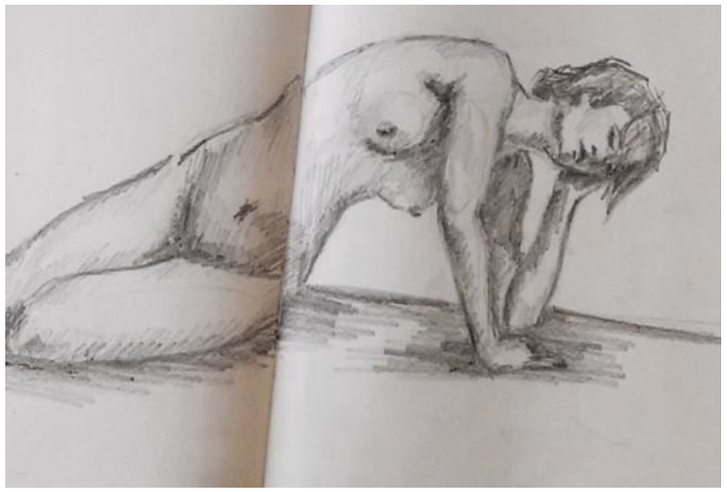


ART ASSIGNMENT #14

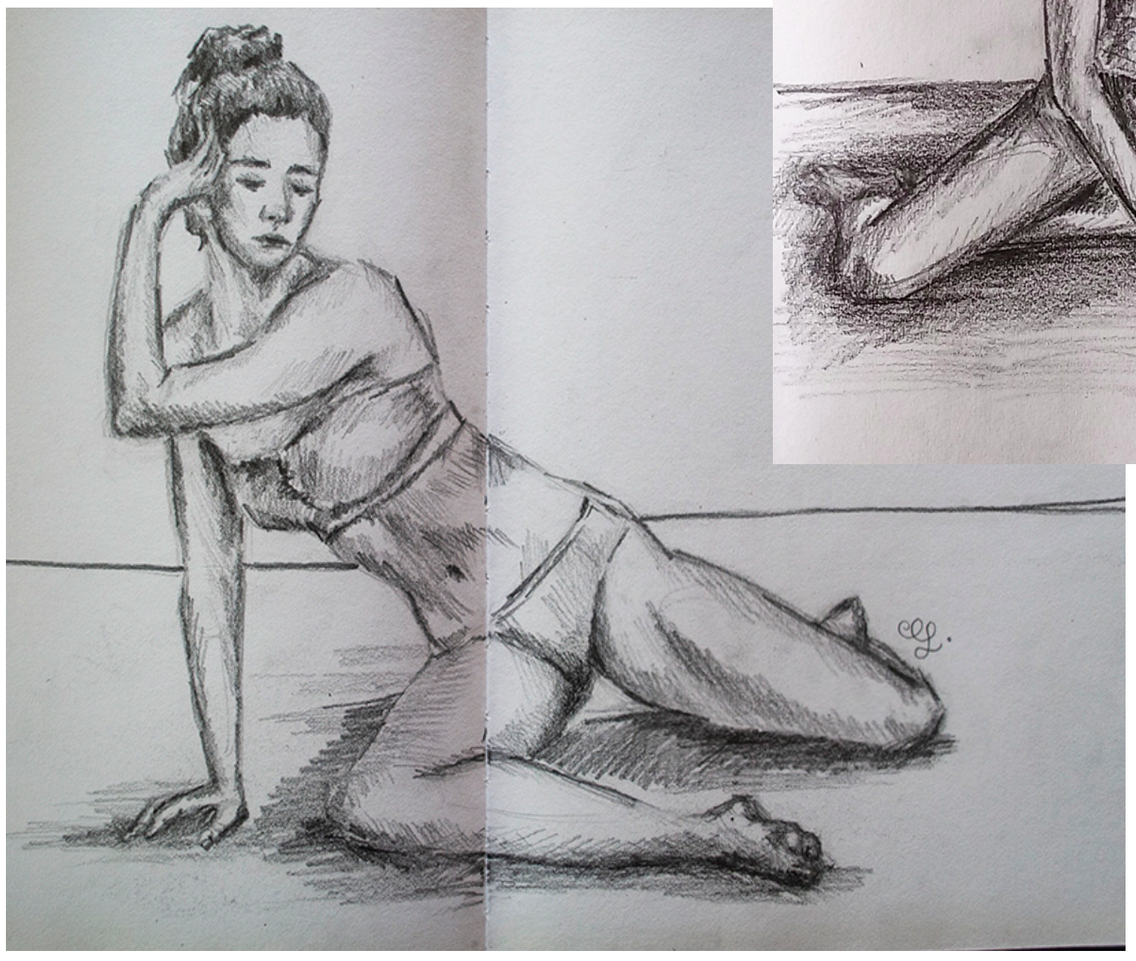
How to Get Started with Drawing the Human Figure

