

Day 1

Your hand, from memory and from life

2 min Draw your hand from memory. Do not look at it.

7 min Now draw it from life. Look at your hand more than at the paper.

2 min Put the two drawings side by side. Circle one difference.

The secret: Keep this page. You will draw your hand again on day 31.

Draw here

Day 2

An upside-down line drawing

2 min Draw slow straight lines across a scrap of paper.

7 min Turn a line drawing upside down. Copy it one edge at a time.

2 min Turn both the right way up and compare.

The secret: Do not turn your copy over until you have finished it.

Draw here

Day 3

An upside-down photo of a chair

2 min Draw 10 slow curves.

7 min Turn a photo of a chair upside down. Copy it, starting at one corner.

2 min Turn it over. Mark the part that looks most right.

The secret: Start with the edge nearest a corner of the photo, then work inwards.

Draw here

Day 4

Trace first, then copy

2 min Trace the outline of a flower sheet.

7 min Copy the same flower freehand beside the tracing.

2 min Lay the tracing over your copy and look.

The secret: Tracing shows your hand where each curve turns.

Draw here

Day 5

A mug from life

2 min Draw 10 ovals of different sizes.

7 min Draw a mug on the table in front of you.

2 min Check the top. Is it an oval or a circle?

The secret: The top of a mug is an oval, unless you look straight down into it.

Draw here

Day 6

One leaf

2 min Draw wavy lines.

7 min Draw a leaf from life. Outer edge first, veins last.

2 min Count the bumps on the real edge and on yours.

The secret: Draw the outer edge before the veins.

Draw here

Day 7

Your hand again

2 min Draw slow straight lines.

7 min Draw your hand from life. Draw the gaps between the fingers first.

2 min Put it next to day 1.

The secret: The gaps between fingers are easier to see than the fingers.

Draw here

Day 8

The edge of a spoon

2 min Draw one line as slowly as you can.

7 min Draw a spoon. Move the pencil only while your eyes move along its edge.

2 min Mark the part of the line that wobbles most.

The secret: Look at the spoon for 3 seconds for every 1 second you look at the paper.

Draw here

Day 9

Folds in a tea towel

2 min Draw slow S-curves.

7 min Drop a tea towel on the table. Follow one fold from end to end, then the next.

2 min Circle the fold you drew best.

The secret: Finish one fold completely before you start the next one.

Draw here

Day 10

One slow line only

2 min Draw a line at half your normal speed.

7 min Draw the outline of a cup at half speed. Nothing else.

2 min Compare it with your day 5 mug.

The secret: If your lines wobble, halve your speed. A slow line wobbles less than a fast one.

Draw here

Day 11

A shoe from the side

2 min Draw long flat lines.

7 min Draw a shoe from the side. Start with the line of the sole.

2 min Check the heel height against the real shoe.

The secret: Draw the sole first. The rest of the shoe sits on it.

Draw here

Day 12

Keys on a table

2 min Draw small circles.

7 min Draw 3 keys. Draw the biggest key first.

2 min Check each key's size against the biggest one.

The secret: The first object you draw sets the size for everything after it.

Draw here

Day 13

A flower from life

2 min Draw petal shapes.

7 min Draw one flower. Start with the petal closest to you.

2 min Shade the petals that sit behind.

The secret: Petals at the back are only partly visible. Draw only the part you can see.

Draw here

Day 14

The mug, slowly

2 min Draw one slow line.

7 min Draw the mug from day 5 again, at half speed.

2 min Put both mugs side by side.

The secret: Same subject, slower line. That is the whole test.

Draw here

Day 15

The gaps in a chair

2 min Draw rectangles.

7 min Draw only the shapes of air between the legs and bars of a chair.

2 min Shade the gaps with your pencil.

The secret: Draw the spaces between the legs, not the legs.

Draw here

Day 16

Between your fingers

2 min Draw triangles.

7 min Spread your fingers on the paper edge. Draw only the gaps between them.

