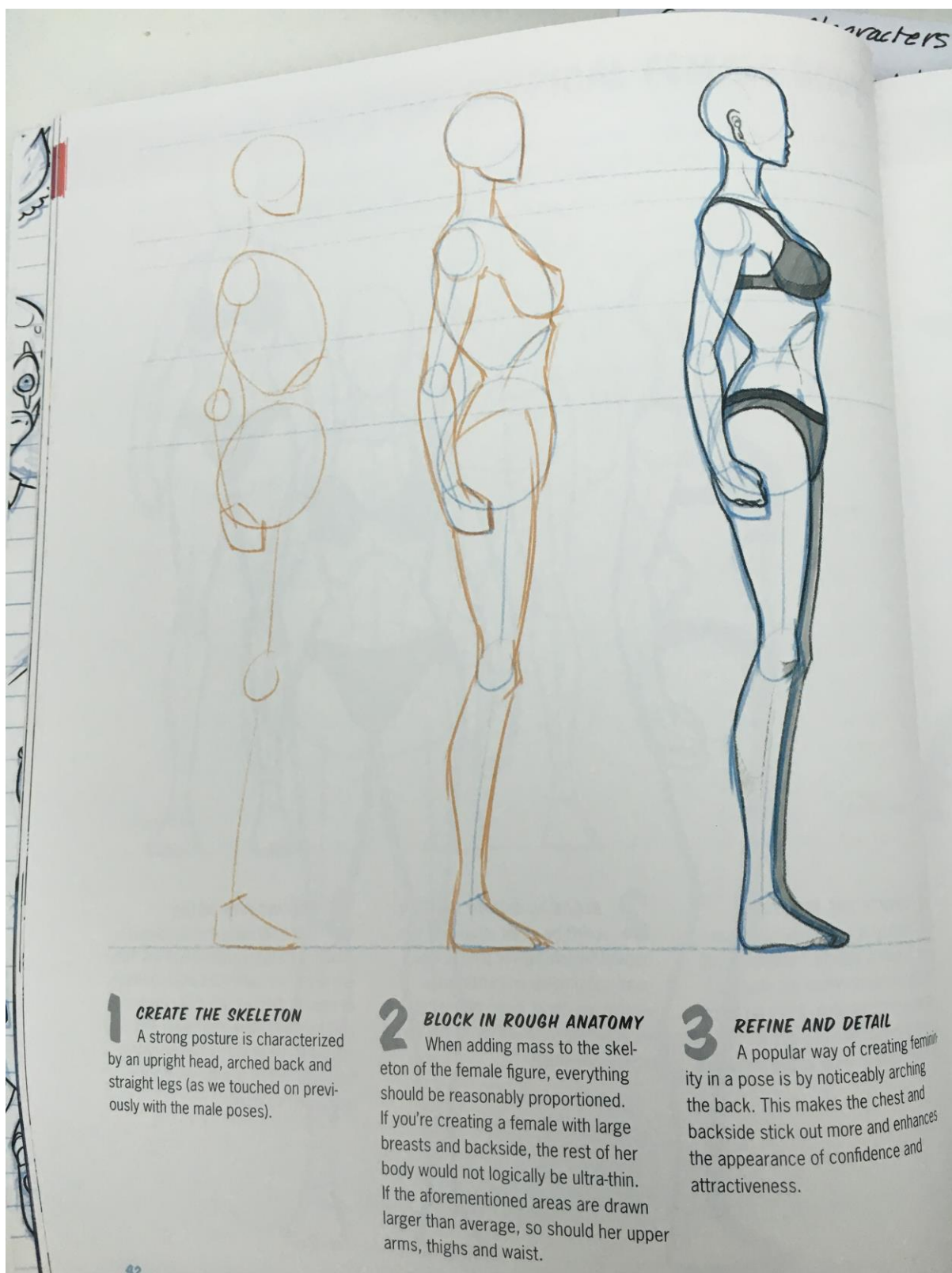
Profile View



1 CREATE THE SKELETON
 Female hips are typically wider than a male's, and their shoulders are usually narrower. When drawing the construction skeleton, it can be helpful to keep this in mind and aim for the hips to be at least as wide as the shoulders.

