



BUILDING NEW SKILLS: BASIC DRAWING EXERCISES

Although these seven exercises are introduced in one presentation, practice each one as a separate lesson.

Practice will
develop your
drawing skills

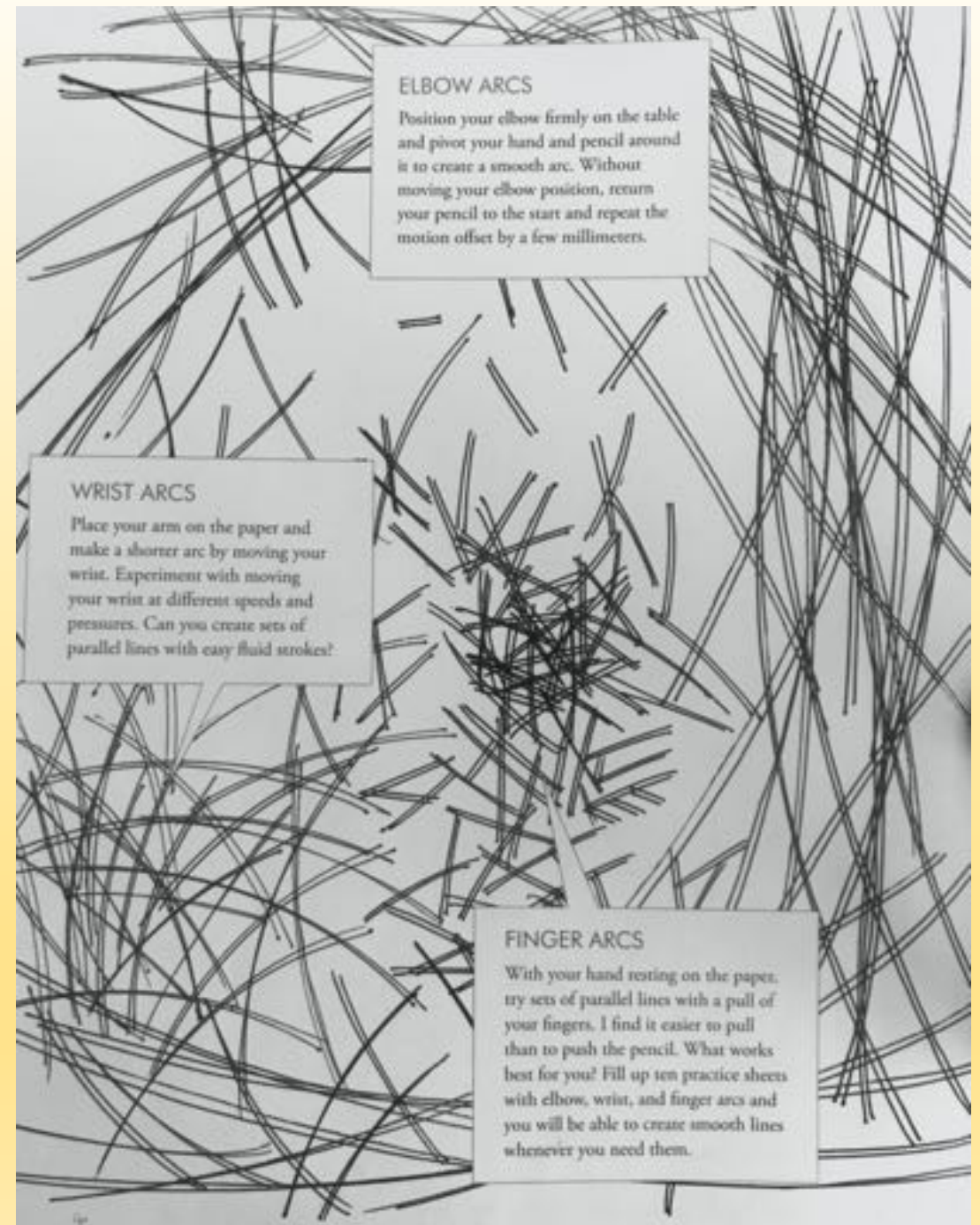
- Think of the following exercises as warm-ups and drills.
- Just as you get better at basketball with practice and repetition of basic skills, so too with drawing.
- The more you practice making marks, the more you will naturally understand what your hand and pencil can do.

Lesson 1: Building Eye-Hand Coordination

- Training your fingers to do what you see in your mind is one foundation of drawing.
- The more pencil miles you put in, the more you train your fingers to respond to what you see.
- We can practice drawing simple shapes (triangles, circles, squares), learning to fill areas with a solid or graded tone, and making light to bold lines.
- These are important parts of every artist's repertoire.

