Blogs

**How To Carve the Inspiration Out of Your Artist Block**

*A guide to finding the motivation to make art.*

If you’re anything like the artists here at Creative Cafe, then chances are you have experienced art block at least *once* in your life. Especially with the added pressure of college courses, critiques, and work-social balance, finding the time, place, and motivation to create art can feel like an immense weight on your shoulders. However, if you are planning to pursue a career in the arts (or just want to get back into a fun hobby), it is extremely important that you recognize how to beat the art block. So, we have compiled a list of some of our best tips to gaining the drive to do art, courtesy of the Creative Cafe team.

1. Your Supplies Need to Be in Sight

One of the biggest reasons that people will fall off of a hobby is because of the idea “out of sight, out of mind.” This *especially* rings true for artists, as I have personally found that when my supplies are all tucked away in a chest under my bed or deep within a closet somewhere, I lose the motivation to go searching for them. Why spend the extra ten minutes I have before class drawing when I can much more easily doom-scroll TikTok?

So, in order to combat this, you need to have your supplies in a visible spot that you visit every single day. It doesn’t have to be your whole lineup of markers, pens, pencils, papers, watercolors, etc., but it should be some basic things: a sketchbook, a pencil, and *maybe* a special marker or pen if you’re feeling fancy. You could even keep it as simple as keeping sticky notes on your desk and in your backpack, that way if inspiration strikes, you have a place to easily develop your ideas.

2. Touch Grass (Respectfully)

Jokes aside, embracing the outdoors is such an amazing way to fight art block. Why? Well, while I may not have totally scientific answers, I do have a few theories. First, one major cause of art block can be over stimulation; you may have too many ideas and not know where to start, be in a crowded, boisterous, cluttered room, or even just be extremely stressed from your workload. Whatever it may be, taking a step outside, letting yourself breathe, and enjoying the calm around you can clear your mind and bring you back to a productive headspace.

Moreover, specifically going outside to feel the sun rays on your skin can also significantly aid in erasing art block. That sweet, sweet Vitamin D that your skin generates from light exposure? It is *scientifically* proven to be a mood regulator and decrease depression, meaning that your negative attitude affecting your inability to create will disappear when the glorious warmth of the rays melts on your skin. (p.s.: in my own experience, this works for all things, not just art block. Going outside feels like a warm hug even on the coldest of days).

Finally, going outside can be a source of inspiration in and of itself. Whether you are in the city, the suburbs, or the countryside, beauty in nature and the outside world is all around you. Maybe try a watercolor painting of the sky or attempt flower pressing for a calming art exercise!

3. Browse Pinterest or Landing Space

Sometimes, all we need is a good reference or a mood board to inspire us to create. With Pinterest or Landing Space, you can do exactly that! I often find that these sites in particular offer a plethora of not just traditionally “pretty” images, but also some super helpful poses, anatomy, and project ideas. For instance, my team and I on the Rutgers Review utilize Pinterest to come up with a cohesive scheme for our feature theme in our magazine issues. Having that inspiration allows me to create my designs much more effectively and efficiently.

3.5 Do NOT Browse Instagram or TikTok

You may be tempted to peruse *all* of your social media apps for inspiration – but be warned. If you find yourself in apps with short-form video content, you *will* spiral into a never-ending doom-scroll of unrelated content. While these apps may have some motivational art content, they tend to be buried beneath trends, memes, and the garbage our algorithm feeds us on a daily basis.

4. Treat Yourself

While yes, saving money is important (especially in college), sometimes treating yourself to new supplies could be the spark that ignites inspiration. Maybe it’s a new sketchbook, some pretty gel pens you’ve been dying to buy, or even some washi tape you want to splurge on to beautify your works. *Buy it*. It is not easy to balance being a creative with college, so have some empathy for yourself and splurge just once on that item you have been eyeing up. You deserve it, and it’ll encourage you to keep creating in the long run.

5. [Reference.sketchdaily](http://reference.sketchdaily.net/)

When you are really stumped and don’t feel a lick of inspiration, try your hand at practicing the basics. Whether it is studying anatomy or attempting different animals, the Reference Sketch Daily website allows you to hone your skills through hundreds of reference images to filter through as well as a timer to keep your gestures loose and flowing. From my own experience, getting out of my comfort zone to draw an animal or a pose from this website has been liberating and helped me get out of a slump many times. Of course, if you prefer other mediums of creativity, you can find many other prompt generator websites to simulate a similar effect.

6. Just Do It. Make it Ugly!

Sometimes we get *so* in our heads about creating because we want it to be picture-perfect with no flaws; however, art gets messy, so embrace it! Treat your sketchbook or other canvas like a journal and just have fun. Smear blobs, write notes, draw silly faces, or make the ugliest thing you can think of – you do not have to overthink or be too serious about it. Facing a blank page or canvas can seem so daunting, so when you alleviate that perfection from the get-go, the fear fades away.

I hope you find these tips helpful at conquering your own artist block! Be sure to message us at yourname@fakeemail.com and let us know your thoughts, including any more tips if you have them!

L8r Sk8r!

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* Editorial on what being a creative in the digital age means – how it shapes us (personal story)
* How to get out of art block

Week in the life of a creative director (with a looming deadline)

By Amber Yams

If you