2 BLOCK IN ROUGH ANATOMY
 Don't be afraid of working with curves! Female figures tend to look more voluptuous, and while not all women are curvy, it can be a great accentuation to femininity to use them to your advantage.

3 REFINE AND DETAIL
 When drawing the final details of anatomy on the female body, think "less is more." Too many lines and indications of muscle definition will make the body look hard and more masculine. This can, of course, be useful for certain character types, but for a soft and feminine look, keep it simple!



1 CREATE THE SKELETON
A strong posture is characterized by an upright head, arched back and straight legs (as we touched on previously with the male poses).

2 BLOCK IN ROUGH ANATOMY
When adding mass to the skeleton of the female figure, everything should be reasonably proportioned. If you're creating a female with large breasts and backside, the rest of her body would not logically be ultra-thin. If the aforementioned areas are drawn larger than average, so should her upper arms, thighs and waist.

3 REFINE AND DETAIL
A popular way of creating femininity in a pose is by noticeably arching the back. This makes the chest and backside stick out more and enhances the appearance of confidence and attractiveness.



Body Shape

The body shape of females, compared with that of males, has some important differences. Women typically have thinner waists, are usually drawn with wider hips and, of course, have breasts. These three factors combined are the reason the hourglass figure is used heavily in comic books and cartoons; it is an accentuated and stereotypical feminine look.



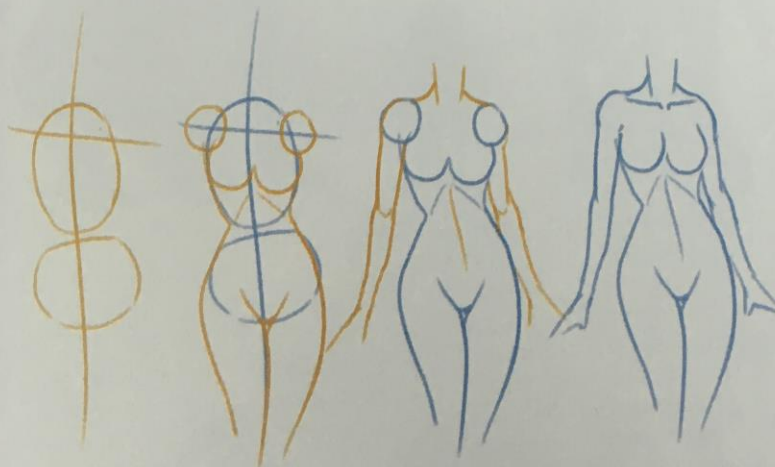
Arching the Back

Slightly (or extremely) arching the back of a female character will do a few things. It will make them look more confident, and it will bring prominence to the chest, abdomen and backside. Obviously, this would look ridiculous if applied to all of your females, but in certain situations, it may be a useful aesthetic tool.



Women Have Curves

Don't be scared to make a woman curvy! Rounded shapes, particularly for the chest, hips and thighs, are a simple and effective way to add a hint of dynamism to a female character, or even add a maternal, motherly look.



