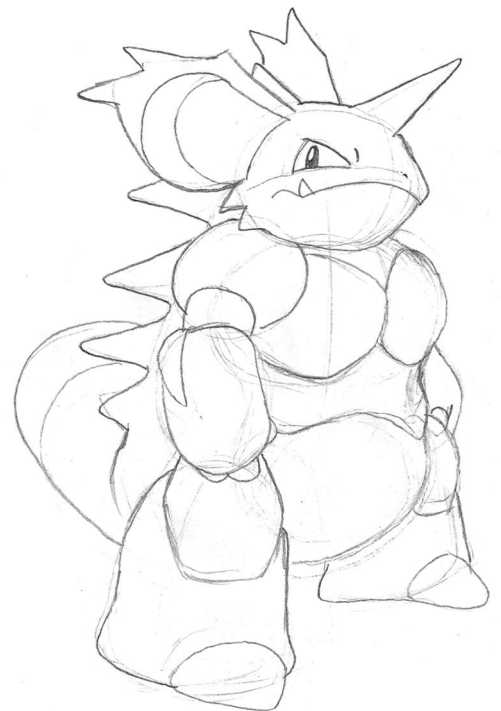
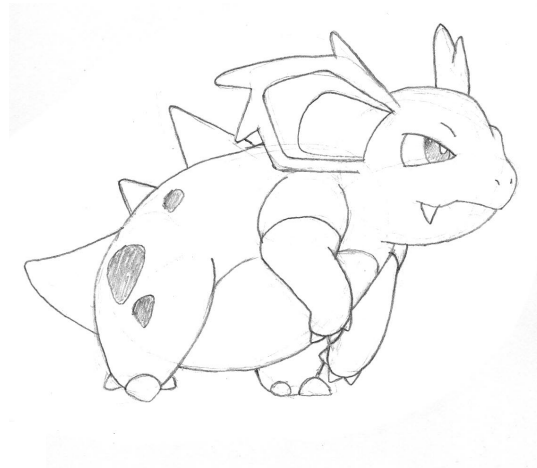
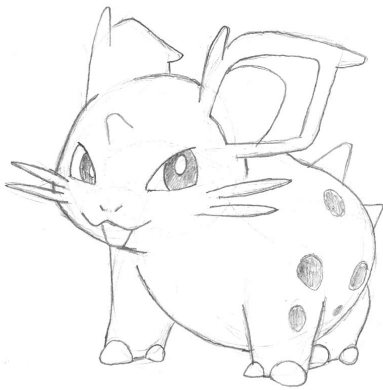


Learning to Draw Pokemon

The Nidoran Family



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Introduction

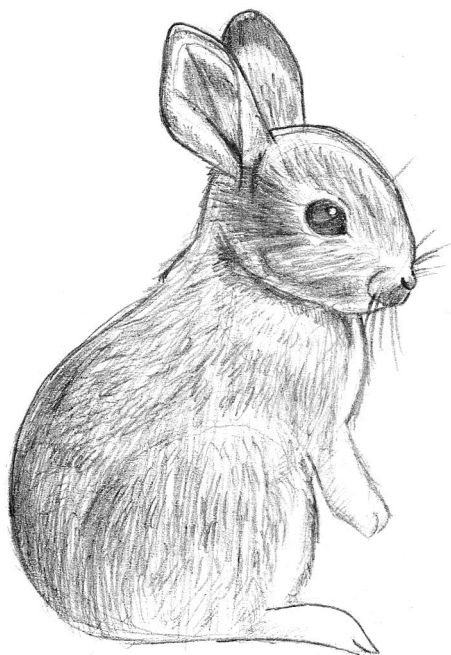
So, you want to draw a Pokemon in the Nidoran family, but you don't know where to start? Or, perhaps you've always been intimidated by the designs. After all, at first glance it's just a mess of spots and spines and a claw count that lacks consistency across the board. Well, the first step is admitting it. The second step, of course, is taking action. Perhaps you've drawn these Pokemon before, but can't get them to look just right, or, you're an art major or professional and you just like to look at approaches to constructing cartoon characters and you want to see if it matches up with your own, or perhaps if it's better or worse than your method. Maybe you don't even know how you got this.

The purpose of this guide is to give clear instruction of what I have found to be the most productive way to construct members of the Nido family, while keeping it relatively simple. This process took a bit of trial and error, but the end result will leave you with the ability to create one of these Pokemon just about every way imaginable. I've used every official source at my disposal, including figurines that provide a 3D perspective of each of the creatures. I put it all together to try to come up with something both nearly accurate to Ken Sugimori's design while allowing flexibility so that it isn't a chore to draw. In other words, it's not 100% on model, but I think you will find that beneficial for leaving some ideas to your imagination, something going strictly by the book would not allow. I hope you will enjoy the end result.

This guide is founded on the principles of drawing first and foremost, so it's almost not enough to just dive right in. I mean, you *could* dive right in but you don't learn anything, you don't know what you're doing, and you're technically only copying. If you're only drawing for fun, don't be discouraged. You will still find this guide easy if you follow along, but you may be limited in the long run. Don't worry about getting anything perfect, the most important thing is that you understand how the forms come together. This guide may come off as a little technical, and so, it may be a little boring. That's just the way it is. Learning the fundamentals of illustration is not nearly as fun as trying to draw whatever you wish in whatever style you want, but as stated before, that's only going to lead to unnatural results. If you plan on illustrating seriously, I want to emphasize one of the most important things you need to do before you draw anything at all...