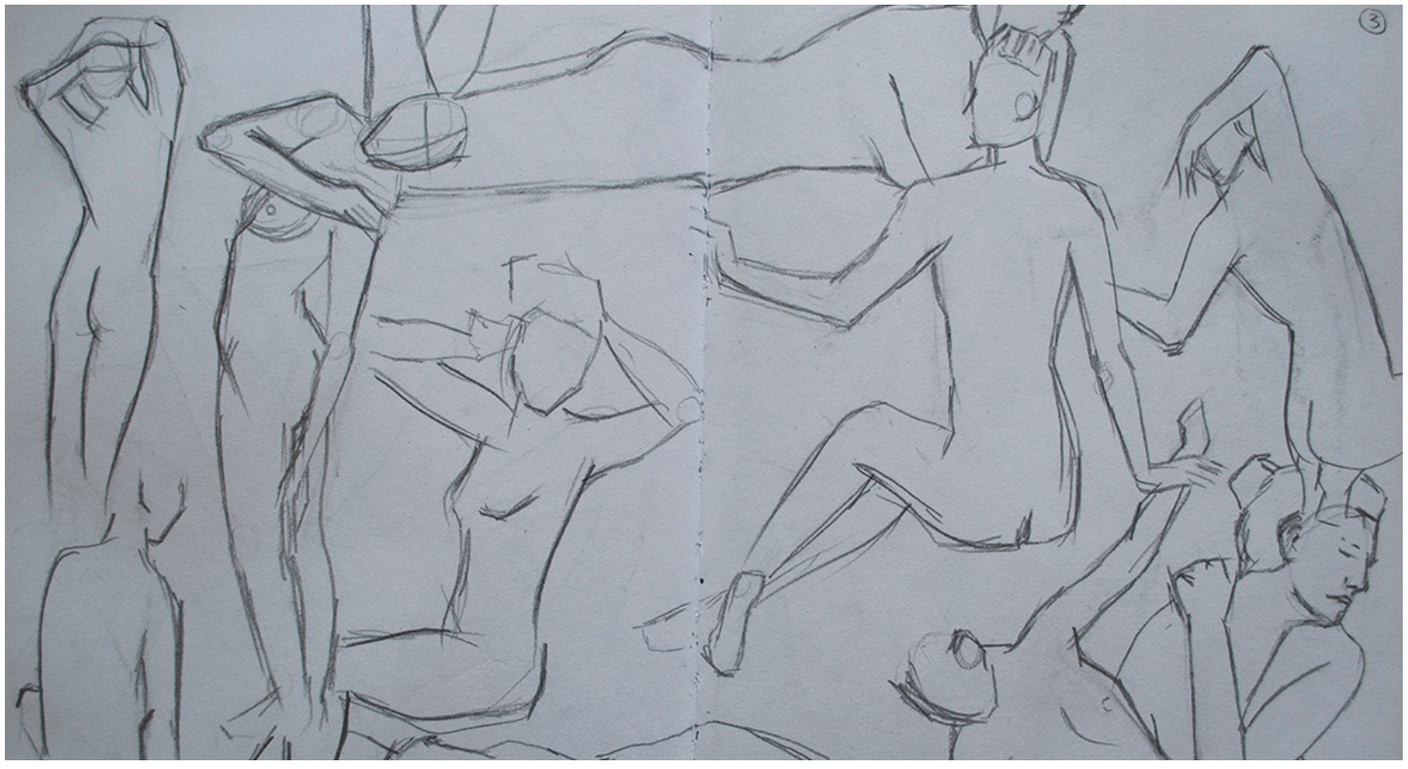
MY OWN JOURNEY

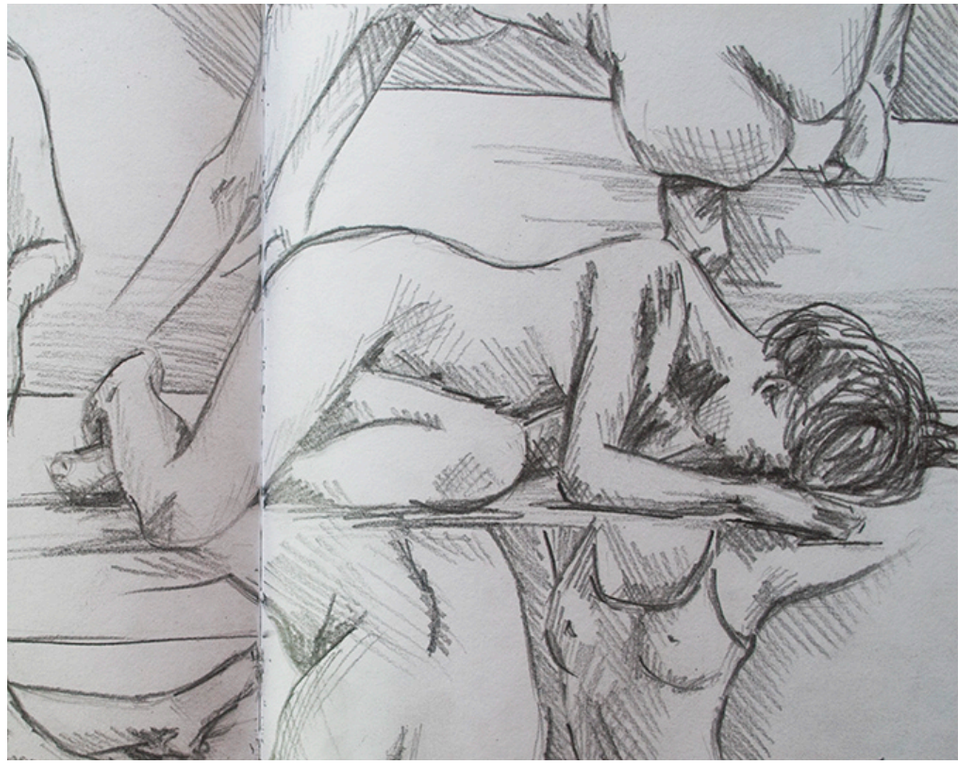