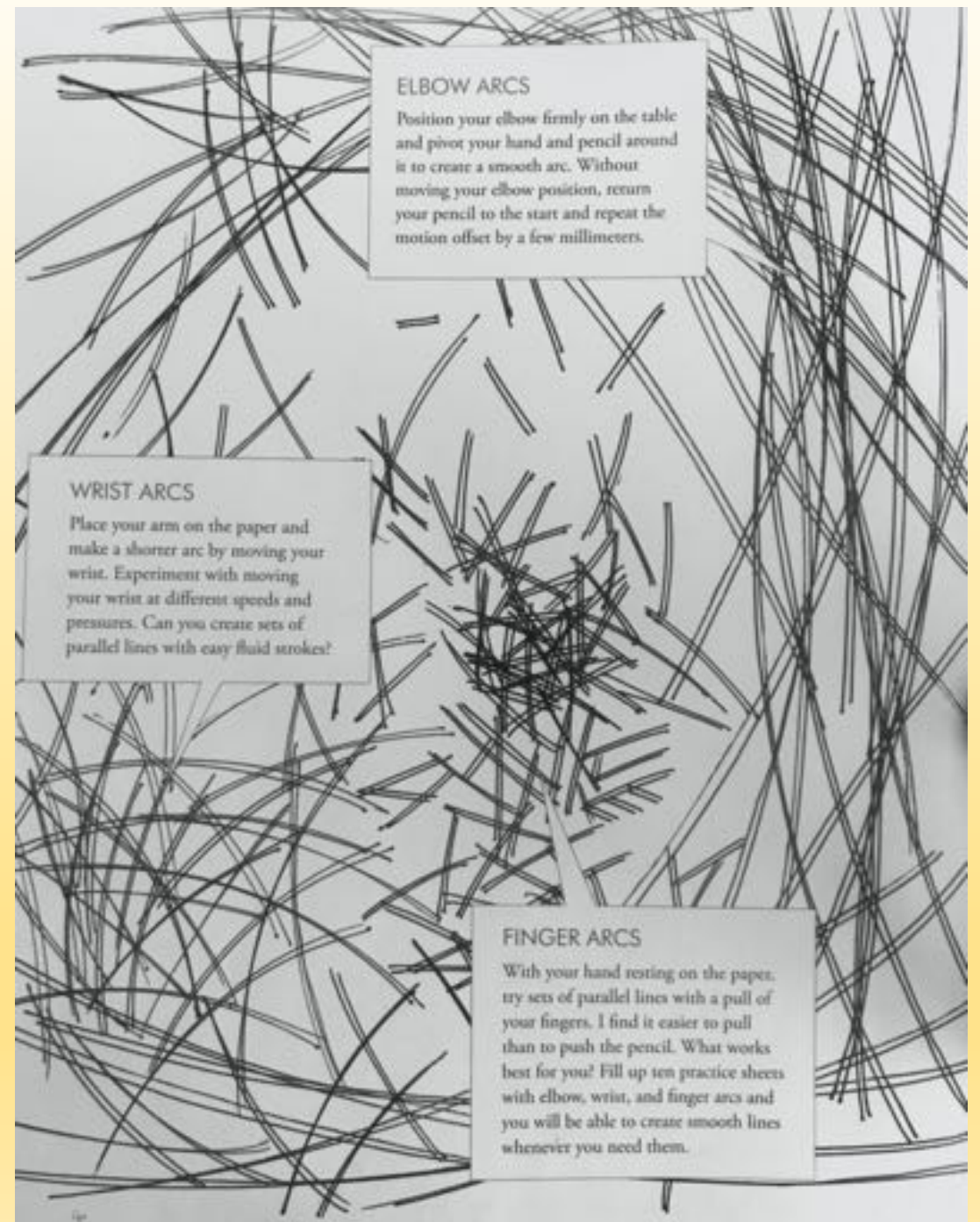
Elbow Arcs

- Position your elbow firmly on the table and pivot your hand and pencil around it to create a smooth arc.
- Without moving your elbow position, return your pencil to the start and repeat the motion offset by a few millimeters.



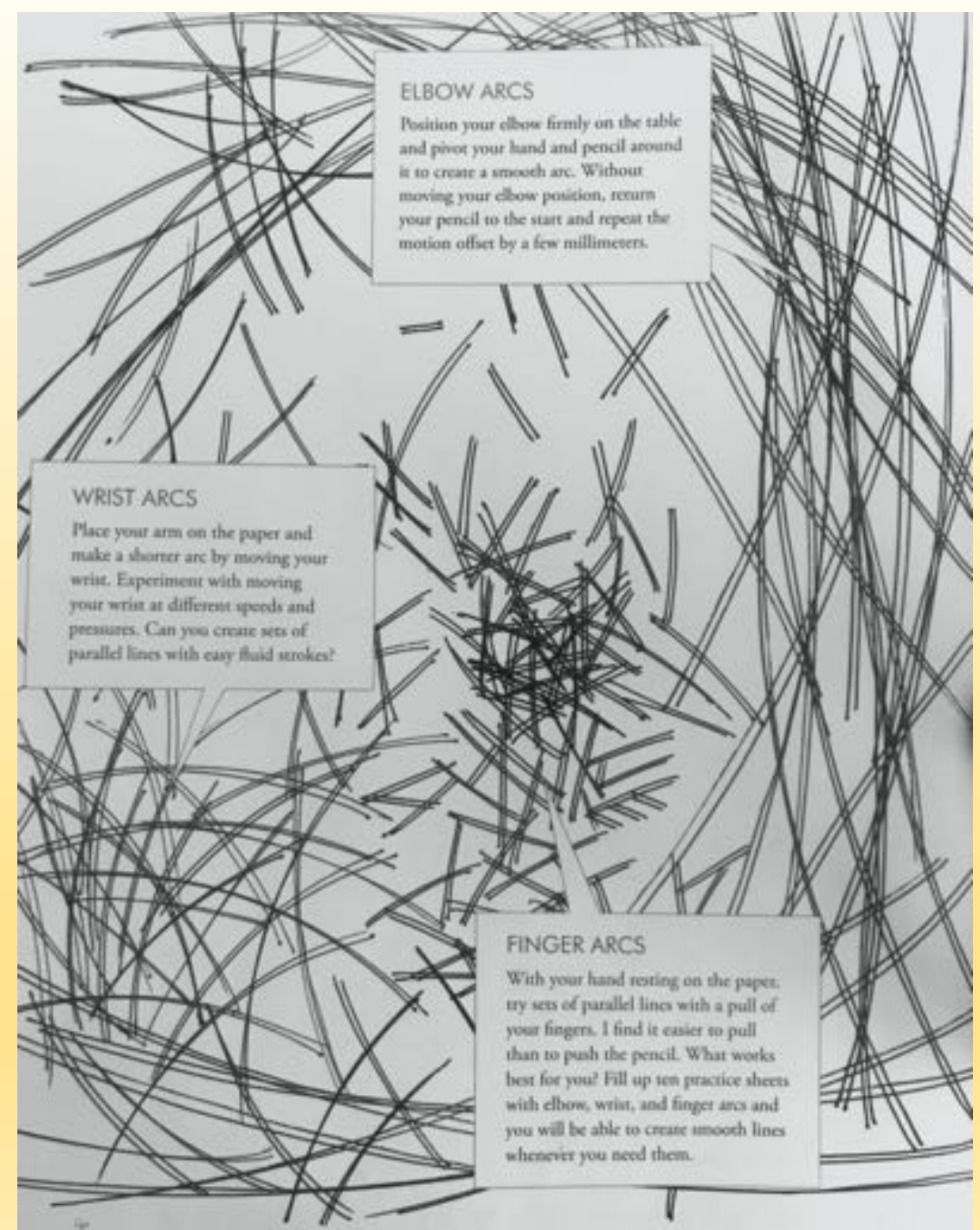
Wrist Arcs

- Place your arm on the paper and make a shorter arc by moving your wrist.
- Experiment with moving your wrist at different speeds and pressures.
- Practice until you can create sets of parallel lines with easy fluid strokes.



