

**Title:**

Drawing The Human Figure - Tips For Beginners

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**Summary:**

Figure drawing is challenging. The act of rendering the human form accurately on paper can be intimidating and frustrating if you try to tackle everything all at once. It is for this reason that you should take things one-step at a time and most importantly, practice! The following article will provide you with some of the basics for understanding how to approach your next figure drawing project.

**Keywords:****Article Body:**

Figure drawing is challenging. The act of rendering the human form accurately on paper can be intimidating and frustrating if you try to tackle everything all at once. It is for this reason that you should take things one-step at a time and most importantly, practice! The following article will provide you with some of the basics for understanding how to approach your next figure drawing project.

The very first thing you will need obviously is your drawing supplies. Drawing does not have to be a very expensive art form. You can get started with a pencil and paper if you so desire, but there are certain supplies that will produce better results. It is quite difficult to recommend the perfect materials as every artist is different and therefore will have different preferences. Only time and experience will tell you what materials work best for your particular style. Your choice of materials will also depend on the chosen subject matter.

The best advice would be to get a variety of different pencils and papers and simply experiment. You will eventually come to like certain materials over others. Get your self a pad of newsprint paper. Newsprint paper is fairly inexpensive and excellent for practice drawings, although you should not expect these drawing to last very long. They will more than likely yellow over time. For your permanent drawings, a good quality paper is recommended. Strathmore is a good brand to look into. You may want to start with a medium textured paper as it has enough "tooth" to hold a fair amount of medium, but smooth enough to allow for detailed work. You will also need a good size drawing board that is smooth and flat for your drawing surface.

Before you even lift a pencil, you should have a basic understanding of human anatomy. When you study anatomy, you will learn more about the construction of the human body and its proportions. You will also have a basic understanding of the muscles and tendons and how they direct and control the body. There is no need to get carried away and memorize every muscle, bone, and tendon in the human body; just a fundamental understanding should suffice.

Getting the proportions correct in your figure drawing is one of the biggest challenges you will face as a beginner. It is for this reason that a unit of measurement was established using the models head. This is the distance from the top of the head to the bottom of the chin. 7 ½ to 8 heads is the standard measurement that has been developed for the height of an erect figure. This measurement can vary depending on the subject so you may have to make adjustments to your figure drawing. You should realize that the measurement of 7 ½ heads corresponds to the figure when it is standing erect. If the pose of your figure changes, adjustments will obviously have to be made.

Artists will often use a pencil to take the head measurement. Stand a reasonable distance from your subject. Grab your pencil from the bottom as if you were holding a hammer and extend your arm out fully in front of you toward the subject. Try and keep your head as still as possible. Make certain that you are standing in the same spot each time you take measurements. Now closing one eye match the tip of the pencil with the top of the subjects head. Place your thumb on the pencil and slide it down until it matches with the bottom of the subjects chin. You now have taken the "head" measurement of your subject, which will now serve as a reference for measuring the rest of your subject.

When deciding on the type of pose for your figure drawing make sure you choose one that looks natural. Your model will be holding his or her pose for a long period of time and should be comfortable and relaxed. Give your model adequate time to move around and get settled. The more relaxed and natural the pose, the more believable the final drawing or painting will be. If your model looks uncomfortable or awkward, your painting or drawing will reflect that as well.

There are number of different lighting situations that you can create for your figure drawing or painting. Will you be working indoors or outdoors? If indoors, will you be working in a room that has natural sunlight or will you be using artificial light? What direction will the light source come from? Will there be multiple light sources? If you are a beginner, you may want to create a lighting effect that strikes your model from only one direction and illuminates your figure only partially, thereby creating more shadow. This will make for a much easier figure drawing. As you gain more experience, you can then move on to more

complex lighting effects.

When you begin your drawing, you should not be overly concerned with getting every detail correct in your figure or other objects that make up your drawing. Many beginners fall into this trap and ultimately wind up with a drawing that is out of proportion or that just looks wrong. Study your subject, squint your eyes and try to locate the basic shapes that make up your subject.

Figure drawing and painting is a vast subject and this article only touches on some of the basics. You should definitely take classes or workshops and practice your figure drawing with live models. Purchase a few good books on figure drawing and anatomy. Join discussion groups and ask questions. Most importantly though, keep practicing and never give up.