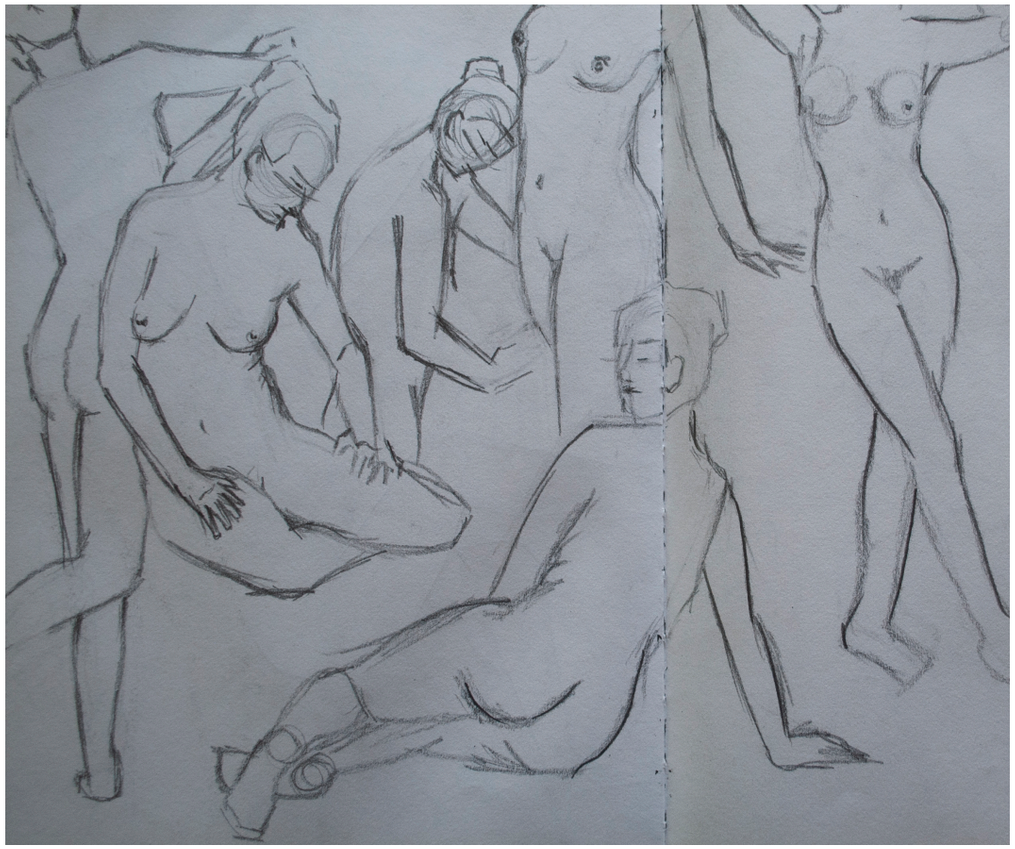


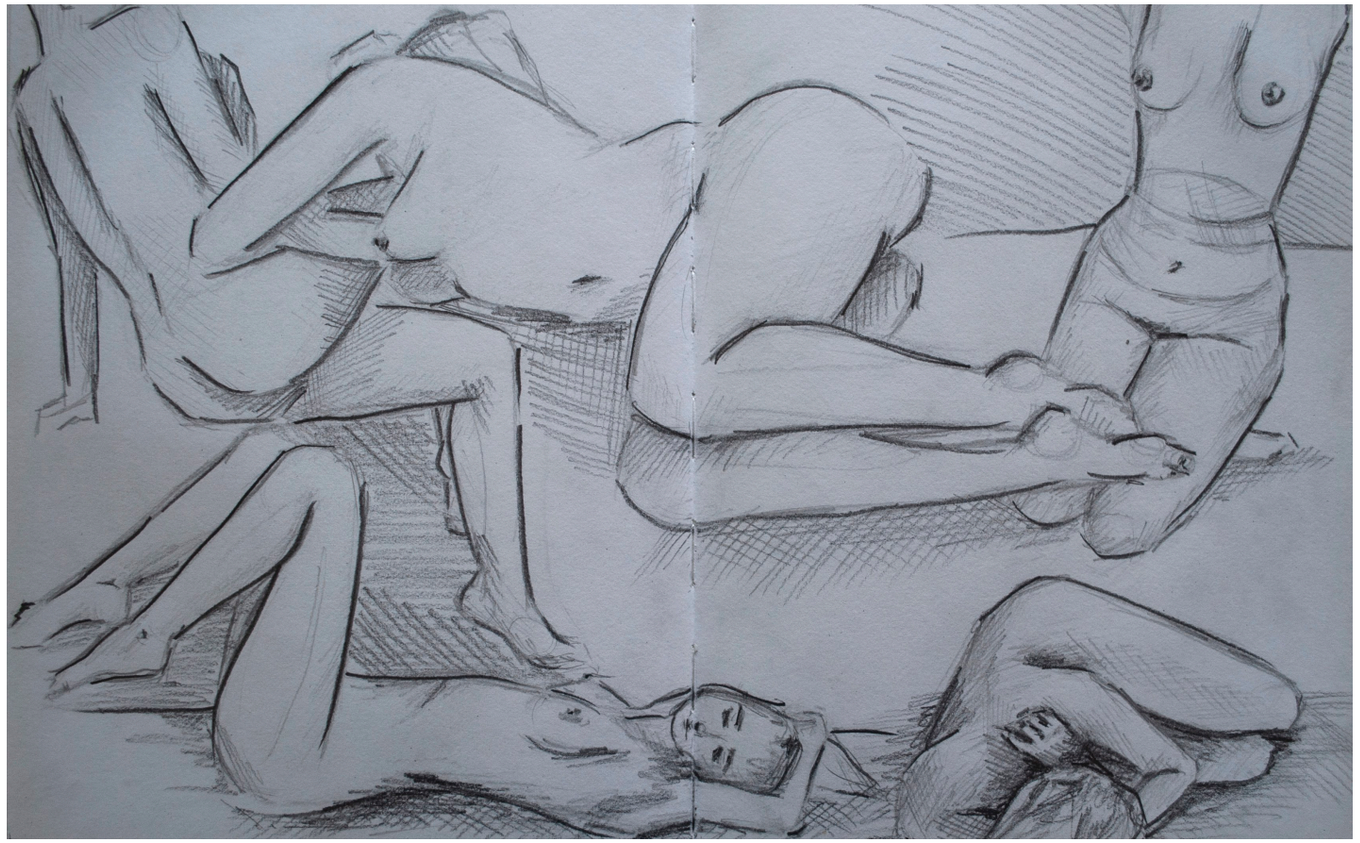












Timed sketches (3-10 mins.)

