

Days to Better Drawings

Drawing with Lines



What are we covering today?

We'll begin our drawing journey by starting with the most foundational element of art, line. When most of us begin a drawing, we start by making lines. So it makes perfect sense to begin our instruction here.

In terms of art, line is a moving dot. If we take a dot, and move it - we create a line. It's quite simple really.

Although the concept of line is simple, the manner in which we use it in a drawing can become quite complex.

We'll start with the basics today and over the course of the next few days we'll explore the complexities of line.



Today's Mindset

Our daily mindset today is "Line is the most fundamental element of art and perhaps the most used with drawing. Drawing is about observation."

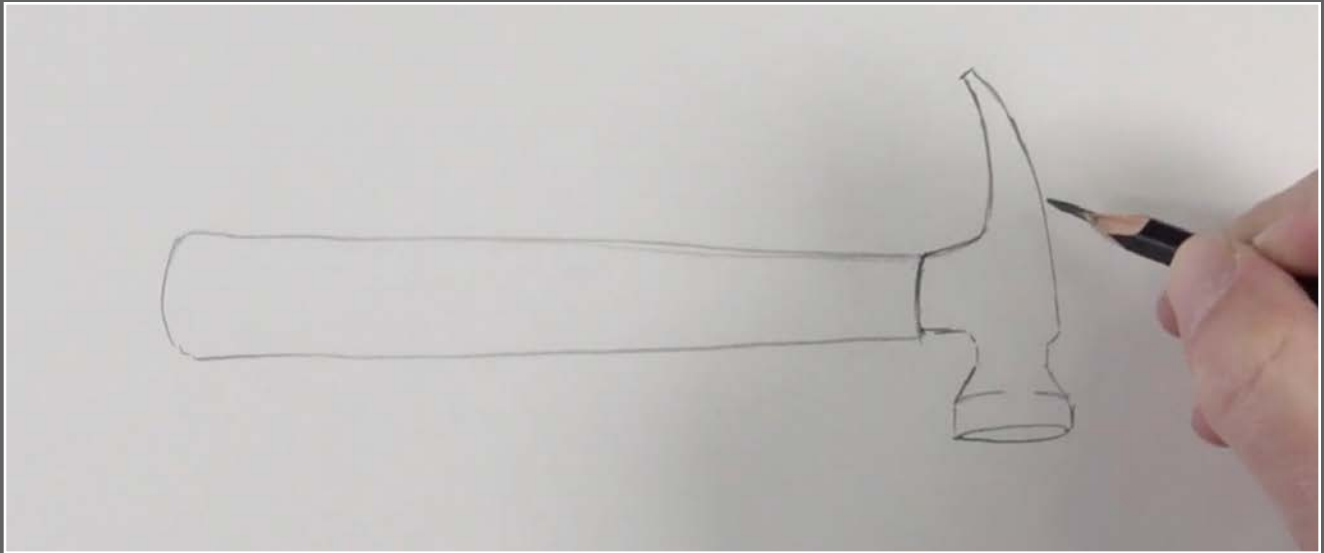
Today, I'll guide you through a series of drawing exercises all focused on the use of line in a drawing. Each of these drawing activities should not be considered as a finished drawing, but instead as exercises designed to strengthened your skills.

Just as we may exercise in the gym to strengthen our bodies, we should also exercise to improve our drawing skills.



Drawing Exercise #1

Let's get started with today's first drawing exercise. For our first exercise, we'll draw a simple hammer from imagination. We'll simply draw the outlines without any shading. Outlines are referred to as **contour lines**.

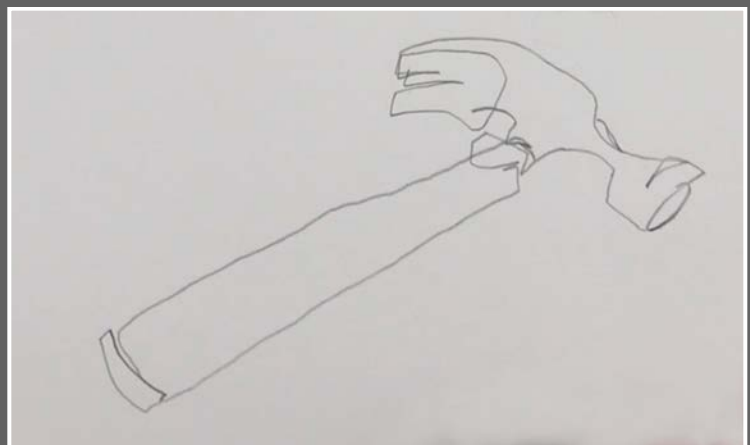


For most of us, we'll create a drawing that communicates a hammer, but the drawing is lacking any details or form. We naturally become rigid when we draw from imagination. We concentrate on what we think a hammer looks like and draw a very simplified version of the subject from our memory.