DO A LIFE STUDY!

The artwork found in this guide takes into account the anatomy of animals such as rabbits and the rhinoceros, getting a feel of their structure, such as the joints and muscles, along with their movement and behavior. I take what I learn, then apply it to the Pokemon in question. Pokemon anatomy by itself is so oversimplified that it actually defies logic and should not by any means be used as a basis for drawing real world equivalents of the creature. Even within the limitations of the Pokemon, you can still apply real life skills here. Furthermore, they still follow solid design principals, which allow for easy reproduction and clear, instantly recognizable silhouettes.



I'm not going to teach you how to draw rabbits or general fundamentals. You'll have to learn that on your own. There are plenty of guides and tutorials out there, but make sure to do a little research on the authority of the source. Anybody can make a guide of how to draw anything (like me for instance), so a little background check never hurt anybody. Also, take classes when you can. You'll receive some rather priceless techniques in a learning environment, provided your teacher knows what he's talking about (and I've been in classes where I knew more about the subject than my professor, so be careful).

With that obligation out of the way, why don't we get right into it and start to draw some Nidos, eh?

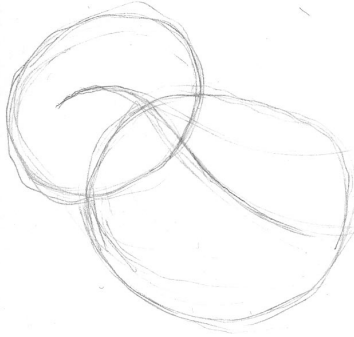
Small Pokemon

Nidoran Female

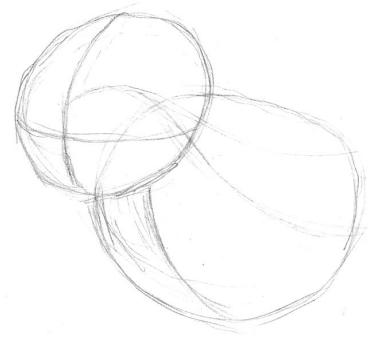
We'll start small by drawing the base form of each gender, starting with the female Nidoran. She's an easy Pokemon to start with, especially for getting acquainted with some standards we'll be using later.



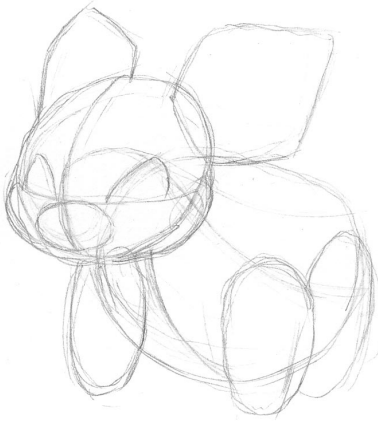
Start by drawing out your line of action. It's a dynamic line that directs the flow of movement and action in a character. For the purpose of this guide, I won't get too technical about the line of action, but it's recommended that you build your poses and actions around it.



Build your forms around the line of action, starting with the head and body. Most of the Nido Pokemon are constructed with egg shaped heads and egg, if not bean or pear shaped bodies.



Now before you move on, imagine your character in 3D space. Which way is it facing? Where's the center of the body, and where is it pointing? Lightly draw in guides to help you.



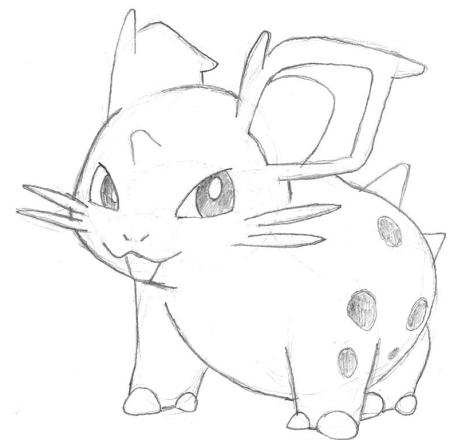
Draw in major appendages first, such as legs, arms, the ears (which for these creatures is considered major), the eyes and muzzle. You want to be sure these wrap around your figure in three dimensions. If you aren't comfortable visualizing the position of an appendage behind something, you can draw the full shape as shown here. When drawing Nido ears, just remember "pentagon".



Add secondary appendages and details. Once you have it all laid out, you can take this time to make final corrections, of which there are a few above (such as the width of her head). The details of Nidos can be tricky to remember, such as her claws and toes. Here's a simple way to remember how to draw her claws. Think of drawing a mitten.



And the toes? It's the inverse!



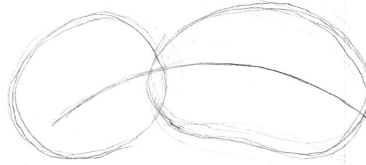
Clean up around the construction lines, and add any final level details such as spots (the official art has a lot of inconsistencies with spot placement, but for the sake of simplicity, this is based off of the latest Sugimori design). And here she is, America's Sweetheart. Or would she be Japan's Sweetheart? Either way, congrats, you just drew a female Nidoran!