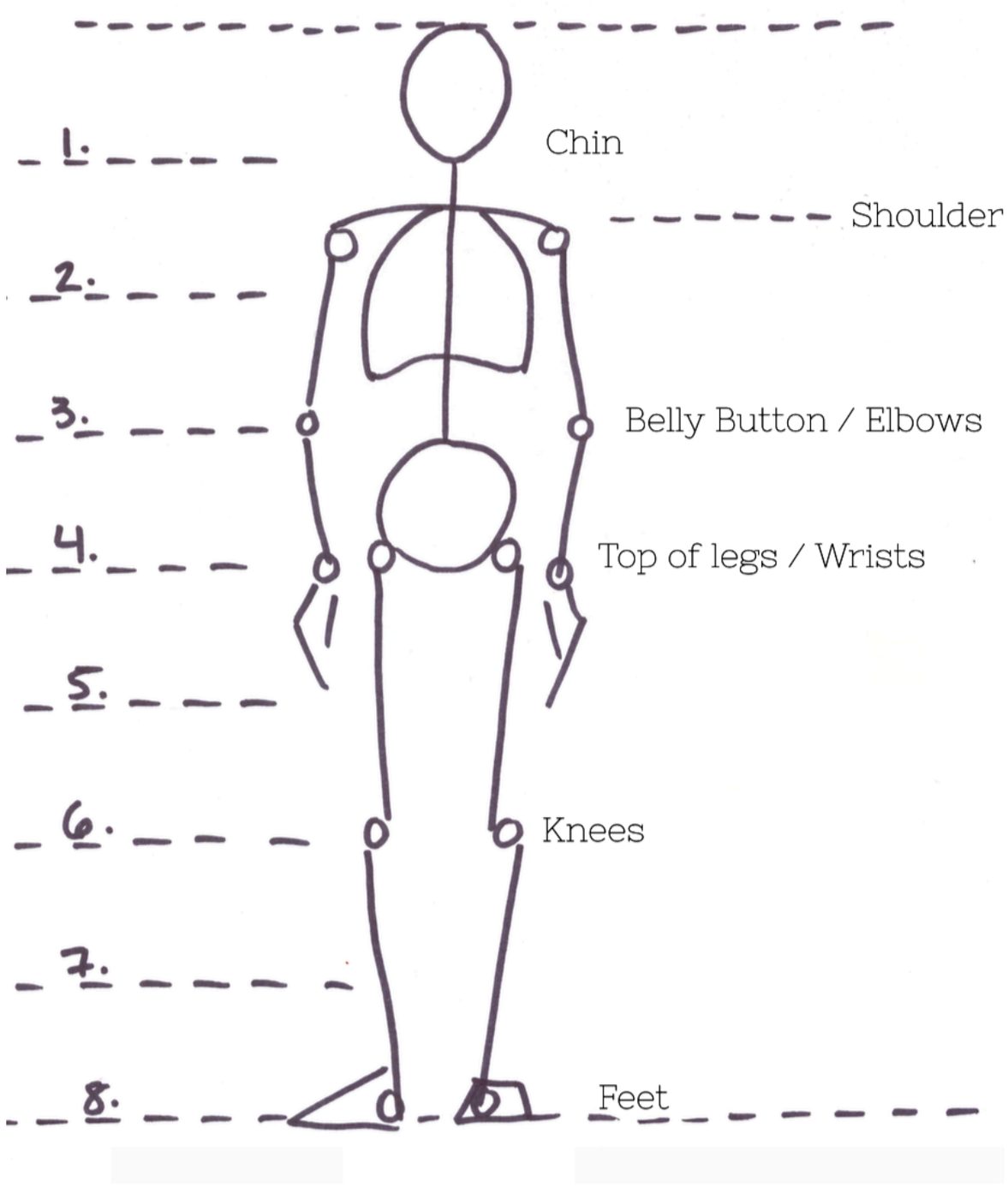
BASIC BODY PROPORTIONS

- **Just like when starting to draw faces, it's important to begin by learning basic anatomical proportions and the alignments of important body elements in a forwards-facing, static pose.**

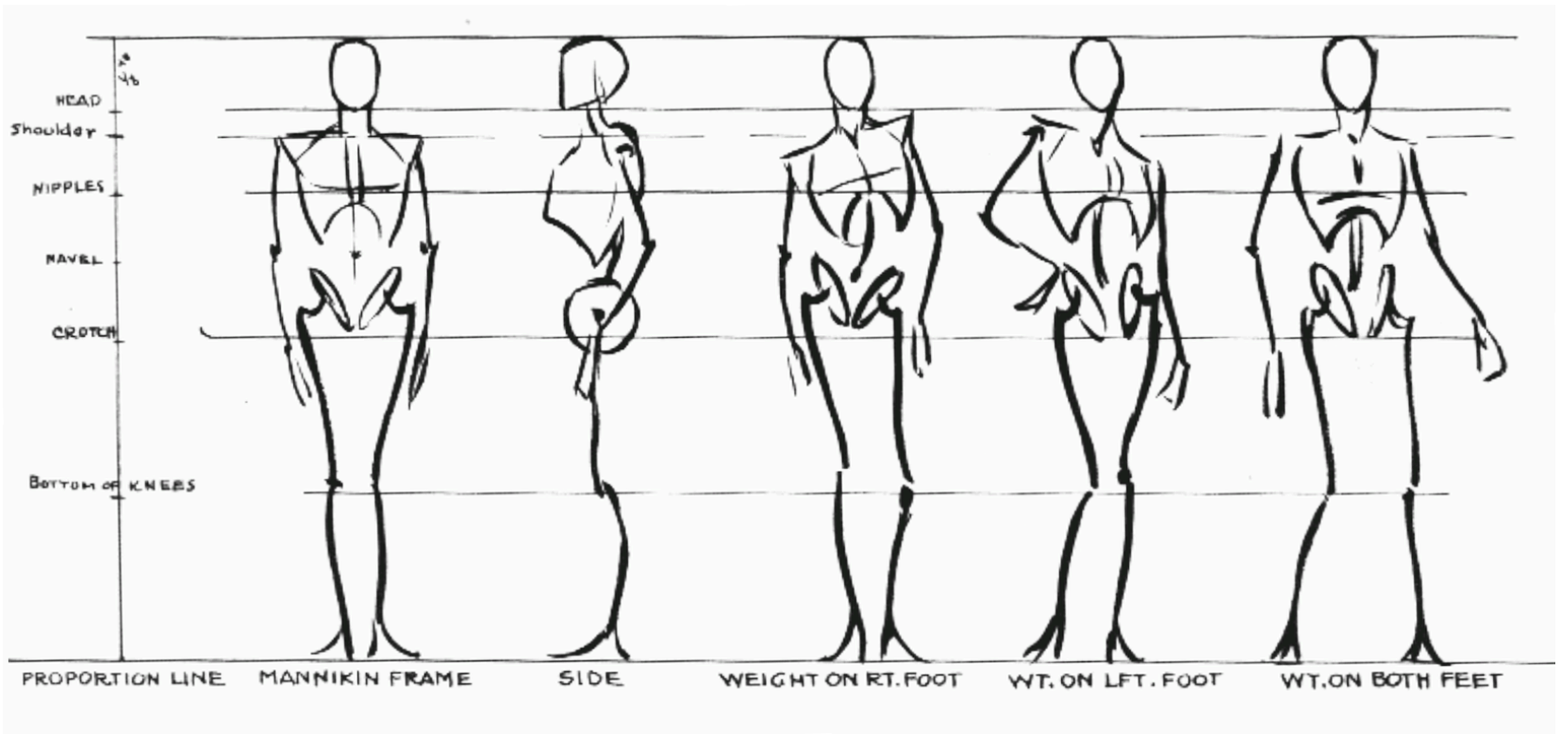
- A lot of artists use the "8 heads tall" guide, in which the length of one head (from top of the cranium to the tip of the chin), is considered the measuring unit. However, this is considered *ideal*, and 7.5 would be more real-life proportions.

- More normal proportions (7.5 - 8 head body length) are manipulated in figures intended for fashion sketching and also by character designers when developing superheroes, etc.

- **Notice how the main body masses (head, torso and hips) are simplified as basic shapes. These simplified skeletons are often referred to as *armatures* or *construction skeletons.***