Drawing Exercise #2

For our second drawing exercise, we'll create a **blind contour line drawing**. A blind contour line drawing is created with a continuous line without looking at the paper.

This means that we'll choose a place to begin our line and place the pencil on the paper. Then we'll slowly move our eyes around the subject and attempt to move our pencil in unison on the paper. We'll only look at the object, observing it 100% of the time. There should be no peeking at the drawing.



Drawing Exercise #3

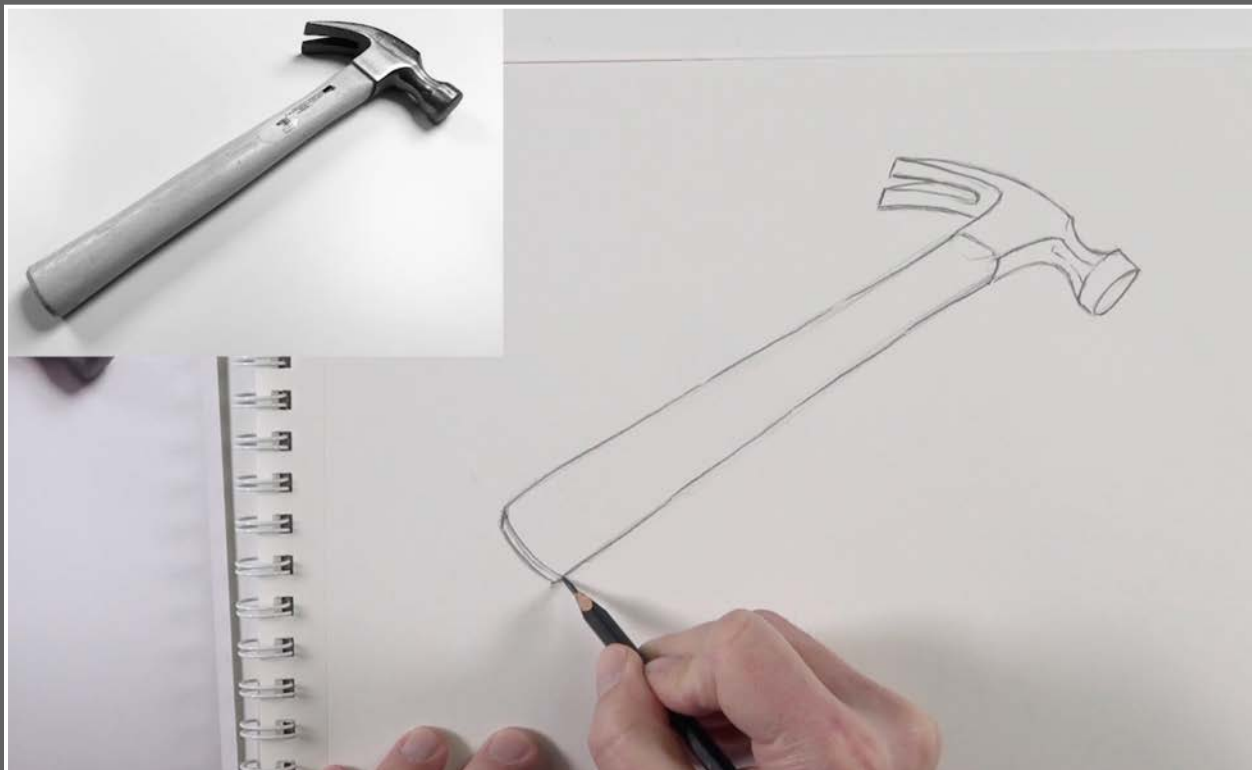
Clearly, the first drawing that we created from imagination does not communicate the subject fully. In our second drawing, we were able to notice some details like the angle of the hammer and the overlapping claws at the end, but the drawing is still very inaccurate.

We need to find a medium between the two approaches - one where we observe the details but have more control over the marks that we make.

In the first drawing, we looked at the object 0% of the time. In the second, we observed the subject 100% of the time. The medium we are looking for is a balance between observation and mark making. This is the essence of drawing.

I suggest spending at least 50% of the time observing the object and 50% of the time making marks based on our observations. Drawing is a dance between observation and mark making.