Nidoran Male

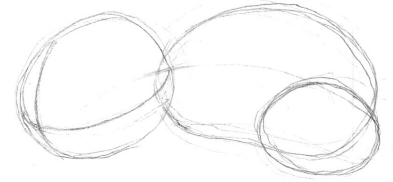
Time to move up to level two. Oh, wait, what's that? Yes yes, Nidoran is in the same pose we always see him in. I know, I'm as tired of it as you are, but there's an important lesson to be found in drawing Nidoran Male that could be overlooked if I don't present it this way. Read on and you'll soon understand why.



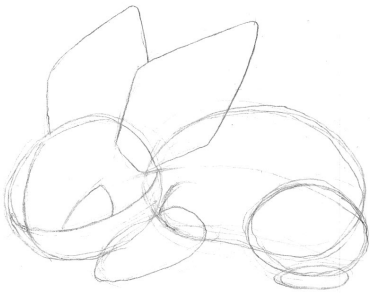
Start with your line of action. In this case, it'll be in the shape of an arc, because Nidoran is crouched over.



Build in solid forms. This can be tricky when referring to official Nidoran works, but he actually has a wider body than it appears. However, it's still a bit slimmer than the female.



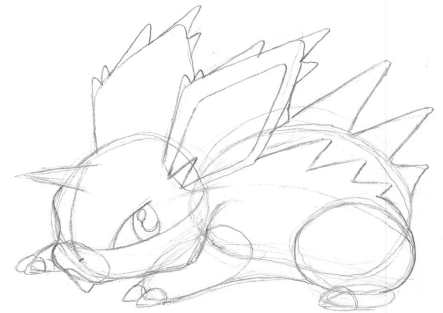
Add guides to place your character into three dimensions. I also added a thigh just to get us moving along.



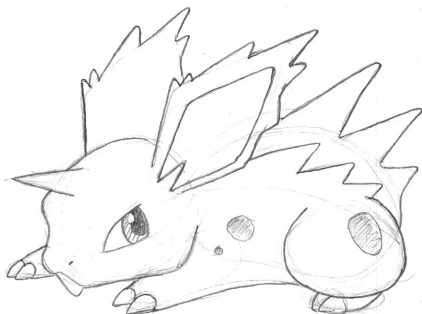
Add in the first level of details. I'll cover this in two parts because the important step is coming next.



Here I added in his muzzle and ear protrusions (he has a total of six officially). Now, add the TOP layer of spines right on his back. He technically has four, but the official art suggests his ear blocks the first.



Add the second level of details. His toes are nearly joined together, but otherwise all of his claws are roughly the same size. Now we also add in the bottom layer of spines, of which there are only three, but on both sides of him. In this position, these spines seem to start from middle right corner of his pentagon ear.



After clean up, you'll inevitably notice that Nidoran appears flattened. This is the illusion that is caused by bottom row of spines, and is why I specifically chose this pose. If you're not careful with the initial construction, you could end up with an even flatter body and an awkward placement of the spines.

The spot placement reflects the latest Sugimori rendition, minus the spot just under the horn, as it's arbitrary in relation to other illustrations of Nidoran.

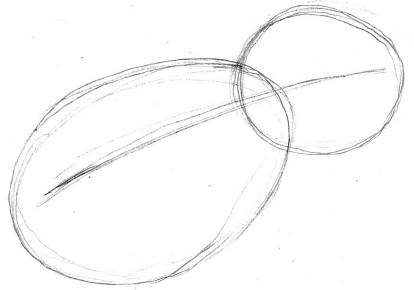
Mid-Sized Pokemon

Nidorina

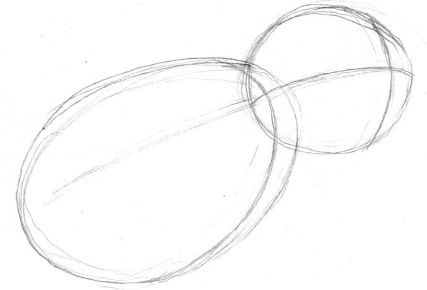
Nidorina is a stout and chubby creature. Because of this, it's hard to believe her anatomy lends towards any natural moment. Unlike Nidoran Female, at least she has visible thighs. Still, we can make her work using a rabbit as a foundation.



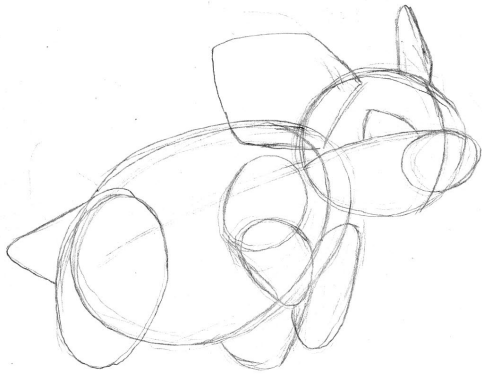
Let's do our line of action like this...