VISUALIZING THE BODY IN DIFFERENT POSES

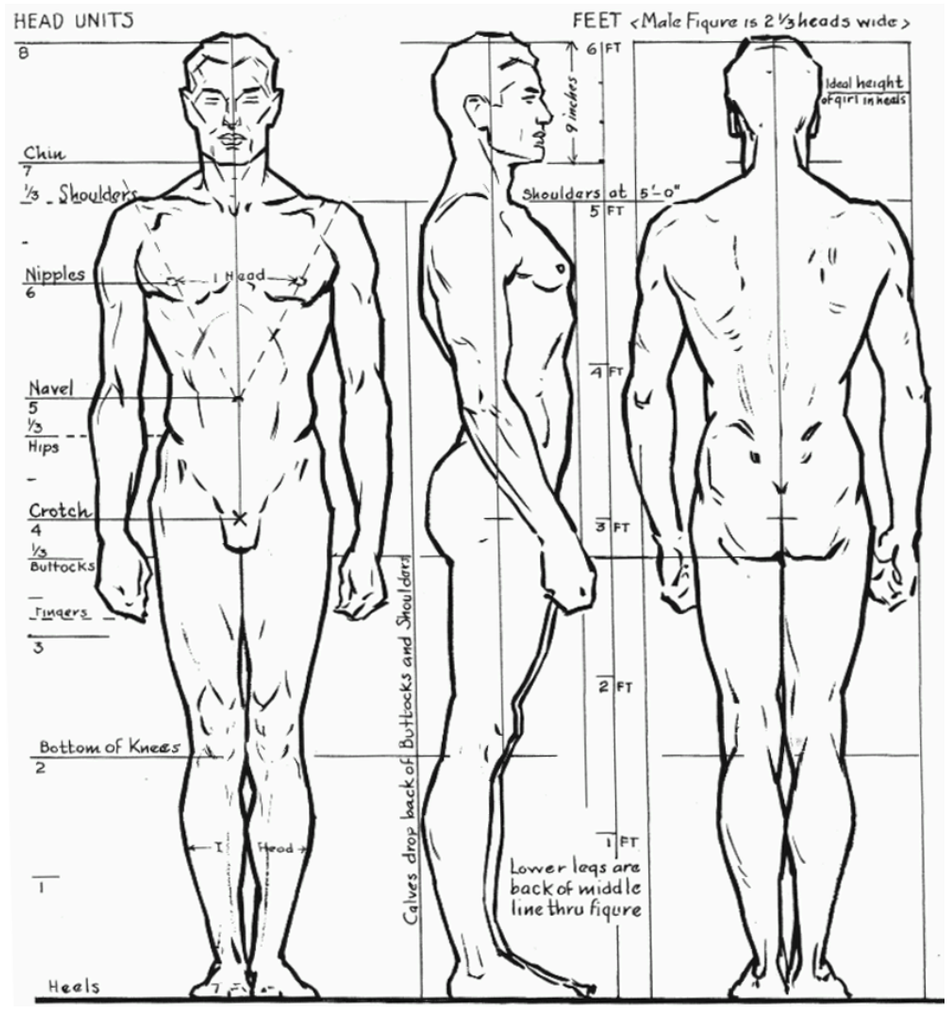


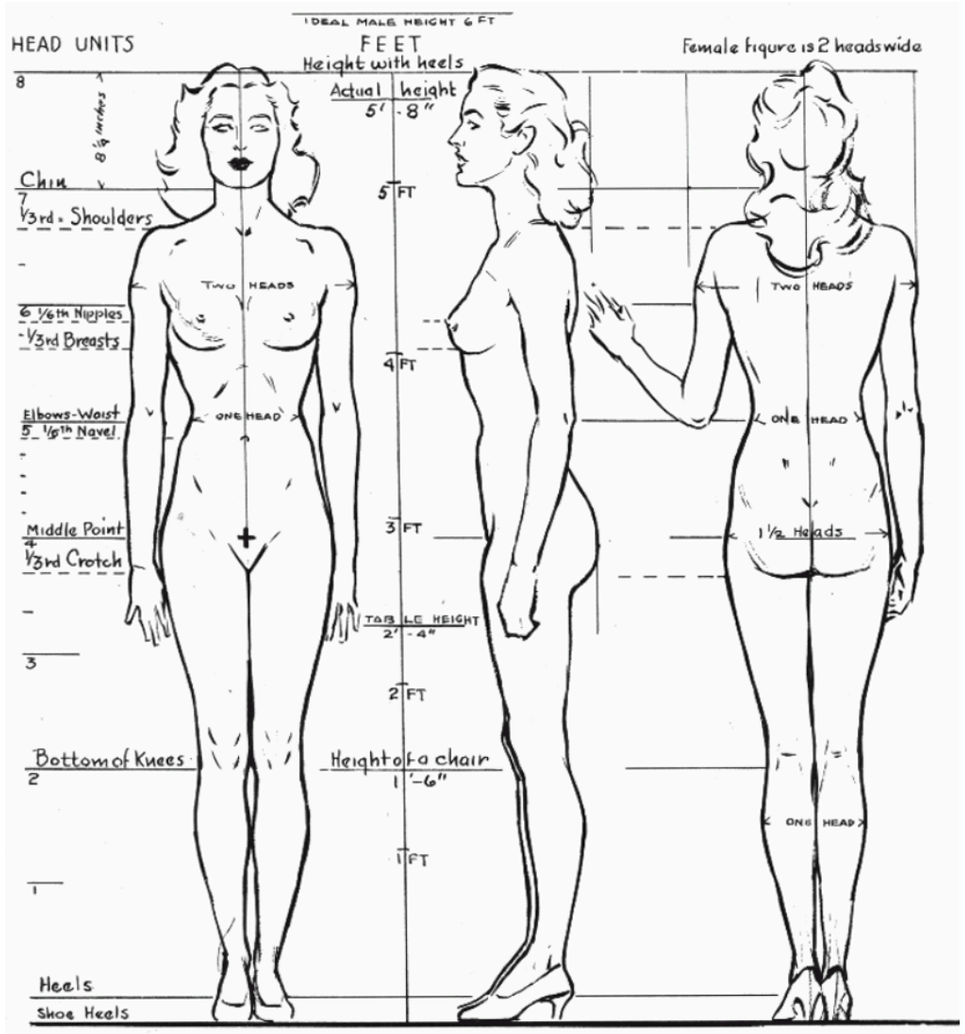
- **There is no right or wrong way to sketch your armatures/simplified skeletons. You could use anything from 2D circles, rectangles or shapes that look like specific parts of the body like the ribcage, to 3D cubes or rectangular prisms. What matters is transmitting effective proportions and believable poses. Usually, our shapes/forms are connected by lines.** **Notice how those lines are not perfectly straight and how the spine is represented by a line that curves in many poses?*

- **It's important to start from *the inside out (think of bones-you'd never start adding windows or painting walls of a house without having that solid base!).*** Construct that solid base and then move on to fleshing out the body, refining and adding details.

- **These basic body proportions apply to both male and female bodies, though once we start actually fleshing out the body, there are differences.**

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE FIGURES





- **Males have more of an upside down triangle shape, while females have more of an hourglass shape created by a smaller, more slender waist and a wider pelvis.**

- In males, the ribcage is wider than in females.