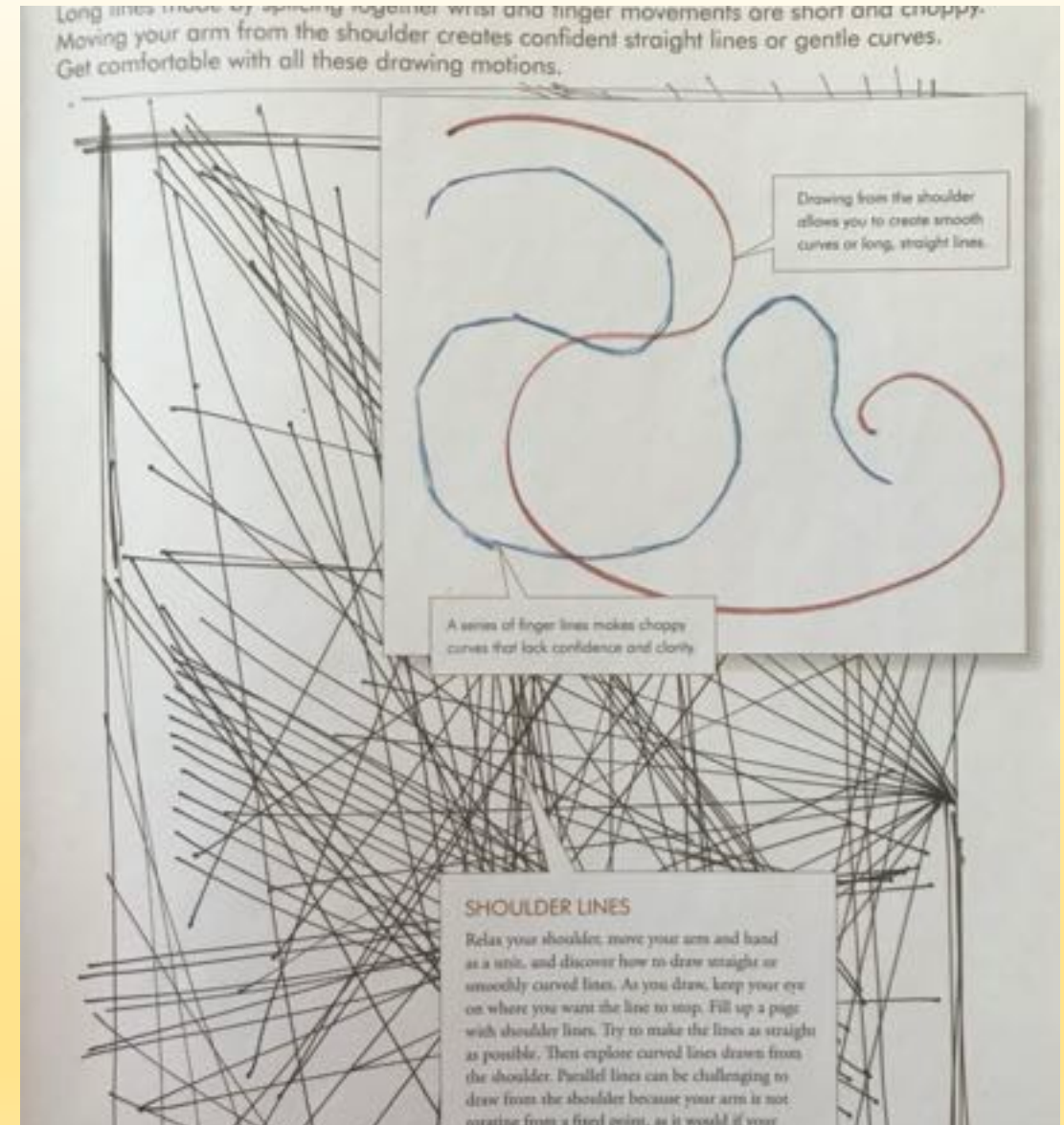
Finger Arcs

- With your hand resting on the paper, try sets of parallel lines with a pull of your fingers.
- It is easier to pull than to push the pencil.