2 min Add the outline of the fingers last.

The secret: A gap has no name, so you draw what is really there.

Draw here

Day 17

Fill the gaps black

2 min Shade small squares solid.

7 min Draw a plant. Fill every gap between leaves solid black.

2 min Step back from the page.

The secret: If the drawing looks empty, shade the gaps solid. The object appears on its own.

Draw here

Day 18

A plant on the windowsill

2 min Draw leaf shapes.

7 min Draw the light between the leaves of a plant against the window.

2 min Darken the leaves, leave the gaps white.

The secret: Against a bright window, the gaps are easier to see than the leaves.

Draw here

Day 19

A pair of scissors

2 min Draw ovals.

7 min Draw the 2 finger holes first, then the blades.

2 min Check that the holes are the right size.

The secret: The holes are the easiest part to get right, so draw them first.

Draw here

Day 20

The inside of a cup handle

2 min Draw C shapes.

7 min Draw the hole inside a cup handle, then the handle, then the cup.

2 min Compare the hole shape with the real one.

The secret: The hole inside a handle is easier to judge than the handle itself.

Draw here

Day 21

The chair again

2 min Draw rectangles.

7 min Draw the chair from day 15. Gaps first, then the outline.

2 min Put both chairs side by side.

The secret: Gaps first, outline second. Keep that order from now on.

Draw here

Day 22

A 5-step pencil scale

2 min Shade one small square as evenly as you can.

7 min Shade 5 boxes from white to your darkest dark.

2 min Squint at the scale. Are the steps even?

The secret: For the darkest box, go over it twice. Do not press harder.

Draw here

Day 23

An egg under one lamp

2 min Shade a small circle.

7 min Put an egg under one lamp. Draw it and shade the side away from the light.

2 min Find the shadow on the table and add it.

The secret: Use one lamp on one side. Light from 2 sides makes the egg look flat.

Draw here

Day 24

Keep one spot white

2 min Shade a square, leaving a white dot in it.

7 min Draw an apple under one lamp. Leave the brightest spot as bare paper.

2 min Check that the white spot is still white.

The secret: If the drawing turns grey all over, stop shading. Leave the brightest spot empty.

Draw here

Day 25

A crumpled paper ball

- 2 min** Shade 3 tones: light, middle, dark.
- 7 min** Squint at a crumpled paper ball. Shade only 3 tones.
- 2 min** Add the darkest creases last.

The secret: Squinting joins small tones into 3 big shapes.

Draw here

Day 26

An apple with no outline

2 min Shade a soft-edged patch.

7 min Draw an apple using shading only. Draw no outline.

2 min Look at where the edge appears.

The secret: The edge of an object is where the dark meets the light. It does not need a line.

Draw here

Day 27

A folded cloth

2 min Shade a 3-tone scale.

7 min Draw a folded cloth. Shade the inside of each fold.

2 min Darken the deepest fold.

The secret: The deepest part of a fold is the darkest. Shade it last.

Draw here

Day 28

The egg again

2 min Shade one small circle.

7 min Draw the day 23 egg again, with no outline.

2 min Put both eggs side by side.

The secret: If the new egg looks rounder, the shading is working.

Draw here

Day 29

Choose a flower and copy its shapes

2 min Draw petal shapes.

7 min Draw a flower with 5 petals or fewer. Gaps first, then outline.

2 min Rub out any line you do not need.

The secret: Pick a flower with 5 petals or fewer for your first finished drawing.

Draw here

Day 30

Slow the line over the outline

2 min Draw one slow line.

7 min Go over yesterday's outline slowly. Add the inner edges of the petals.

2 min Mark where the light comes from.

The secret: Only ink or darken the lines you are sure of.

Draw here

Day 31

Shade it, then compare

2 min Shade a 3-tone scale.

7 min Shade the flower from one light. Fill one petal with a simple pattern.

2 min Lay it next to your day 1 hand.

The secret: Write the date on the back, not the front.

Draw here