

Brush PEN Basics

LEARN ALL THE BASIC STOKES

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Brush basics

A FREE WORKBOOK BY

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Learning brush calligraphy can seem super intimidating! But it is all about practice and muscle memory, and we need to train our eyes and hands to repeat movements and strokes that will later construct our letters. Once we know how to build letters correctly, we can make words, and after that, we can learn about composition and flourishes—one step at a time.

I know the process might seem too long even to try, but don't give up on me when we haven't even started, ok? To master brush calligraphy, all you need are the TWO P's: Patience and Practice.

I created this free guide to help you understand the basics of brush calligraphy, whether you are using your iPad or a brush pen and paper. Below you can find my recommendations for brush pens and paper.

SUPPLIES



Tombow Fudenosuke
» howjoyful.com/tombowfude

Pentel Touch
» howjoyful.com/pentelfude

Kuretake Fudebiyori
» howjoyful.com/kuretake



Smooth paper to print:
» howjoyful.com/hppaper



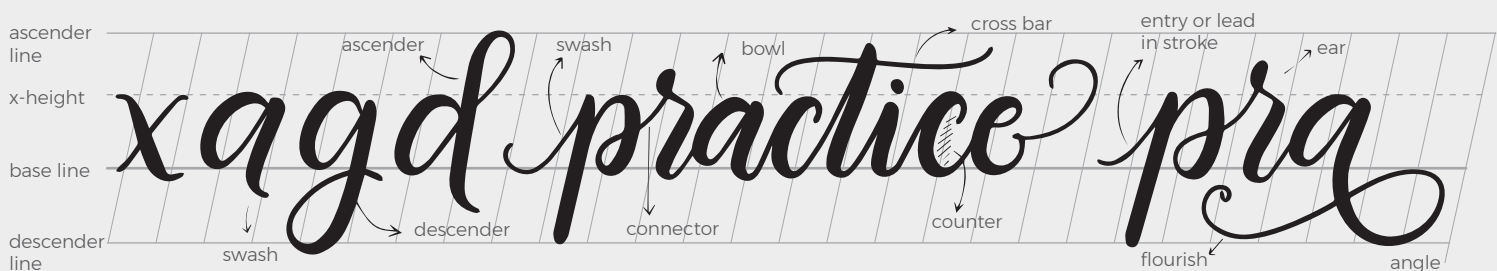
Rhodia pad
» howjoyful.com/rhodia



Tracing paper
» howjoyful.com/tracepaper

ANATOMY

When you are starting with brush calligraphy, there are some terms that you need to know to understand better when other artists (and I in this guide) explain the motions. Knowing your reference lines (listed on the left) are a must, so start there first! You can then slowly get familiar with the rest (I didn't list all of them, just the most important ones to get you started)



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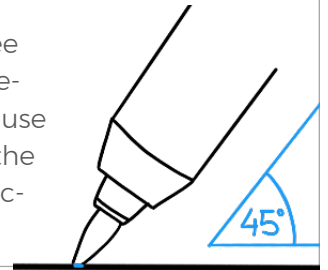
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PRESSURE BASICS

UPSTROKE



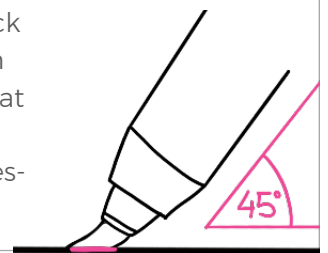
These are thin lines (colored blue in this guide), to achieve a thin line, you have to glide your pen, applying very light pressure (just enough for the tip to touch the paper), always holding your pen at a 45-degree angle from your paper. Thin lines are usually the hardest to master, because you will have less contact with the paper, but don't worry, because it's all about muscle memory, the more you practice your upstrokes, the better and less shaky they will be (Also not drinking coffee before practice will help)



DOWNSTROKE



These are thick lines, (colored in hot pink in this guide), to achieve thick lines you need to apply full pressure to your pen so that most of the tip of your brush touches the paper, always holding your pen at a 45-degree angle from your paper. The problem most people have achieving thick lines is that they think that brush pens can break if you put too much pressure. BUT don't worry about that! They are designed to handle that pressure; you will damage your brush pen when you use porous copy paper way more than any damage that can be caused by putting pressure on it.