Shoulder Lines

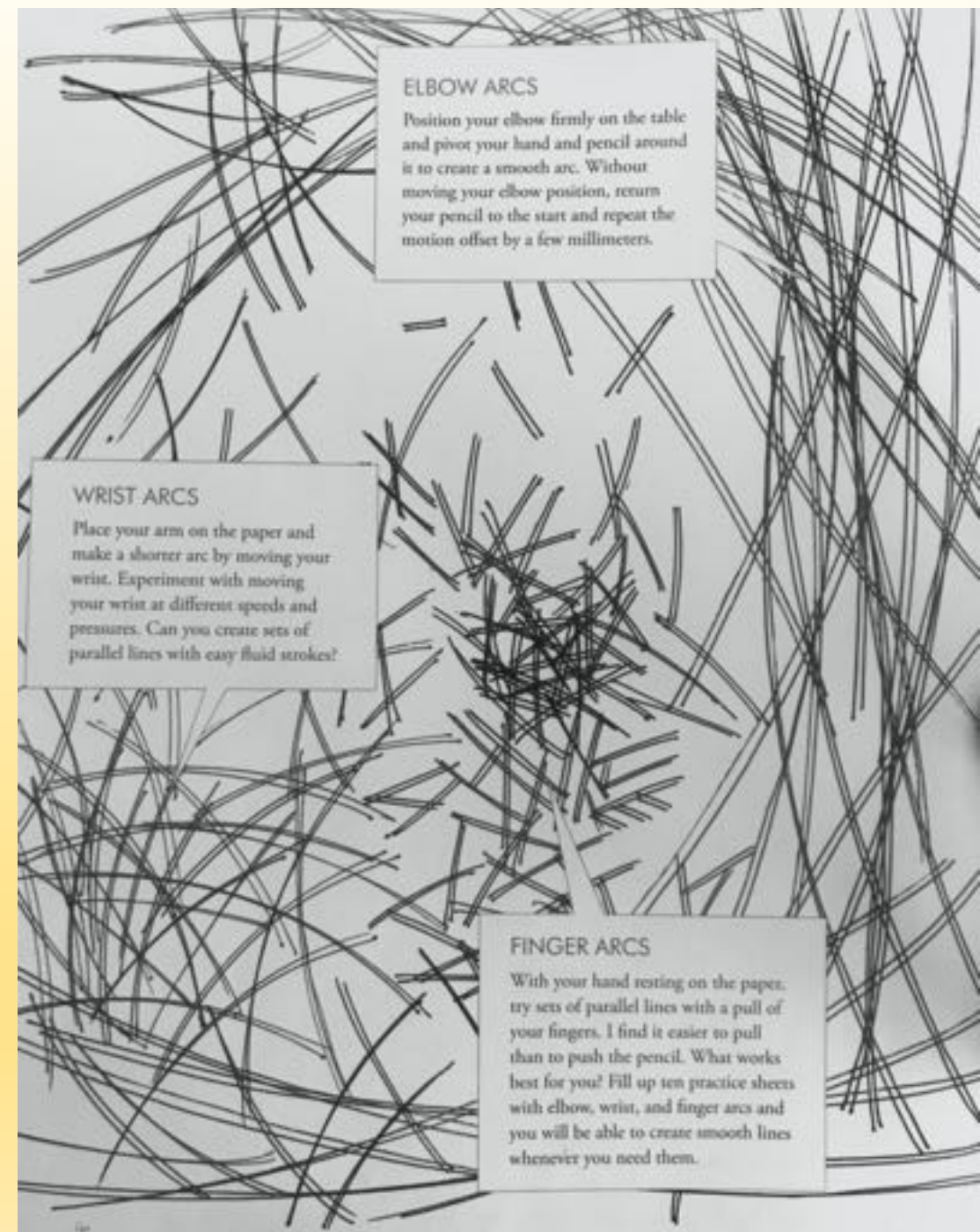
- Relax your shoulder, move your arm and hand as a unit and you will be able to draw straight or smoothly curved lines.
- As you draw, keep your eye on where you want the line to stop.
- Try to make the lines as straight as possible
- Then create a variety of curved lines drawn from the shoulder.
- Parallel lines can be challenging to draw from the shoulder because your arm is not rotating from a fixed point as it would if your elbow were locked on the paper.



Practice #1

Line Exercises

- On two facing journal pages, practice making elbow arcs, wrist arcs, finger arcs and shoulder lines.



Practice #2 Drawing Geometrical Patterns

Step 1

- Doodling is great practice. Fill a page with random geometrical patterns.
- Make some lines dark, others light, some thick, some thin. Make variable lines. Make circles, squares, triangles, long straight lines, smooth curves and elbow and finger arcs.
- *Practice drawing these shapes focusing on moving only your shoulder, only your elbow, only your wrist, only your finger, as you did in Practice #1.
- When you have drawn all your lines and shapes, go back and label them as finger, wrist, elbow, and shoulder drawings. Make sure you have LOTS of each.