- Females have breasts. **A challenging part of the body to learn to draw in itself!*

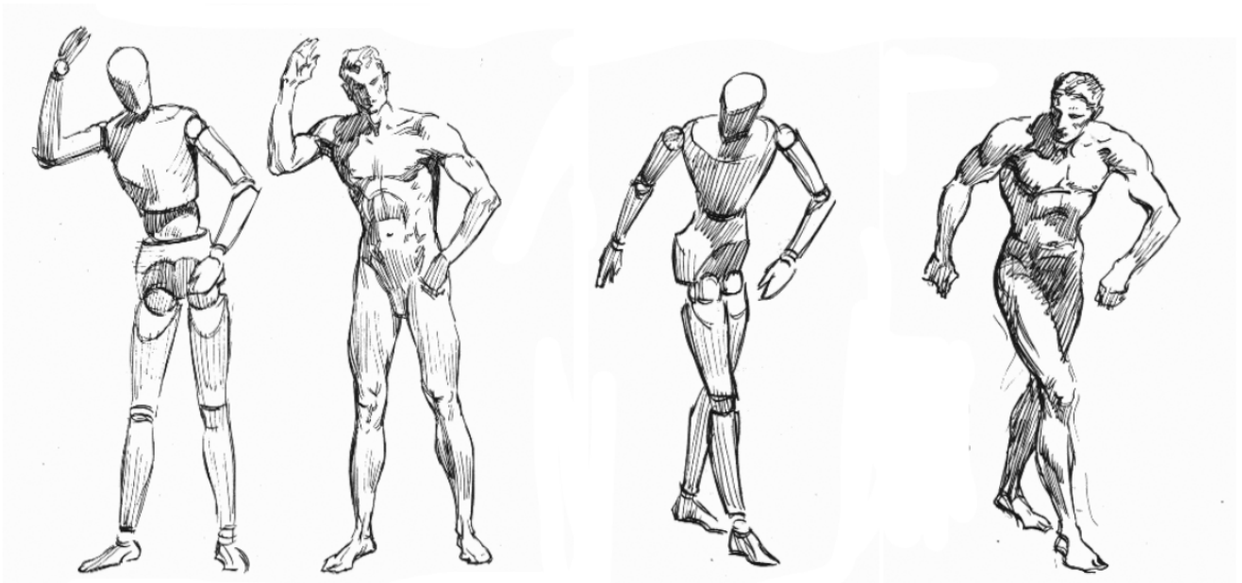
THE THREE MAIN PHASES OF DRAWING

- **There are three main phases which can be applied to drawing the head, the human body and really *any* other kind of subject:**

  1. Construct with basic shapes

  2. Flesh out / Refine shapes

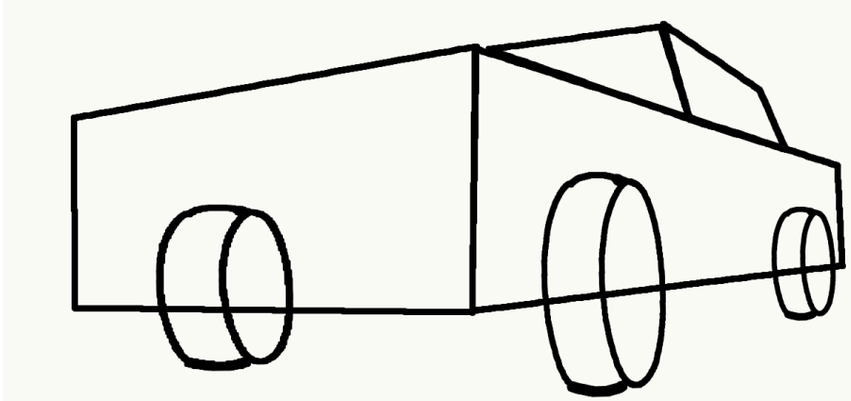
  3. Detailing and Shading



- **Why is this process useful? It ensures that we achieve effective proportions and believable poses *prior* to starting on the smaller details and shading. It saves us time.**

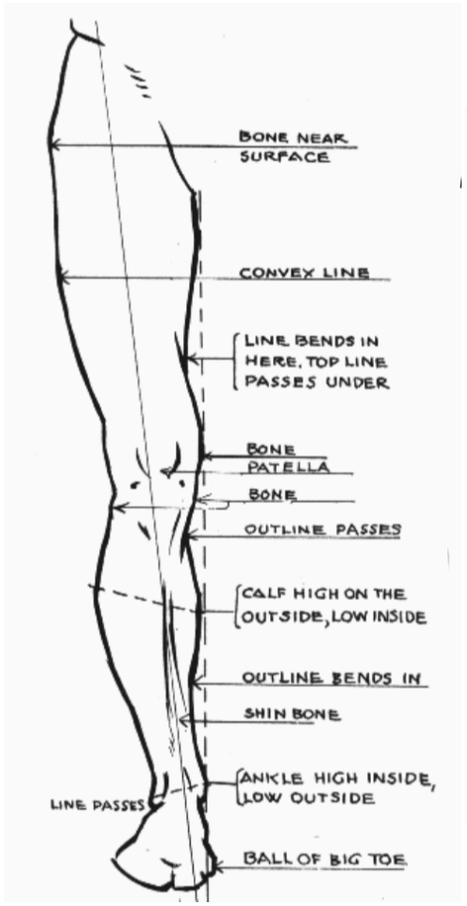
- Think of the body as being a combination of *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary* forms as you're drawing. *Primary - Main/simplified form, Secondary - Muscles and fat, shape refinement, Tertiary - Veins, Wrinkles, Hair, etc.

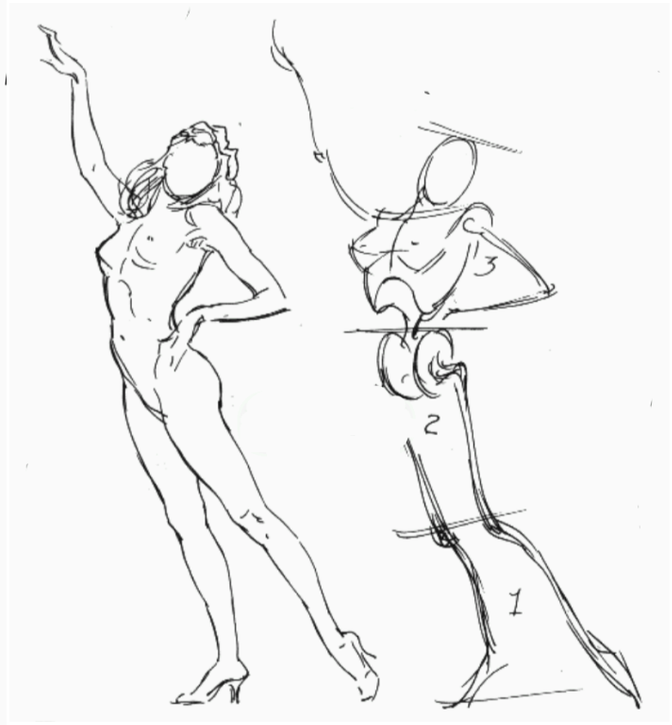
- In the beginning, we want to focus on the primary forms.