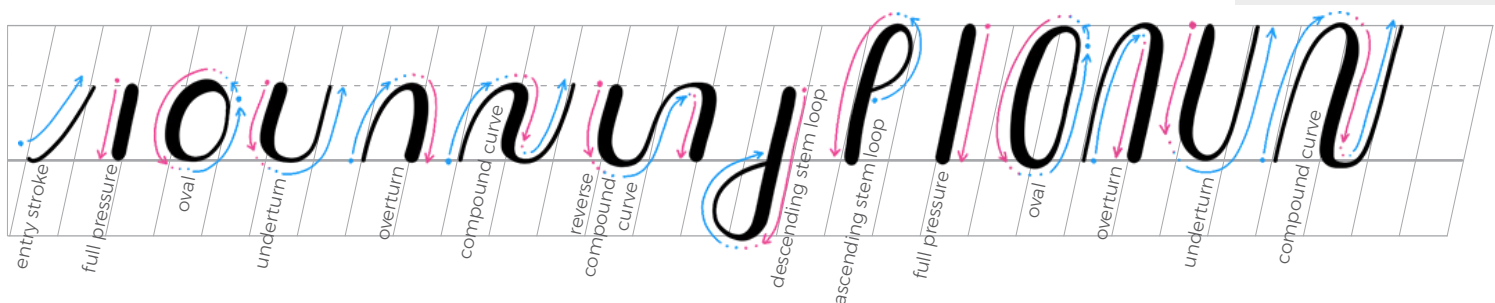


TRANSITION



These are the spots where you start lifting or start applying pressure (marked with dots in this guide) to go from a downstroke to an upstroke or vice versa. It's essential to know where you need to start with your transitions because if you start too late or too early, you might have readability issues when you begin constructing letters.

BASIC STROKES



These are the foundation on which we will construct letters; it is essential to master how to make the pieces before we put everything together in a letter or word. And the only way to learn them is by doing drills; this repetitive motion will help us create muscle memory; this way, our hands, and eyes will get used to the movements and transitions.