Practice 2, Drawing Geometrical Patterns

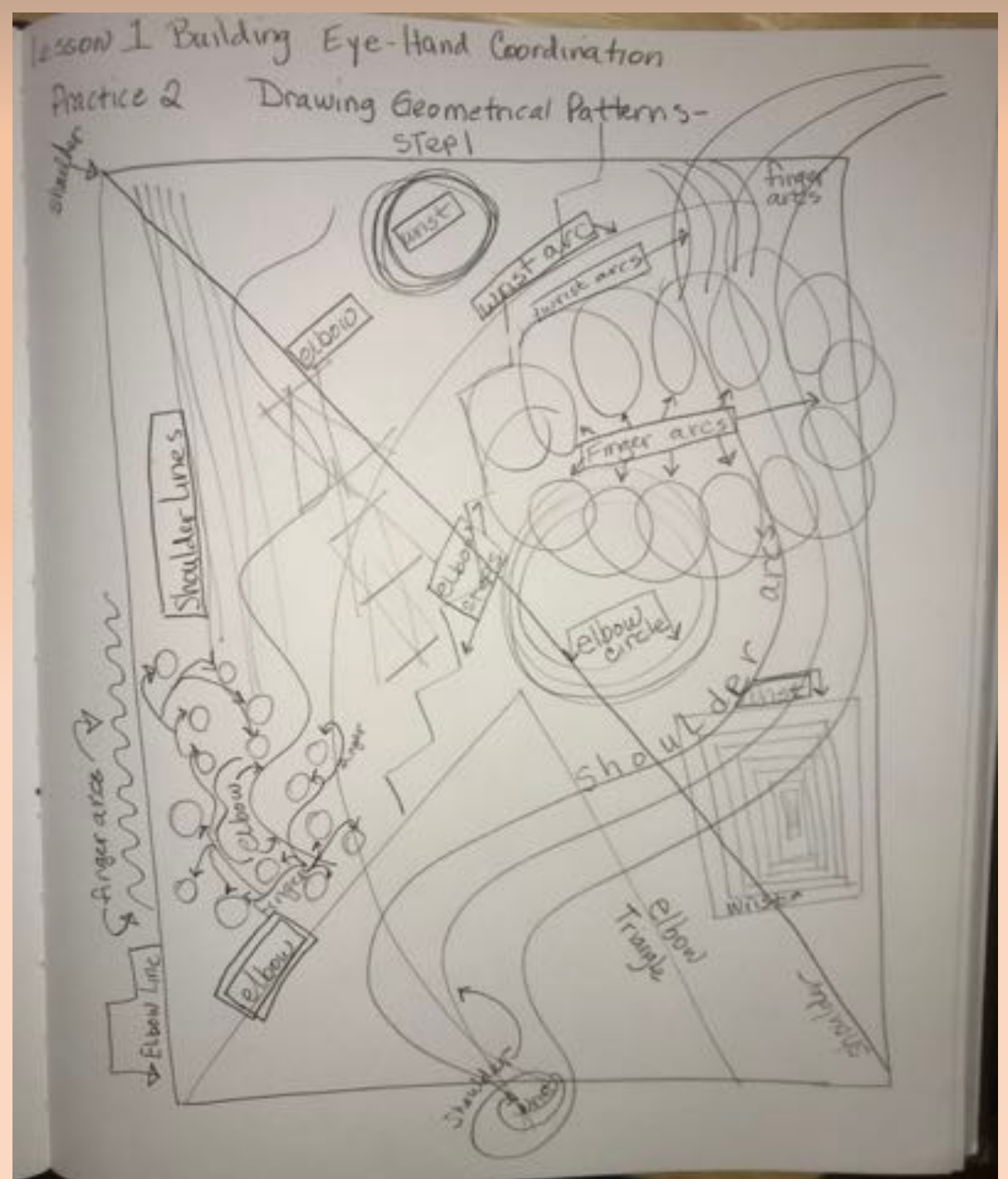
Step 1

Draw geometrical shapes

- ✓ Light and dark lines
- ✓ Thick and thin lines
- ✓ Circles, squares, triangles
- ✓ Long straight lines, smooth curves
- ✓ Elbow and finger arcs

Label finger, wrist, elbow, and shoulder lines.

Make sure you have **LOTS** of each kind.

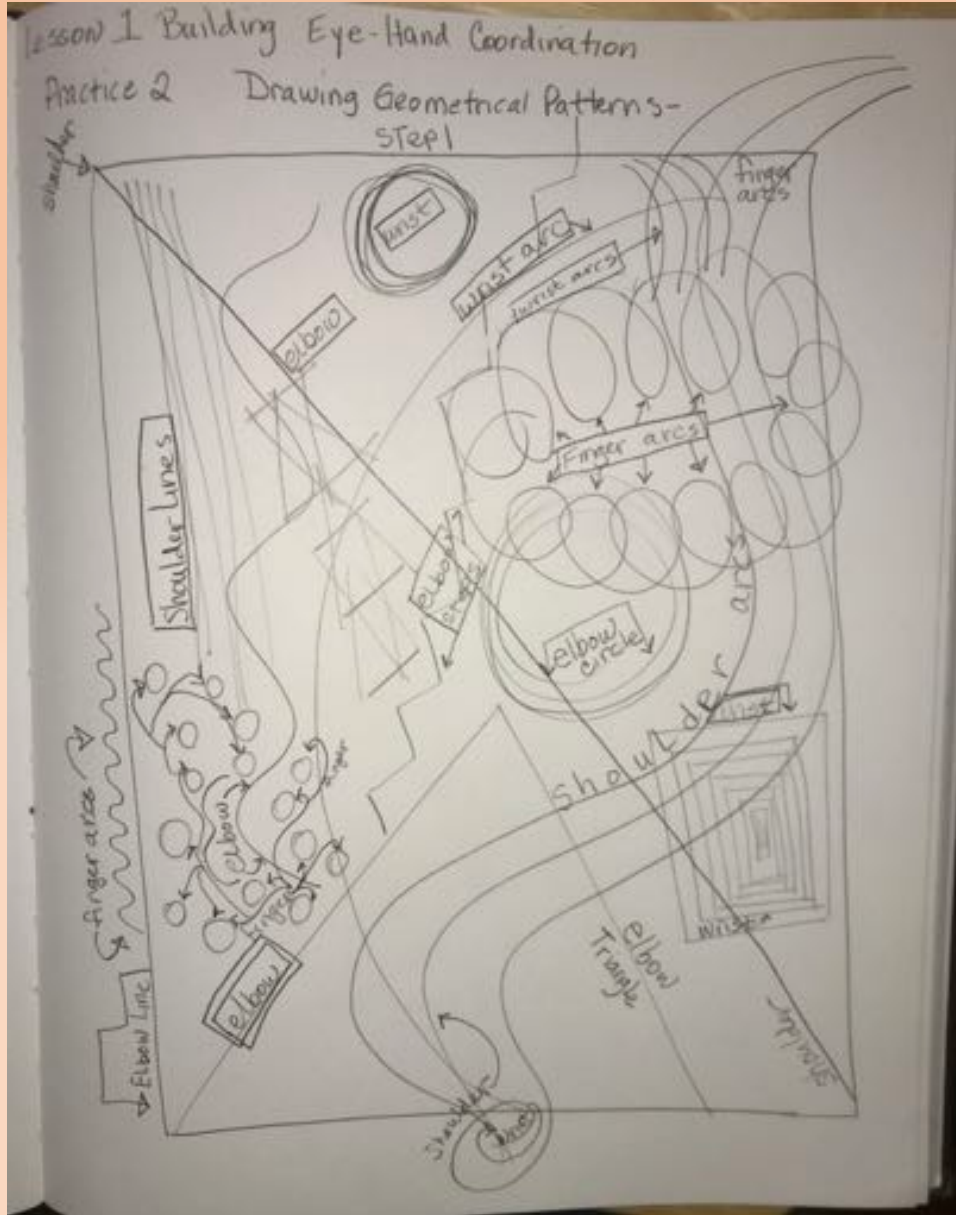


Practice #2 Drawing Geometrical Patterns

Step 2

- Fill in spaces with **tone**, **grading** and **texture**. Fill in some of the spaces with even, continuous tone, or a smooth graded tone going from rich dark to as light a value as you can make.
 - Fill boxes with hatched lines and cross hatching.
 - Invent textures: A hairy surface, a bumpy surface, a pitted surface, a pebbled surface, dry cracks.
 - Use only one color but vary the texture and pressure to create color and tone.
- ❖ With this training, you will be able to draw straight lines, smooth curves, and sets of parallel lines, which are great for plant stems.

Practice #2, Step 1



Practice #2, Step 2



Practice 3: Finger Tracing and Air Drawing

- Before you can draw the object, you must train your eye to see angles and changes of contour. The goal is to draw the shape that is in front of you, not the one in your imagination.



Practice 3: Finger Tracing and Air Drawing

- Hold an object in one hand or place an object in front of you.
- Close one eye and trace the edges with a finger of the other hand.



