

Learning to draw hands:

Learning to draw hands is easier than it seems, as though they are complex forms, they become less daunting by simplifying the shapes. The formulaic approach to drawing hands using circles and ovals is helpful to start with, but the shapes needed will change according to the position of the hand, so it is much better to train your eye to see what is required. It can help to see each part of the finger as a short cylinder, depicted with an oval overlapping the next to form the joint, but from there the subtle variations of shape must be built up.



1. Rough in the overall form.

Imagine the hand is encased in a tight mitten, and sketch the basic shape formed by the hand and fingers. Mark the imaginary lines through the joints.



2. Form the fingers.

Observing carefully the shape of the space between them, draw and check the relative size and placement of the fingers and thumb.



3. Refine the drawing.

Indicate the main visible creases, especially where the thumb folds into the hand. Refine contour lines defining the palm and thumb.



4. Describe the form with tone.

Here some rough shading is added to bring out the form of hand. Once you have the basic form down, try more subtle shading, and observe the fine lines and visible veins.



In this example some fingers are partially hidden. Draw the closest finger first and allow the others to sit in behind it, drawing only the portion you can see, or *lightly* indicating the hidden lines to help judge proportion.

Tips:

- Practice with your own hand, but try closing one eye to avoid seeing from a different angle with each eye (try it and see!)
- Keep your drawing consistent with the rest of the figure. If you've used a fairly free approach, then don't overwork; if you have thoroughly worked the figure, give the same attention to the hands.
- Try to have interesting or 'friendly' poses, resting on a surface or holding an object. Avoid interlaced fingers.
- Become familiar with the underlying anatomy.



Veins and tendons often show as lighter areas. (A study after Michelangelo)