UPSTROKE →
 TRANSITION ·····
 DOWNSTROKE →

Upstroke & Downstroke

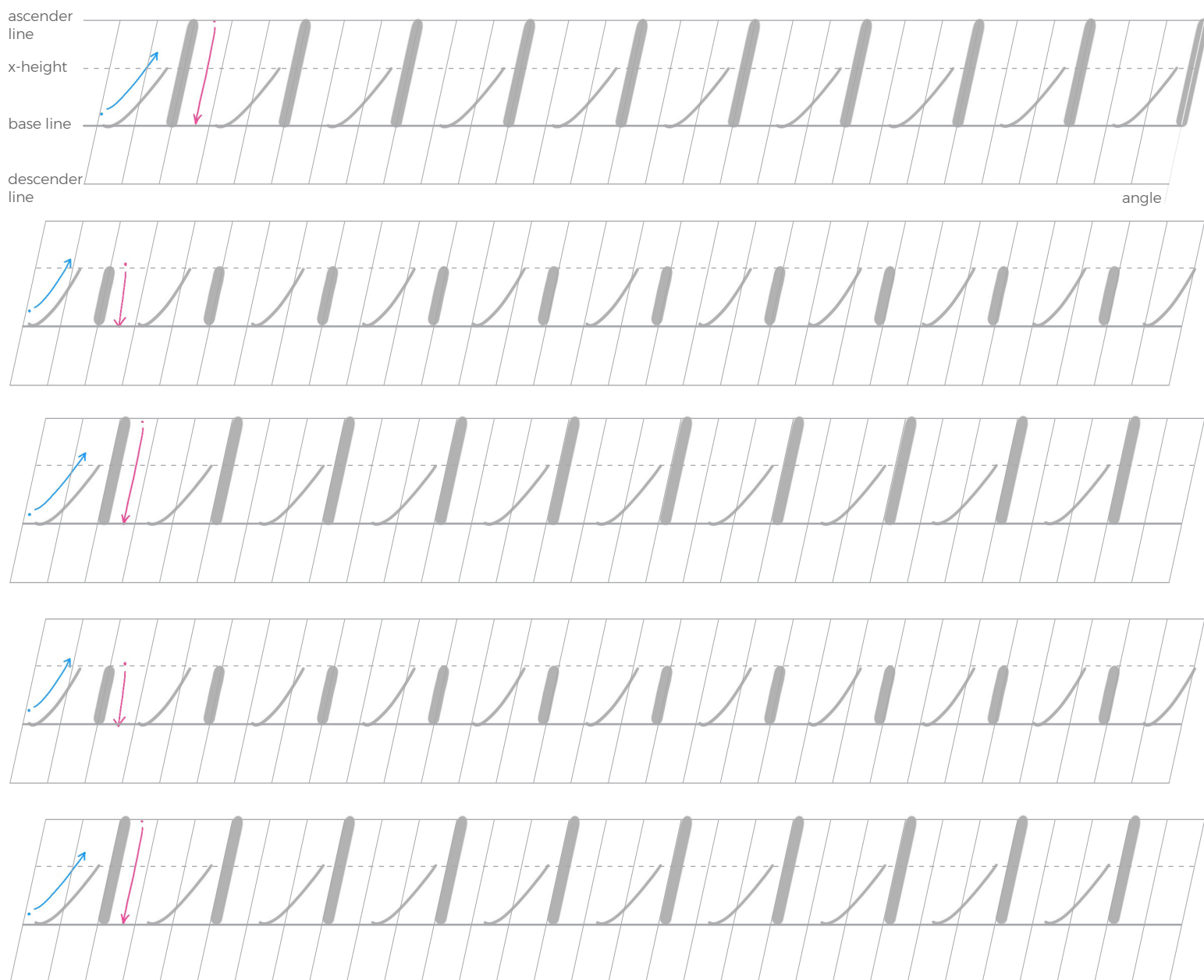


UPSTROKE or ENTRY STROKE

Glide our brush pen and in an upwards movement applying as minimal pressure as possible so our pen will lightly touch the paper. From baseline to the x-height.

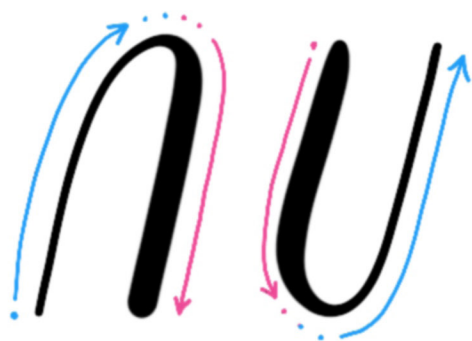
DOWNSTROKE or FULL PRESSURE STROKE

Apply full pressure in our brush pen, always maintaining a 45-degree angle in relation to our paper. Press as hard as you can and slide slowly down; I've set up so you can practice long and short downstrokes.