For our third drawing exercise, we'll do just that. We'll go back and forth between our reference and drawing paper, paying attention to the lines that are observed. We'll place the lines as accurately as possible on the drawing surface.

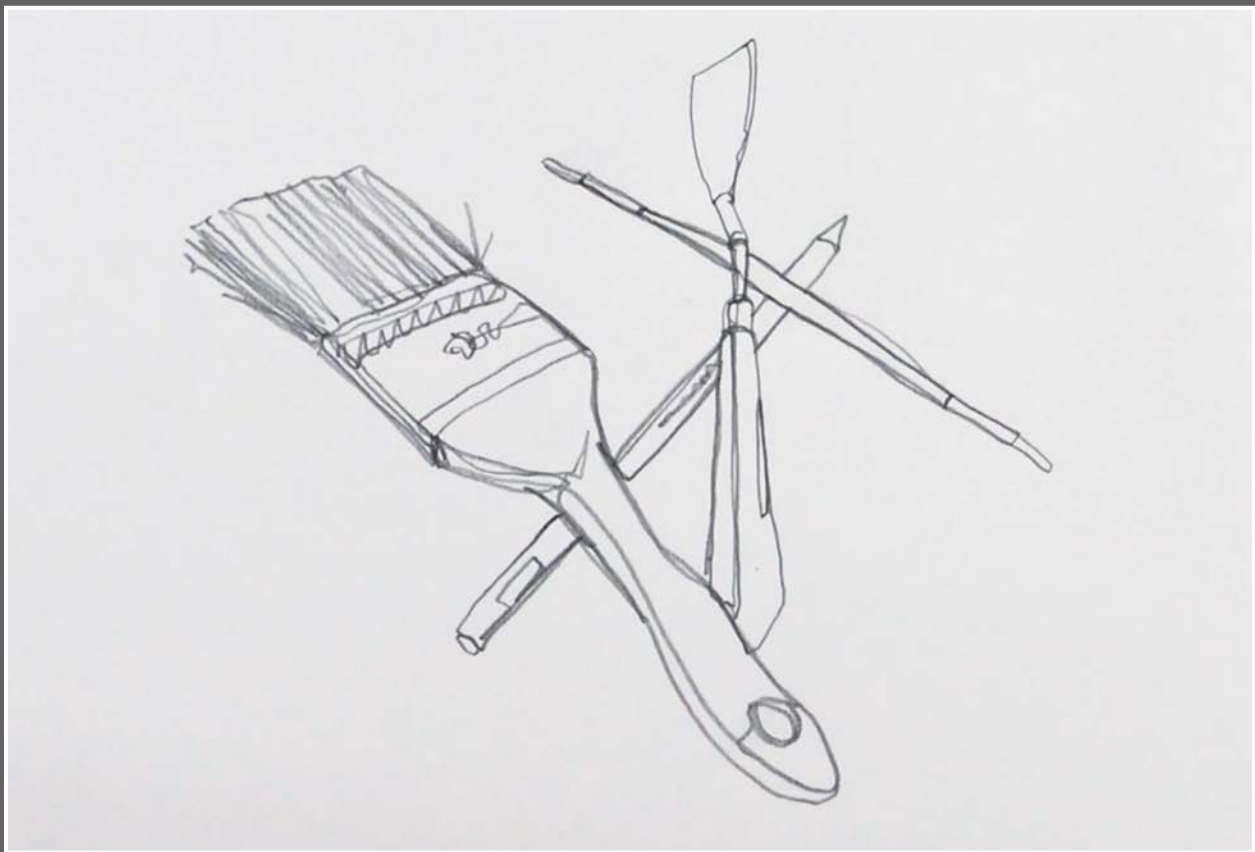


With our third drawing exercise, we can see that we find the most success. Our drawing most closely resembles the subject. This may be an extreme way to illustrate this principle, but it is absolutely essential to understand that drawing is not just about mark making. It is mostly about observation.

Drawing Exercise #4

Now it's time for some additional practice. For our fourth drawing exercise, we'll create a **continuous line drawing**. A continuous line drawing is created with just one line. This means that once we place our pencil to the drawing surface, we won't pick it up again until the drawing is complete.

Unlike the blind contour line drawing, we can go back and forth between the reference and the drawing paper - so we can look at both. We are training our eyes for observation and also enhancing our hand-eye coordination, which is also essential for drawing success.



Continuous line drawings are mostly created for practice, but they can also stand on their own as finished drawings. Remember, all of the exercises that we have completed today are just that - exercises designed to make you stronger.