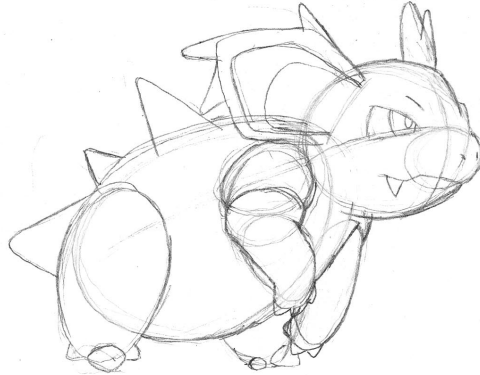
followed by a head and body...



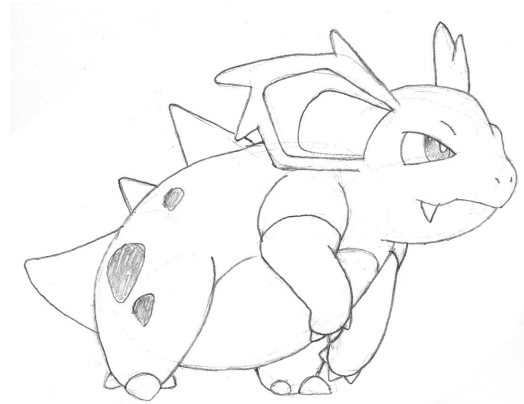
and let's add dimension.



Now for the first set of details. It kind of looks like she's pointing at something, doesn't it? Note the arms; I used two hot dog shaped ovals for her joints.



Add the next set of details. Here's some tips. Nidorina has both three toes and claws. Her claws are the same size, while her middle toe is larger than the others. She has 4 spines that run parallel down her back. She also has three ear points, two on the corners of her ear and one just underneath the other with a gap in between.



After a bit of clean up and some finishing touches, here's our Nidorina. That seemed to go by pretty quickly, didn't it?

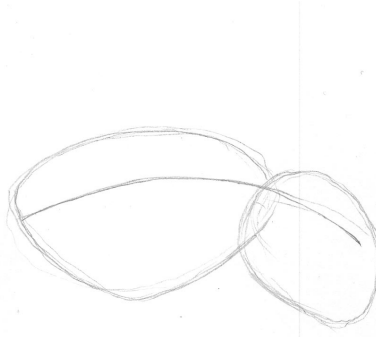
As always, the spots are of official standard.

Nidorino

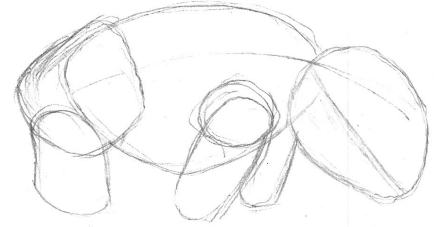
Nidorino is an animal of a different type. Up until this point, the Nidoran family has had more in common with rabbits, including Nidorina. Nidorino, however, shares more with the rhinoceros. I used a photo of a real rhinoceros to draw this Nidorino, but it's way simplified. Maybe you can make the connection, though.



Imagine what you want your character to do. Using a photo of a rhino grazing, I wanted to create that image for Nidorino, so my LoA follows suit.



Build a body around that line.



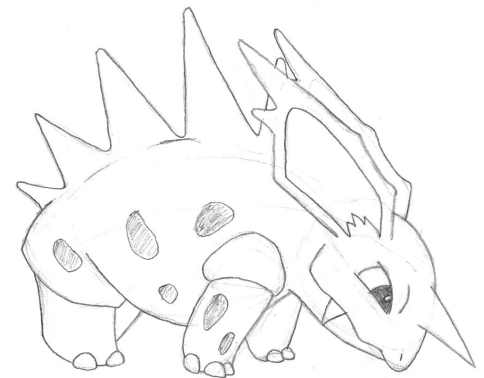
Add your guides. From here on out I'm going to move a bit faster. Take a notice of the limbs, and especially the thigh and leg. See how it's not attached to the torso but instead the thigh? If you compare Nidorino's design to a rhino, you will see quite a few similarities in the body (though not so much the face). Construct the body this way for the most accuracy.



Add details. Nidorino has five spines that run along his back. He also has three claws, but only TWO toes. Remember that. Nidorino also has a different type of snout than his younger siblings and female counterpart. It's more in line with the final evolutions.



Nidorino has an interesting ear design. They look like they have a couple of bony joints sticking out, but there's only two points proper. He also has some fuzz in his ears. The design of his upper and lower jaw is closer to that of Nidoqueen than any other member of the family.



When you clean it all up, you can really see how using the initial rhino reference helps it all come together in the end. He's actually kind of cute in this natural pose. The spot placement is kind of arbitrary, but nearly a mirror of what you'd see on his left side, which is usually shown.

Large Pokemon Nidoqueen

The large Nidos don't have a basic animal to draw reference from when it comes to natural actions and poses. They're also a lot more challenging to draw correctly, and have more details than anything smaller than them. For the purpose of Nidoqueen, we're going to do a simple, no frills front view illustration.



You always want to make a line of action, But since this is an 100% straight ahead shot, I'm just going to construct the body. The line would otherwise be vertical.

Lay in some guides. Turns out my guides make a line of action anyway.

I create the legs and feet in a single "ham" styled shape. Also, since she has more complex arms, I've drawn a loose skeleton to work the arms around.