UPSTROKE →
 TRANSITION
 DOWNSTROKE →

Overturn & Underturn

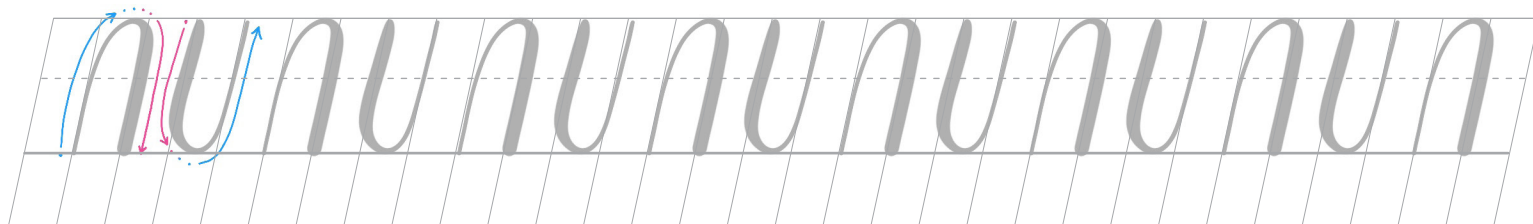
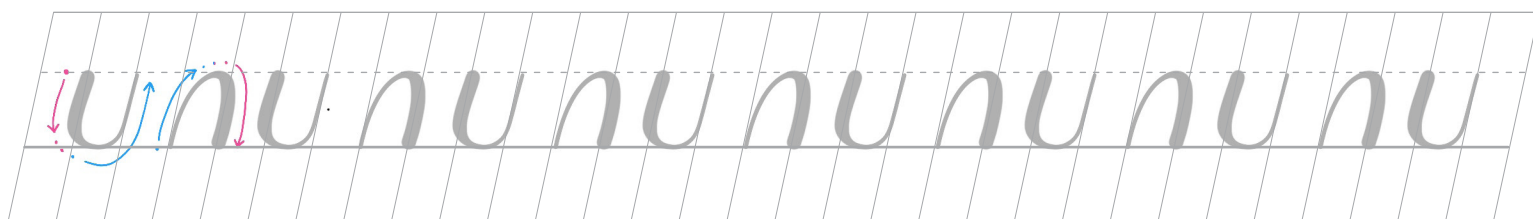
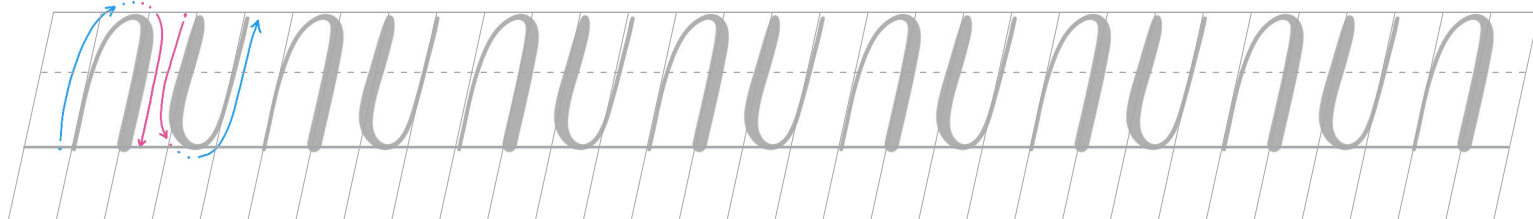
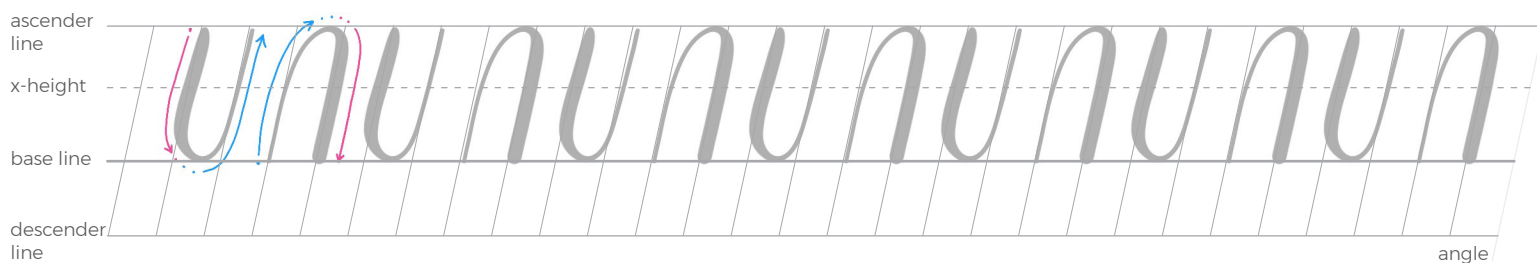


OVERTURN STROKE

Start where the single blue dot is placed, glide your pen in an upstroke and on the top start transitioning to a thick downstroke, once you reach the pink section apply intense pressure maintaining a 45-degree angle.

UNDERTURN STROKE

Start where the single pink dot is placed, apply firm down-pressure on the downstroke and right before you turn, start transitioning into a thin and light line. For the upstroke glide the pen as soft and with very light pressure.