Necessary Anatomy

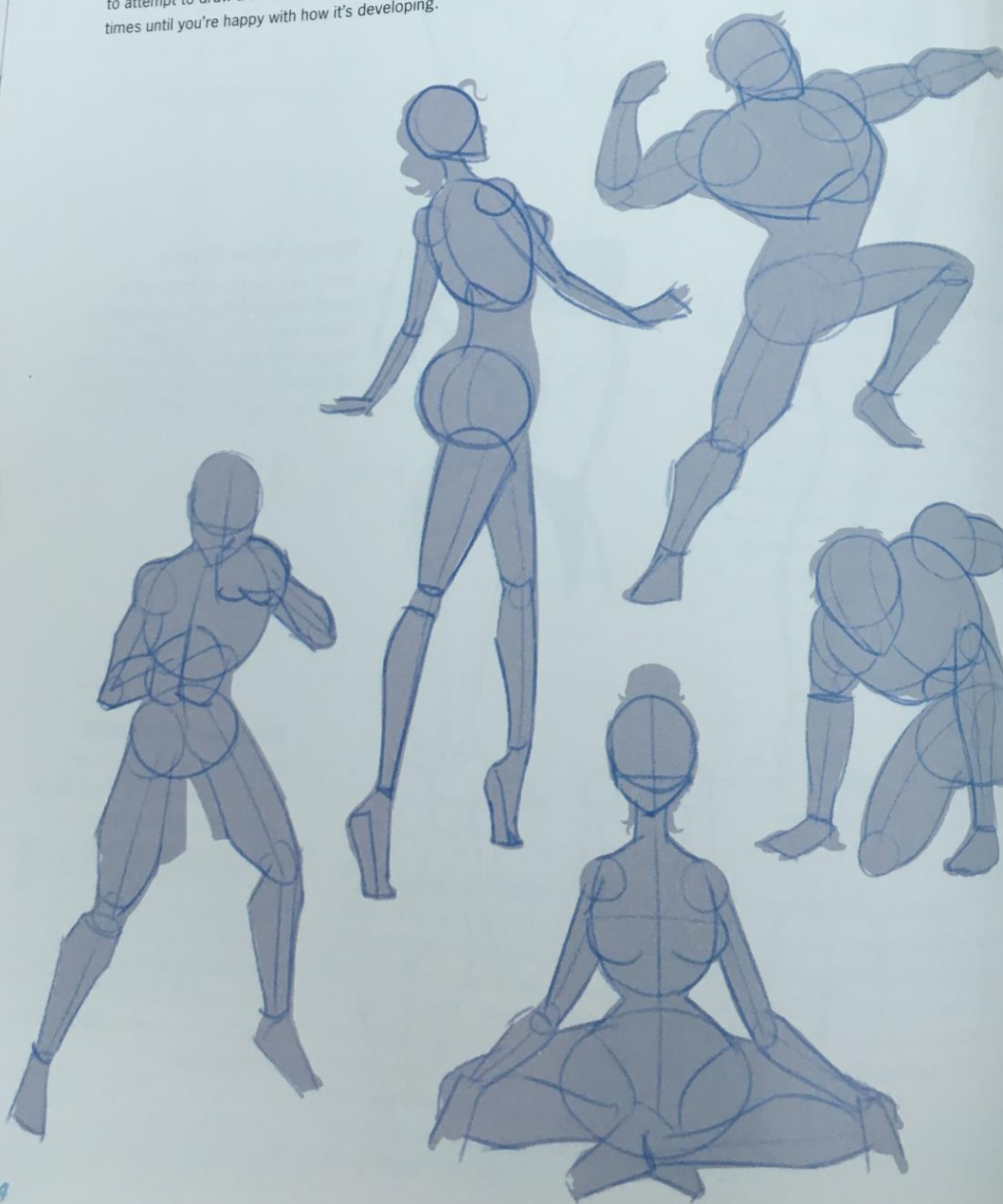
Breasts are often a difficult thing to draw well. It may sound odd to recommend that artists familiarize themselves with this part of the female form, but being shy about drawing a prevalent piece of anatomy will not improve your abilities. Life drawing is a great way to see how the female form can be interpreted.

Practice poses using construction lines

PRACTICE POSES USING CONSTRUCTION LINES

Drawing dynamic poses becomes a much simpler process when using construction lines. The sketch acts as a taste test so we can see if we like the direction we're going in before we commit to the whole meal, as it were. It's normal to attempt to draw a character in one difficult pose many times until you're happy with how it's developing.

Furthermore, your construction work will improve with time and practice, as will your ability to spot what is and isn't working. Work with your figure to produce strong silhouettes that communicate the intention and motion of your characters.



All shapes and sizes

ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

As with the head, once you've learned how to draw the human form with construction lines, you can free yourself up and be creative with how you warp and play with these shapes! Play with the proportions, push yourself outside of your comfort zone and create as many interesting body types as possible! You can also use reference images or models to deconstruct

different body types, which you can then recreate in various poses using simple construction lines. One of the most valuable things about construction lines is that they free you up to be more creative with less effort!

Large hips and a narrow waist give this tribal warrior a very strong but womanly aesthetic.



This old lady has a long, narrow neck and hunched posture, which accentuates the fragility of her age. Her very small shoulders and thin arms also make her look timid and weak.



A short, heavy build (made by using large circles with the construction lines) can help accentuate several character types, including those that are angry, feisty, jolly or, in this case, timid.



This tall, lanky character with long limbs has a bent-in posture, which accentuates his relaxed attitude and ensures his height doesn't make him look too intimidating.