Now things get complex when you add in further details. Here's some tips. Her chest plates are about the length of the top of her horn to the bottom of her head. She has three claws and two toes. There is only one horizontal stripe across her faux-underoos (I have no idea what else to refer to it as). And even then, that plating only spans to just behind her legs and to her tail. The ham you drew for legs gets further broken into three for the foot, the lower leg, and the upper leg and knee. Her arms are also divided into three with a shoulder, upper arm, and lower arm and hand combo.



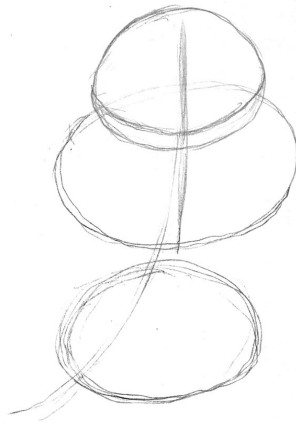
When you lay in these parts, absolutely do NOT concern yourself with trying to make it look perfectly symmetrical. Organic forms are never perfectly symmetrical, and things appear contrived and unnatural when you try to force symmetry. Have a look at yourself in the mirror closely one day. You will notice that your eye finds asymmetry more appealing, and it makes things look believable. After clean up, you should have a rather modest Nidoqueen. All that's left is the most challenging one of them all.

Nidoking

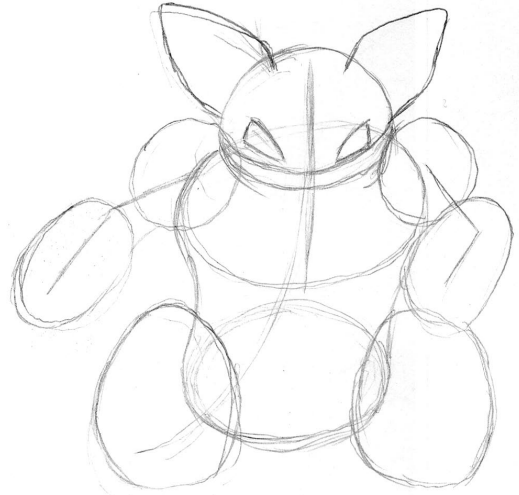
Without a clear reference, Nidoking is not only the hardest Nido to draw, but also the easiest to screw up. If you don't have a solid formula and his design memorized, you'll be forced to ad-lib him, or draw from memory, which will often lead to mixed results. Before you try taking an artistic spin on the character, you should understand and be able to reproduce his original design first.



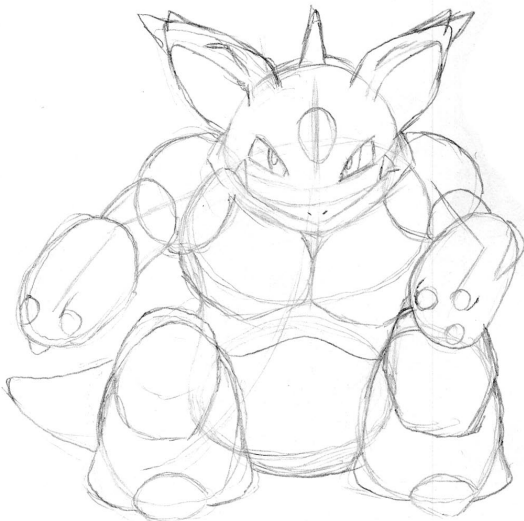
Like Nidoqueen, we'll do a front view. This design of Nidoking is near identical to his figurine, which allows for a full-proof way to learn the basics quickly. The LoA depicts the direction his tail is moving in.



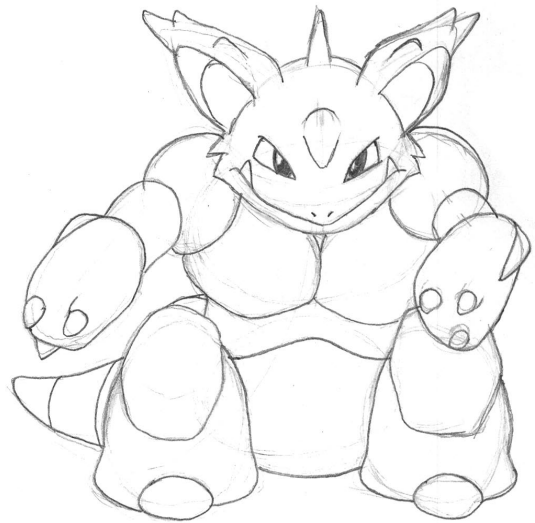
You'll note that Nidoking's structure is different from every other Nido we've drawn. He has a head, a torso and a waist. Draw out the shapes for these, then add in some guides.



Adding the first set of details is identical to Nidoqueen, so this should be a bit familiar and comfortable. Use "bones" to determine the position of the arms. Draw in hams for legs. Be sure to connect the torso to the waist.



Use the techniques learned from Nidoqueen to help you with Nidoking. His "kneecaps" are hexagonal, and his chest is split into two very skewed pentagons. The entire chest and waist is broken into three parts. His three fingers are spread in a triangle. He also has but a single toe.