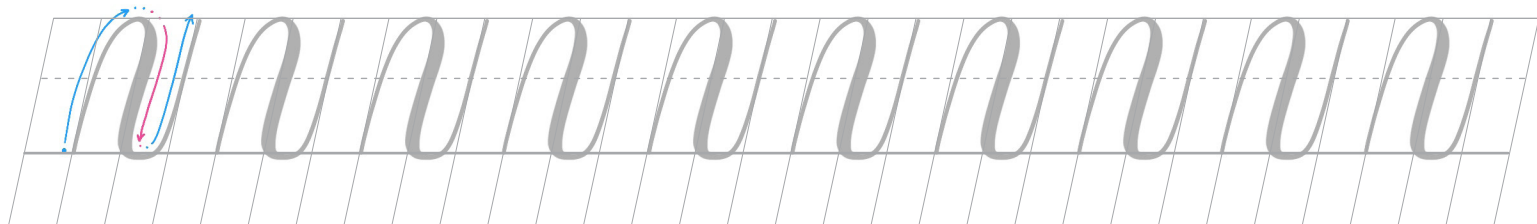
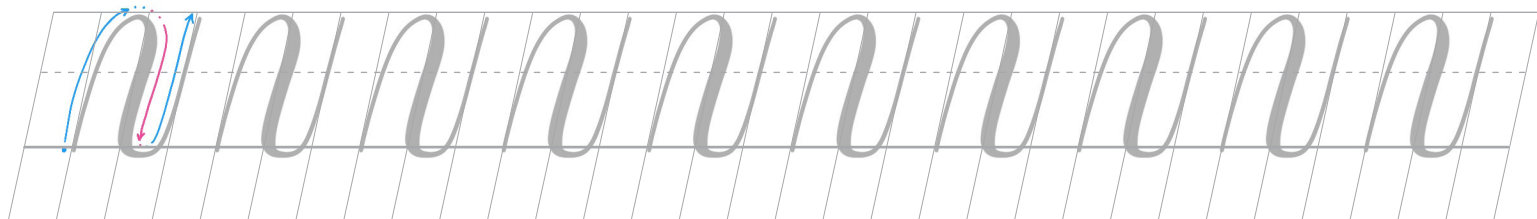
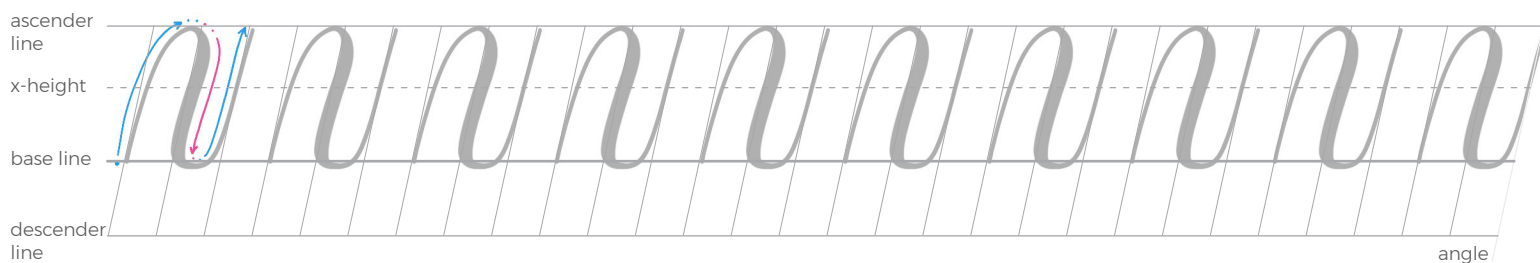
UPSTROKE →
 TRANSITION
 DOWNSTROKE →

Compound Curve



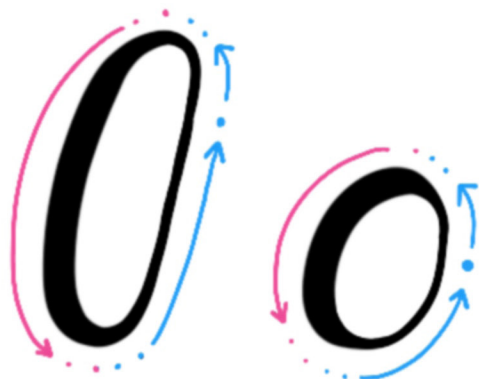
COMPOUND CURVE

Start where the single blue dot is placed, use very light pressure in an upwards motion and once on the top, start transitioning to a full downstroke, as you reach the bottom start transitioning and release the pressure and continue up with an upstroke.