Practice 3: Finger Tracing and Air Drawing

- As you trace the edges, describe out loud the new angle each time your finger changes direction.
- For example: “Straight down, sharp right turn, short flat edge, starting to curve down, little bump, now straight out at an angle.”



Practice 3: Finger Tracing and Air Drawing



- Now do this with a pencil in your hand.
- This time, trace the shape in the air with the tip of the pencil. Imagine a line being inscribed on the wall behind the object.
- Each micro change or pencil direction or line-segment length is a decision. You want to notice each decision as you move around the object.

Practice 4: Learning to Draw Lightly

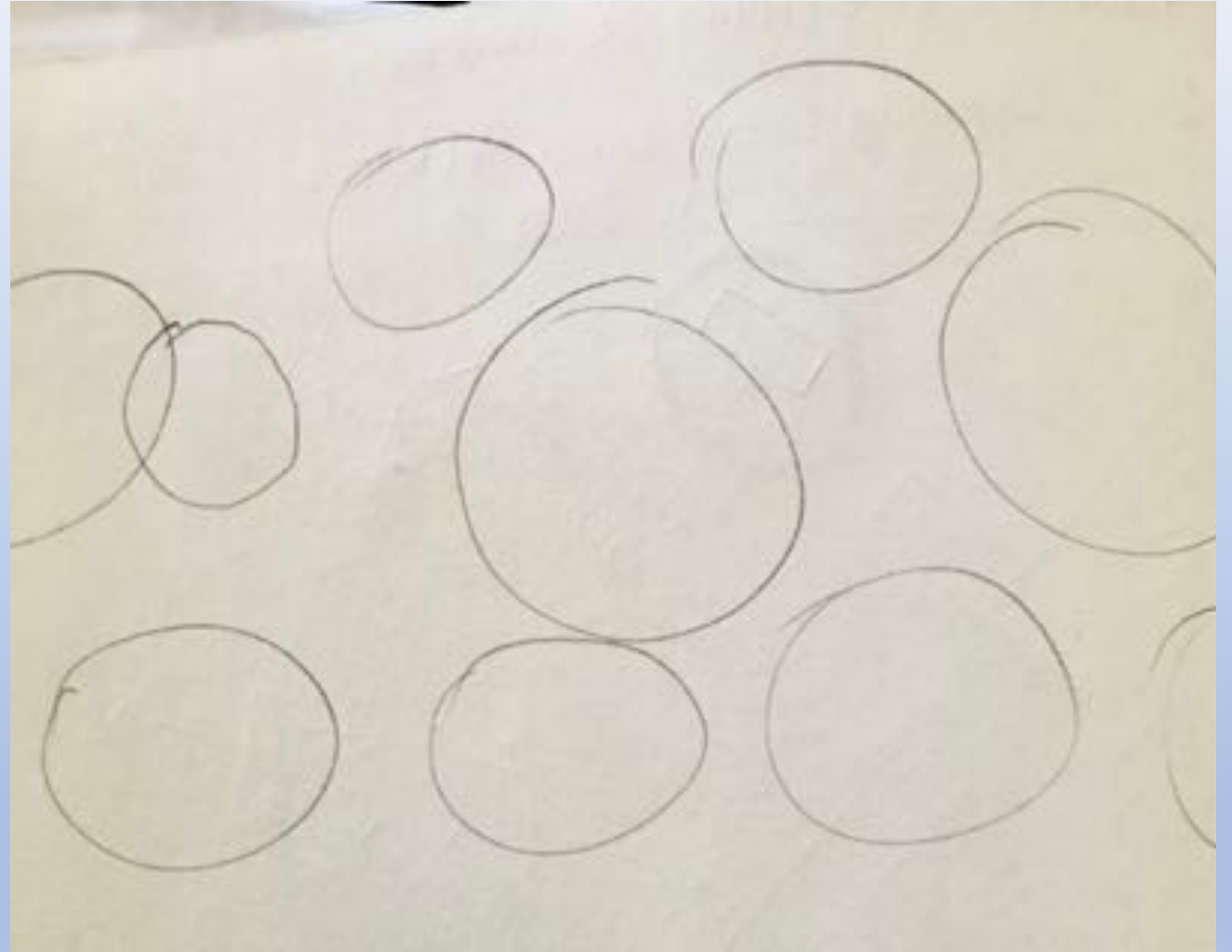
- Learning to draw lightly is a skill we can develop with a little practice.
- The energy behind this kind of drawing will be used again and again in observational drawing.
- Using one journal page, get ready to warm up!

Practice 4

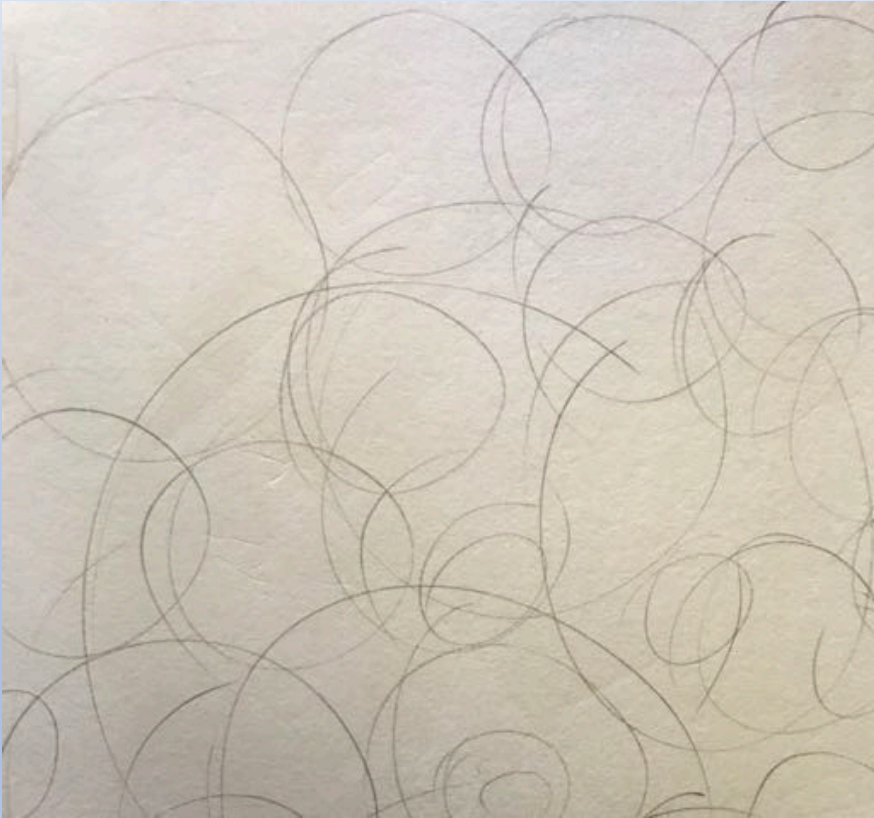
Learning to Draw Lightly

Use the following sequence as a **warm-up** to drawing.