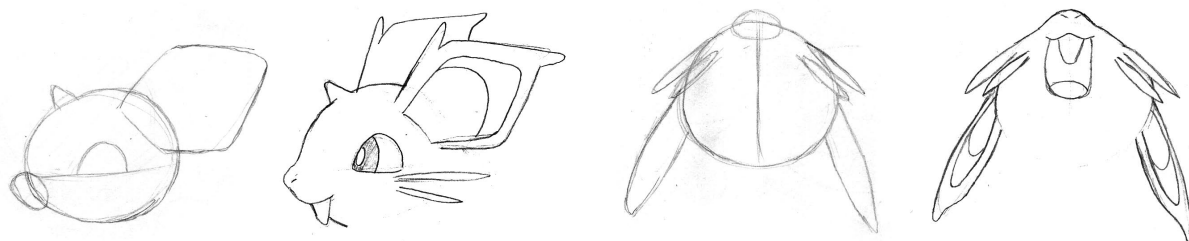


In this clearer image, you'll be able to see more details, such as his lower arm "blades" that rest just at the point where his lower and upper arms meet. His ear protrusion count is not consistent across the board, but recent art shows there to be three. So, how did you do? Don't worry about trying to get it perfect the first time.

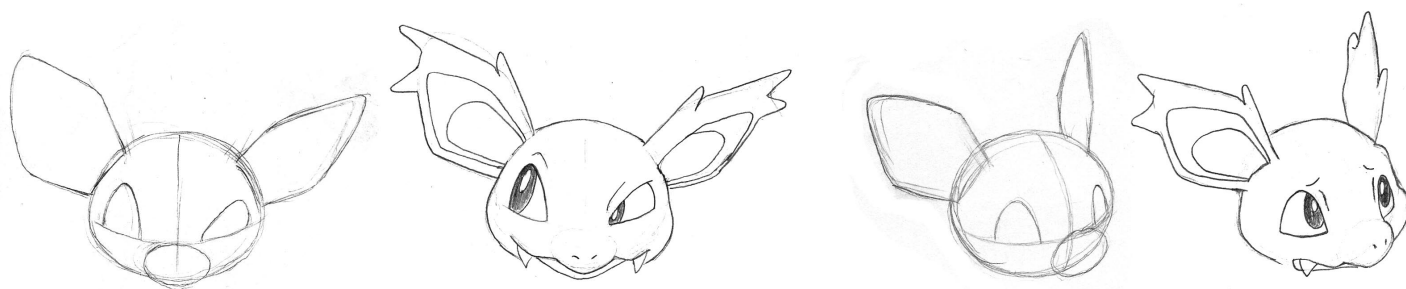
Heads Will Roll

Drawing heads and faces

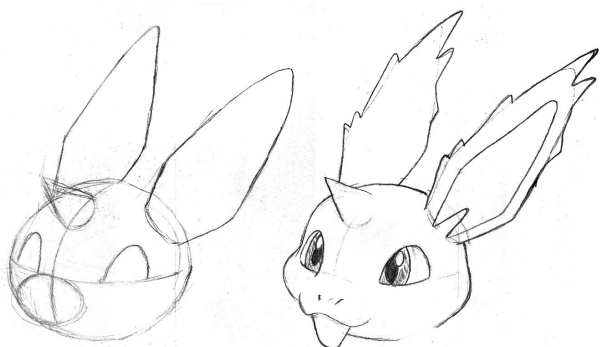
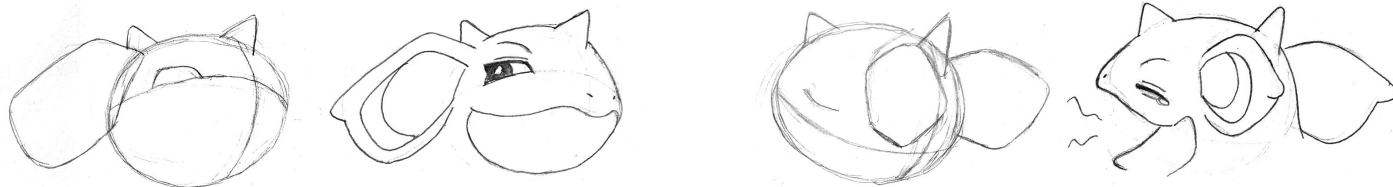
The most expressive part of any creature is the face. In fact, as humans, we try to find faces in things that don't even have them. And furthermore, they're fun to draw! But, it's not enough to just draw some faces on a head. You should also learn how to draw that same head at any angle. This guide does not go over every single angle for each individual Pokemon, but between them all, there are a variety of examples to take into account. Use what you learned in construction, or what you can find in official media (Aqua Bunny is full of such examples) to create some more angles. Remember, above all else, practice!