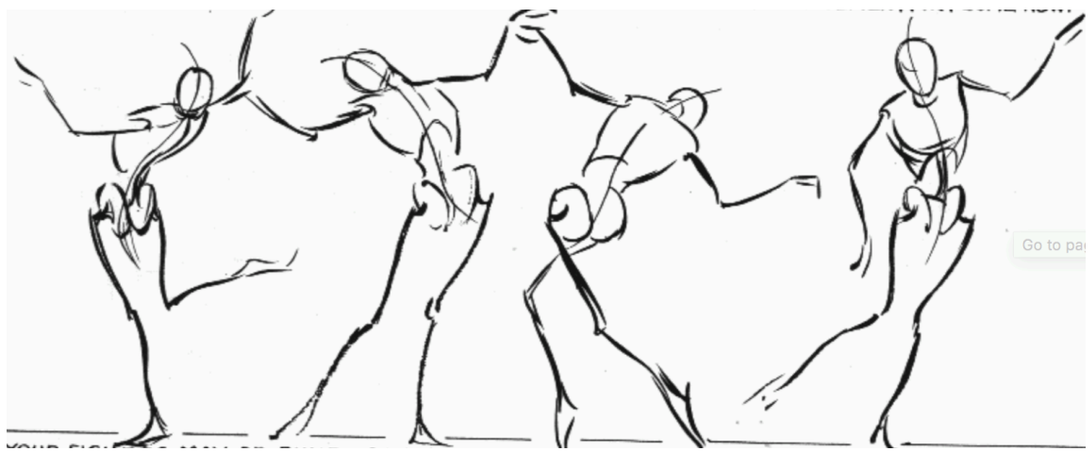




TAKE IT STEP-BY-STEP







1. Learn basic proportions and practice drawing simplified skeletons in front and side view. Choose your simple shapes to symbolize the largest masses (head, torso and hips).

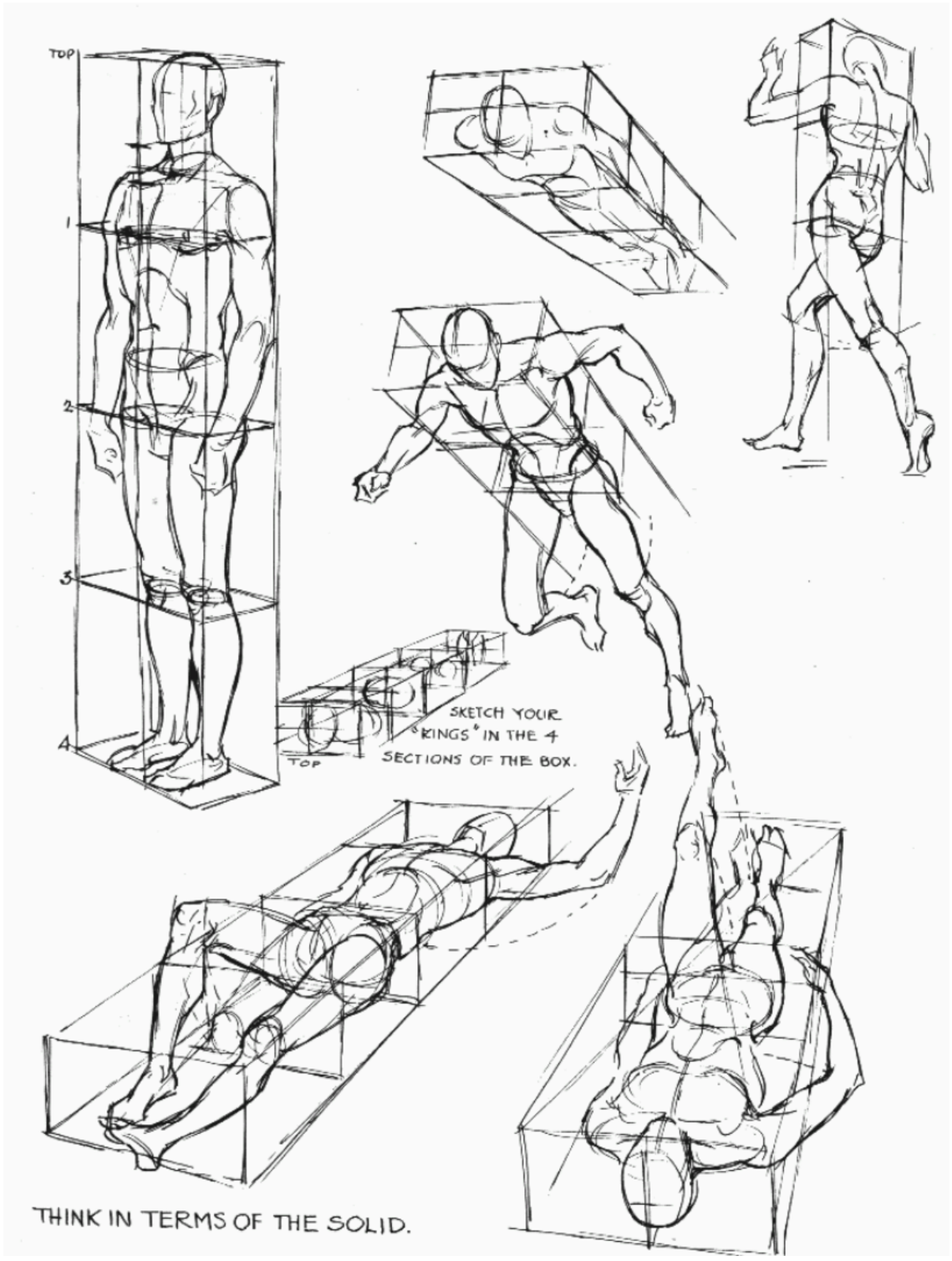
2. Print full-body photos of people in different poses (standing, sitting, in motion) and use tracing paper to create simplified skeletons right over them.

3. Remove photos and practice drawing simplified skeletons of people in different poses *freehand,* using your observation.