1. Start by loosening up. Relax your shoulders, arm and hand. And draw a circle on your paper.
2. Drop your shoulders, unclench your jaw, loosen up on your pencil grip and move your pencil grip back a little.
3. When you draw, move your whole arm, not just the fingers. Draw another circle, then another.



Practice 4: Learning to Draw Lightly



- **Now lighten up!**

- Draw a circle as lightly as you can.
- Now see if you can draw one that is even lighter.
- Fill the whole page with the lightest circles your pencil can make.
- Now speed it up. Keep the lines loose and light, but this time the goal is to also make them fast.
- Make a series of overlapping circles, scribbles, and flowing lines.

PRACTICE 5: CONTOUR DRAWING

- Contour drawing is a way to train yourself to look at drawing shapes
- The most important part of accurately drawing an object is to look at it carefully.
- Too often we rely on our mental image or what we THINK our drawing subject SHOULD look like, instead of observation.
- Contour drawing is the most powerful way to train yourself to look at the subject.

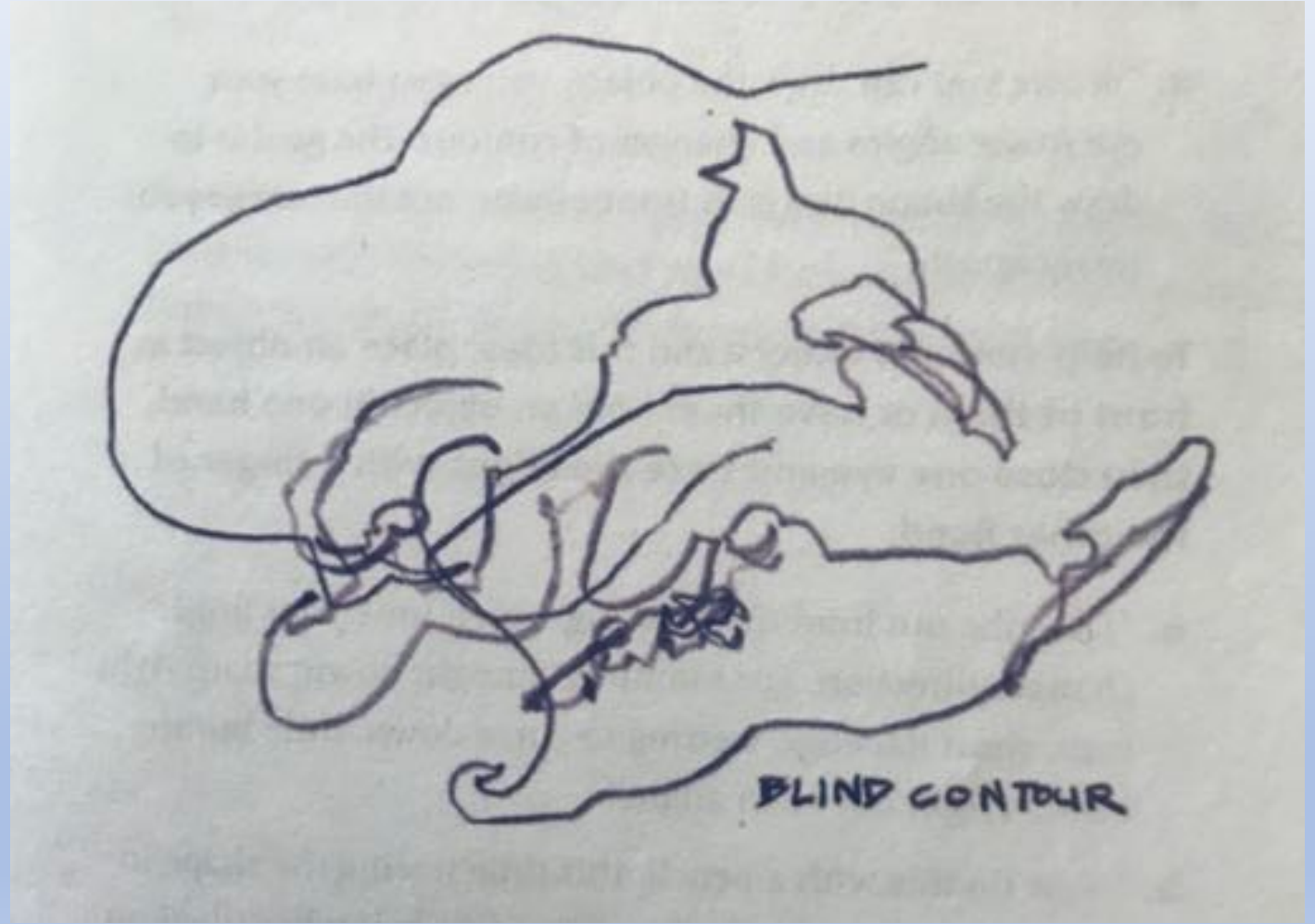
BLIND CONTOUR DRAWING

- The point of blind contour drawing is not to draw, but to see. It's a fun exercise that will train the connection between your eye and your pencil.
1. Select an interesting object to draw.
 2. Stare at the object and slowly begin to draw its shape without looking at the paper. Let your eye crawl slowly along the contour (outline) of the object.
 3. Let your pencil creep along your paper moving up or down, following the curves and angles that you see.
 4. DO NOT LOOK AT YOUR PAPER!
 5. With every change in angle, let your pencil respond with its own change of direction. Do not lift your pencil or look down to see where you are.
- TAKE YOUR TIME!