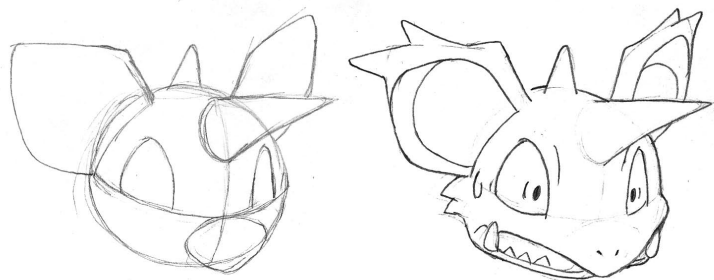
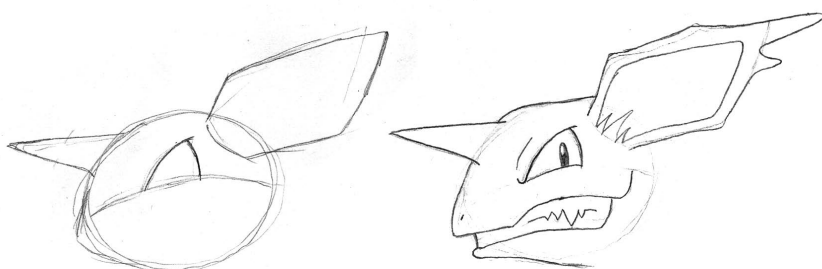
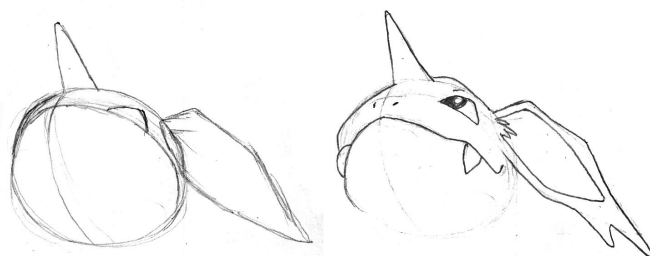
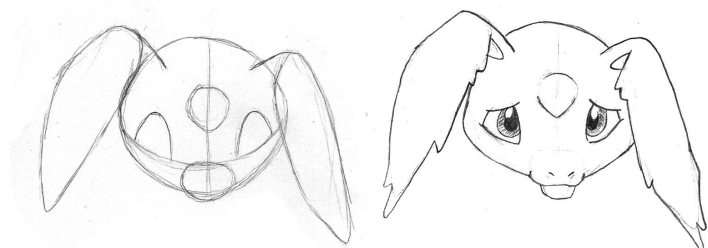
The female Nidoran has a more prominent nose than any other Nido who typically has a muzzle with nostrils. This is actually pretty close to the nose of a mouse.



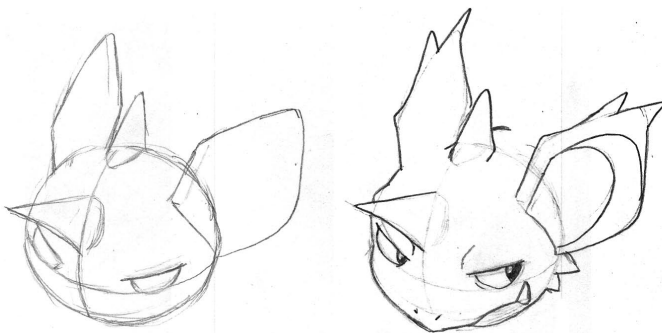
When at an angle where you can see both eyes, you'll notice that Nidorina's face is actually quite round and chubby, which reflects the rest of her body. Be sure to draw in some cheeks for this Pokemon like you would for the Nidoran.



The cheeks on the male Nidoran are a bit more angular than that of the female and Nidorina. Technically speaking Nidoran has a facial structure closest to a real rabbit (and not a cartoon abstraction of one), but because this isn't reflected very well in the anime or just about anything outside the figurines, I'll leave that in as a footnote, and I drew something closer to his simpler anime design.