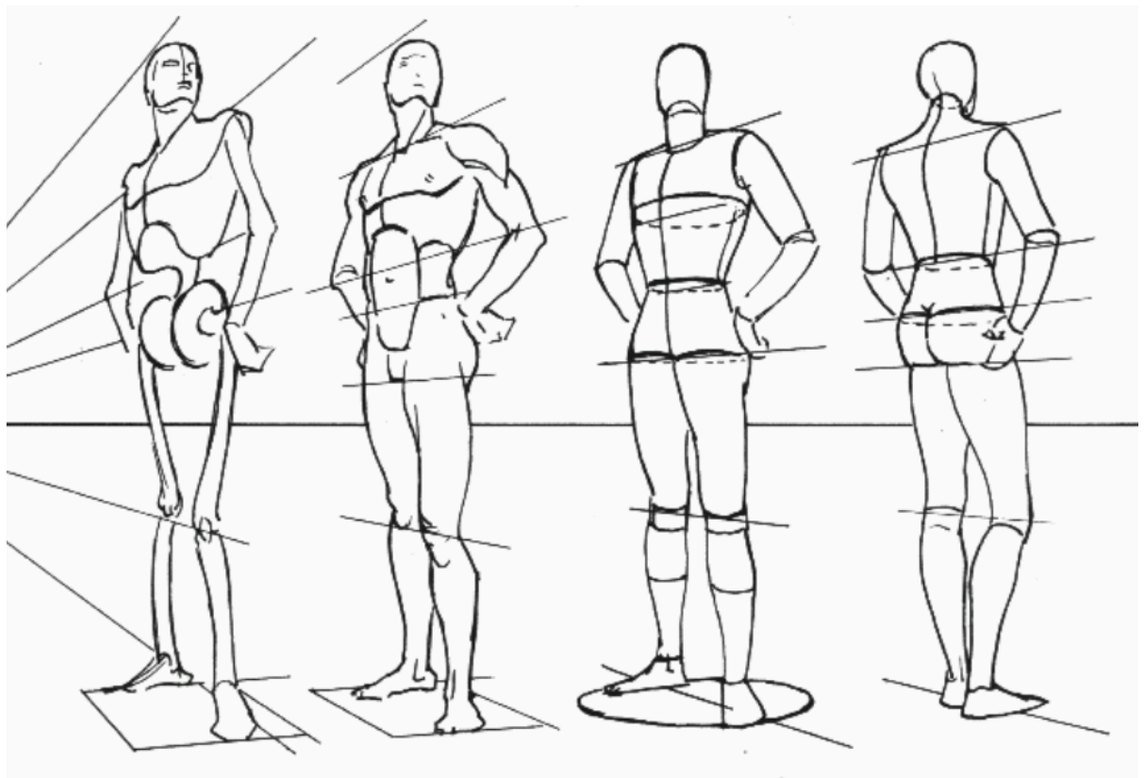
4. Study the shapes created by fat and muscle, and getting comfortable tracing them over photos. **Start drawing these masses freehand around your construction skeletons.**

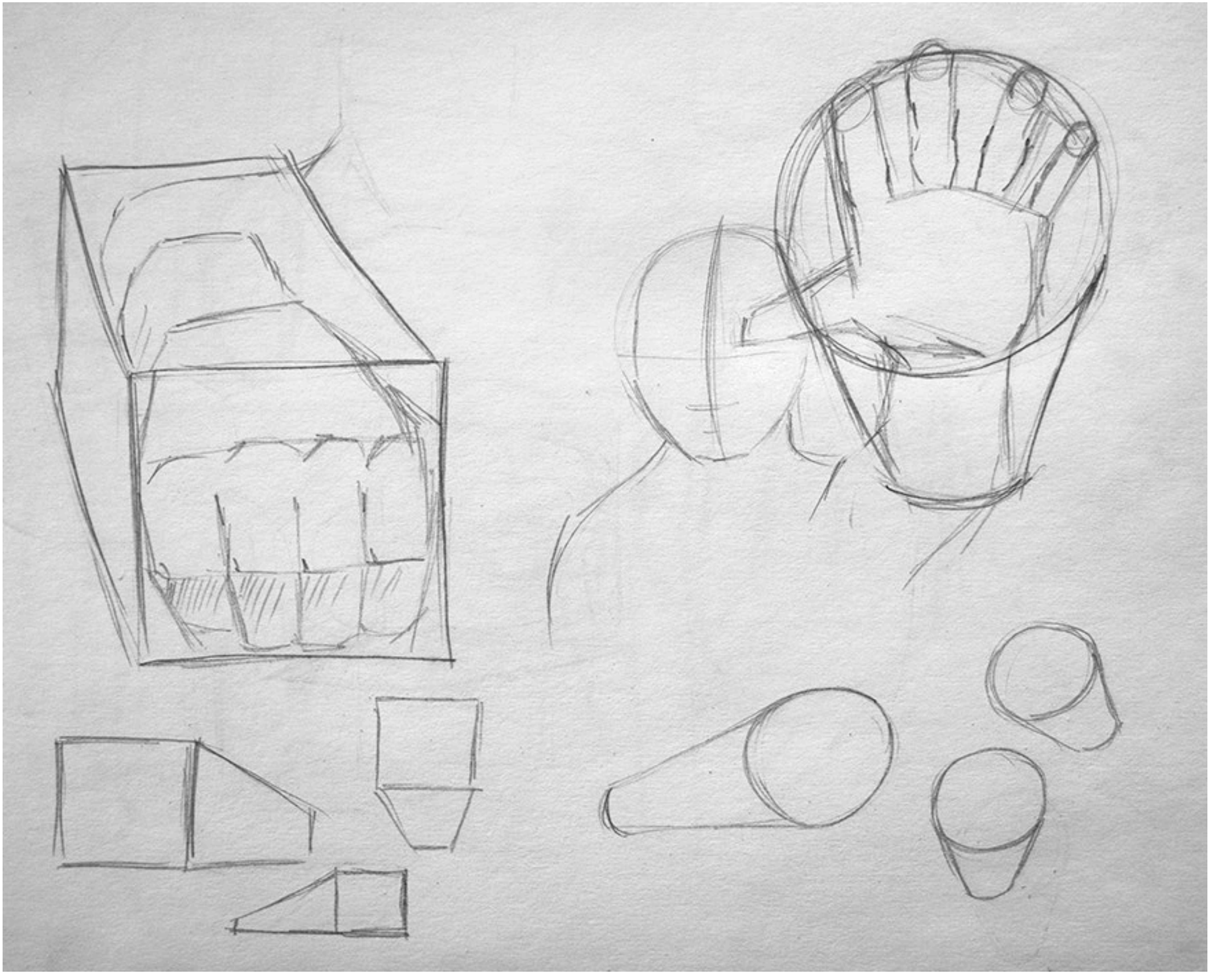
5. Begin acknowledging different body parts as simplified 3D forms such as cylinders and spheres in order to start adding believable shading. Bring in your knowledge of perspective and foreshortening. Ask yourself, what 3D form can I use to stand for this part of the body (think of *primary forms*)?

VISUALIZING BODY PARTS AS SIMPLE 3D FORMS



- **Just like when we draw anything else, starting with basic 3D forms allows us to visualize and develop believable perspective. **Perspective is a part of all kinds of drawing!***
- Also, remember that we cannot achieve effective shading, if we don't understand what we're drawing as a three-dimensional structure created by a variety of planes, that can be seen at many different angles and perspectives.





CREATIVE ASSIGNMENT #14:

- Sketch at least three different figures (sitting, standing, in motion), starting with your basic construction skeletons and moving on to adding mass/shape around them. **Depending on your skill level, you can choose to trace over photos or do this completely freehand.*
- If you're more advanced, make sure you're choosing more complex/ extreme poses with foreshortening, etc.

- ***Recommended Resources: *Links and downloadable reference photos will be left within this Patreon post.***
- Andrew Loomis- *Figure Drawing for All It's Worth*
- Use magazines, Google or free online reference photo sites to find full-body poses of people.
- For timed poses (more advanced): **Croquis Cafe** YouTube channel and **New Master's Academy** YouTube channel