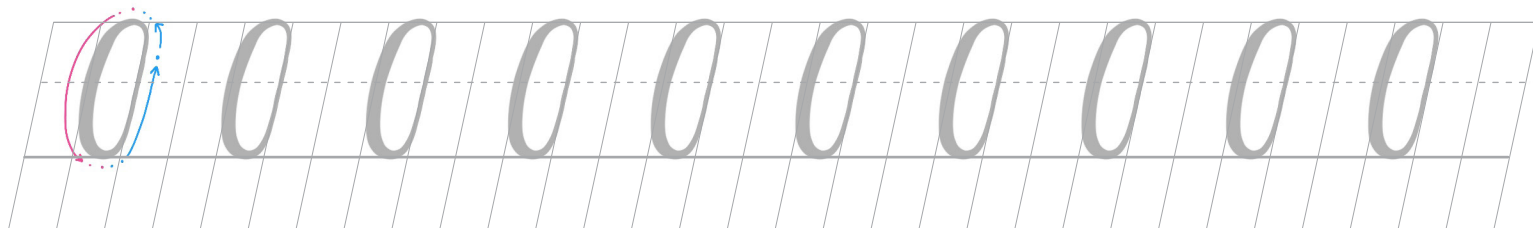
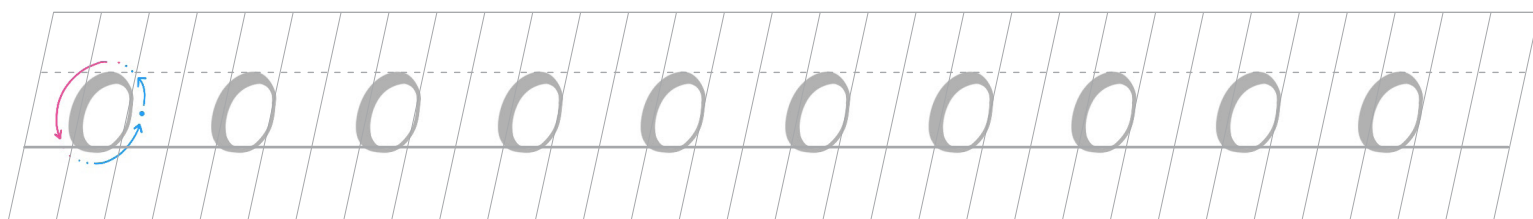
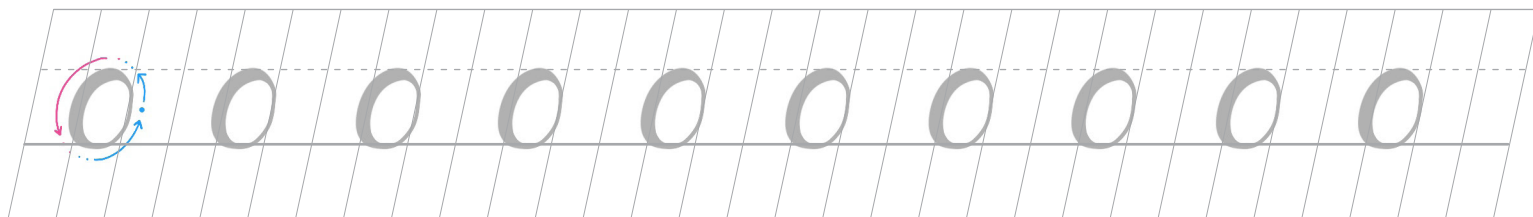
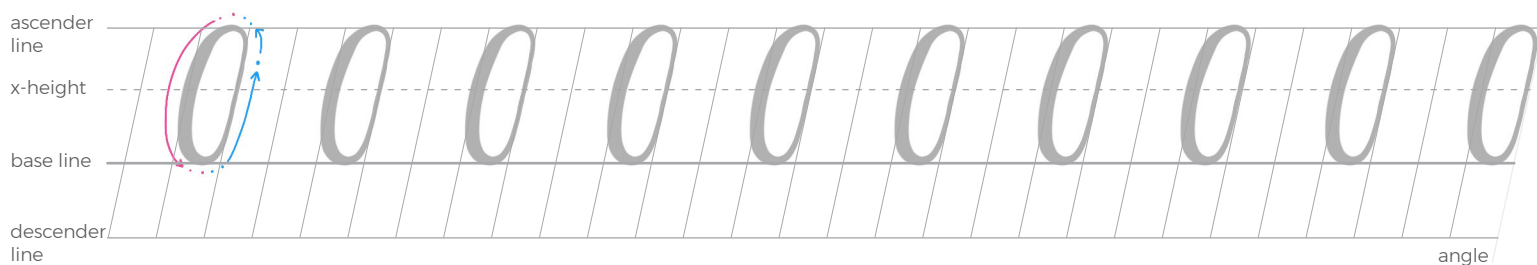
UPSTROKE →
 TRANSITION ···
 DOWNSTROKE →

Oval



OVAL

Start where the single blue dot is placed, around the 2 o'clock position. Glide your pen with very light pressure and begin slowly going counterclockwise, once you pass the waistline begin applying full pressure on a downward movement and around halfway between the waistline and baseline start transitioning so that when you hit the baseline, you already have a thin line, continue upwards with very light pressure until you close the oval.



Descending and Ascending loop

UPSTROKE →
TRANSITION ···
DOWNSTROKE →



DESCENDING LOOP

Start where the single pink dot is placed, we go down with a full pressure stroke until right before we hit the descender line, where we transition and lift the pen while going clockwise in a circular motion to come back to the baseline.

ASCENDING LOOP

Start where the single blue dot is placed, we start with an upward curved thin counter-clockwise stroke, right after we approach the ascender line we transition to a downstroke and we continue to the baseline.