BLIND CONTOUR DRAWING (continued)

When you are done, take a look. The results might be comical and fascinating. Look for places where your lines reveal subtle changes or aspects of the real object.

You can continue practicing with other objects. This will train your hands to respond to what your eyes see.



MODIFIED CONTOUR DRAWING

- A modified contour drawing also helps us hone our observations but results in a drawing that looks much more like the object.
- The process is the same, only this time, you get to peek. Every now and then, you can glance down at your paper to allow yourself to relate the spacing and size of the lines to each other.
- You can also pick up your pencil and move it to another spot. To keep the energy of the contour drawing, keep your eyes on the object as you draw.



MODIFIED CONTRA

Practice 6 Learning to Use Negative Shapes

- Negative shapes are the shapes that occur between the objects we are drawing. In approaching a subject such as a skull, you would probably focus on the shape of the upper and lower jaws.
- The negative shape is the shape of the empty space between the upper and lower jaws. The jaws have height, width, and angles, as does the negative space.
- By drawing the negative space as an actual shape, you may discover that you drew the jaws too close together or too far apart.

Practice 6: Negative Space



- If your negative space does not fit, don't ignore it and move on. You will have found a valuable indication that something is off with your proportion.
- Find out what is wrong and fix these errors before continuing to draw. Using negative space is one of the most powerful but underused tricks in the artist's tool kit.

Exercise 6: Negative Space

1. Use the object you used for contour drawing.
2. Sketch it again, this time using both contours AND negative space.

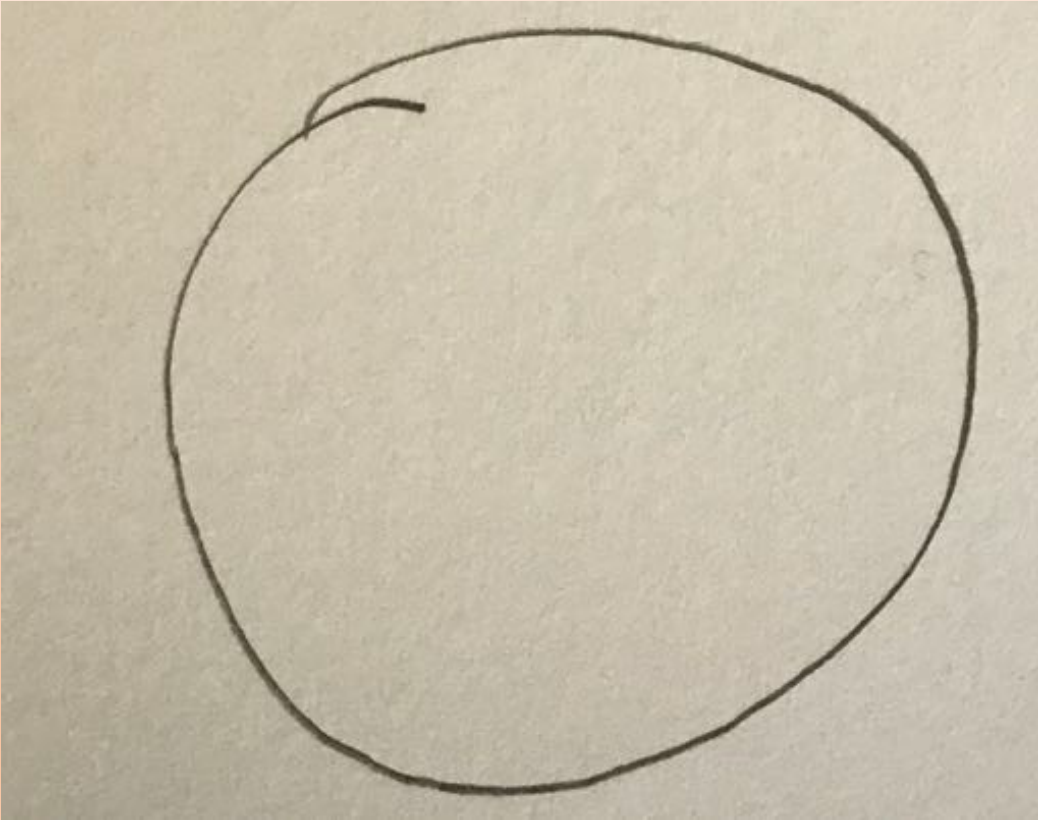


A red wax or charcoal sketch of a reclining figure, possibly a person lying down. The drawing is composed of bold, expressive, and somewhat gestural lines. The figure's head is on the left, and their limbs are spread out. The background is a light, textured surface. The text "Practice 7: Gesture Drawing" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

Practice 7: Gesture Drawing

GESTURE

Practice 7: Gesture Drawing



- Would you like to draw the perfect circle?
- Draw a circle with ONE clean line right now.
- Your circle is probably lopsided or uneven. Drawing a circle this way is hard.

Practice 7: Gesture Drawing

Let's try an easier way

- Lightly and loosely draw a circle. It's OK if it's a little lopsided.
- Now, without erasing, draw over it, correcting some of the imperfections with continued light lines.
- Overlap five or more circles, slowly correcting the roundness.
- Your brain will gravitate toward the right lines, As it does, you can press a little harder, reinforcing the lines you want to keep. Watch a perfect circle emerge from the page!

Practice 7: Gesture Drawing

- The key is to begin lightly, make lots of lines, and reinforce those that seem to be most accurate.
- By keeping it light, you let your brain sort between several possibilities as you carve into or add to your original shape.
- If you start with bold, hard lines you will feel committed to those lines even if they're wrong. Use this approach with starting any object.

If you try to draw a circle with one crisp line, it is easy to get a lopsided shape.

Instead, start with a light circle and continue to draw over it, adding lines and curves to correct your mistakes. Reinforce the lines that you like the best.



Practice 7: Gesture Drawing

- Notice the many light lines used until the shape was correct.
- Then the bold lines drawn over the correct lines.

Bye for Now. Thanks for Joining Me.



Plathemis lydia Common Whitetail adult male