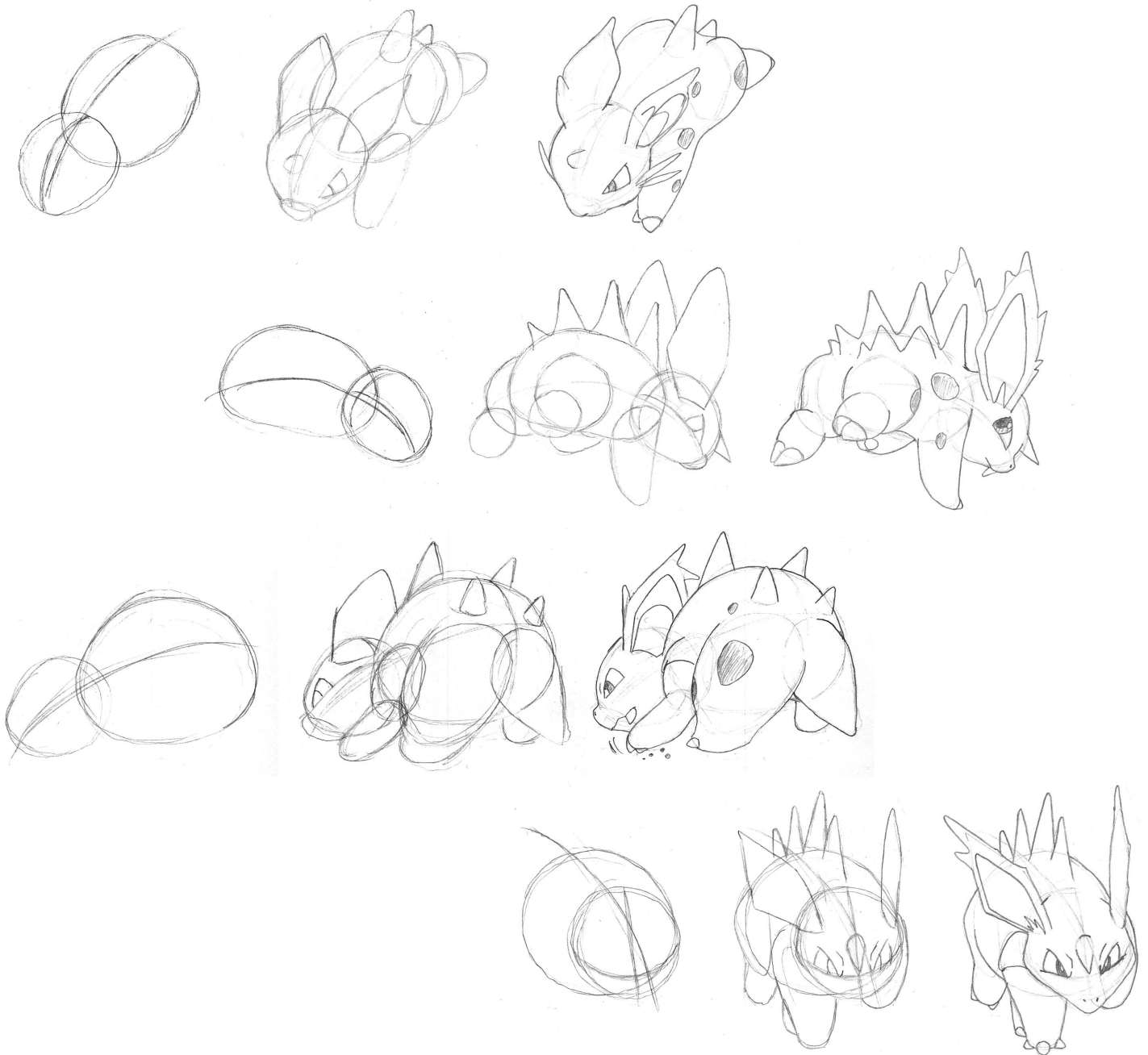
Here's an expression loosely based on a similar one Nidoking had in the anime. It goes to show that even Nidoking can have an expression that goes beyond his default scowl. Try to create your own expressions as well. Don't rely too much on character models and stock expressions to try to get the character to portray the mood he or she is feeling. But don't just create a silly expression for the sake of it being silly. It comes off as forced when it doesn't work.



Action Drawing

Creating dynamic poses and using body language

A face may be able to telegraph how a character is feeling, but sometimes a face will tell you one thing while the body will say another. Or maybe they are both speaking the same language. At any rate, drawing the body in interesting ways is just as important, if not more important than the face. Stiff and unlively models don't make for very interesting or visually appealing art. Because of the nature of these Pokemon, a lot of the poses and actions used are based from real world animals. By using photos of the corresponding animals as a reference, it can also give more insight to how a Pokemon might possibly behave if he or she were sitting right in front of you. It also makes good use of your life studies to apply what you learned to characters. You can use human subjects for human characters, but you can also use humans along with real animals for animal caricatures.

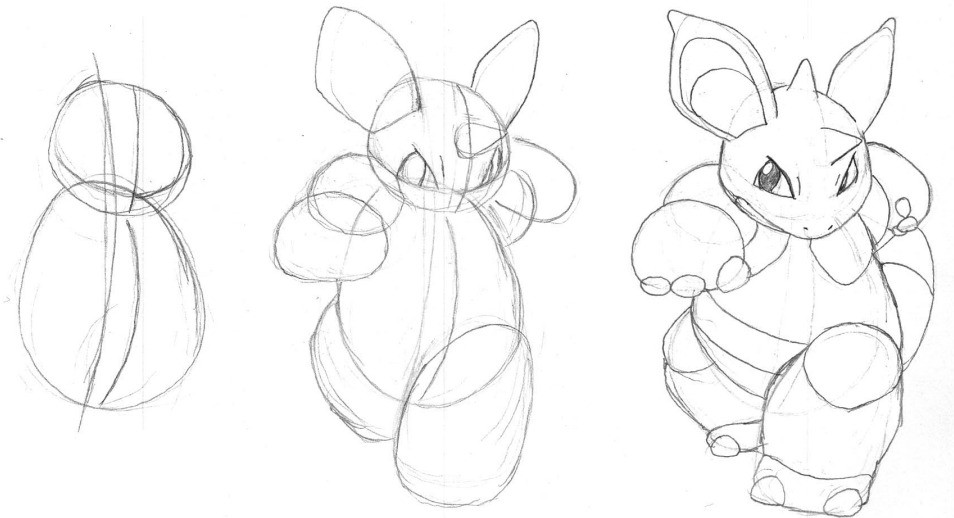


These poses include abridged construction so you can see how to arrive at the final image. Use the techniques you've learned before to put them all together. Like the heads, I also created some poses of different angles without resorting to doing bland turnarounds so you can get multiple views. These poses should be a lot more interesting to view at face value, too.

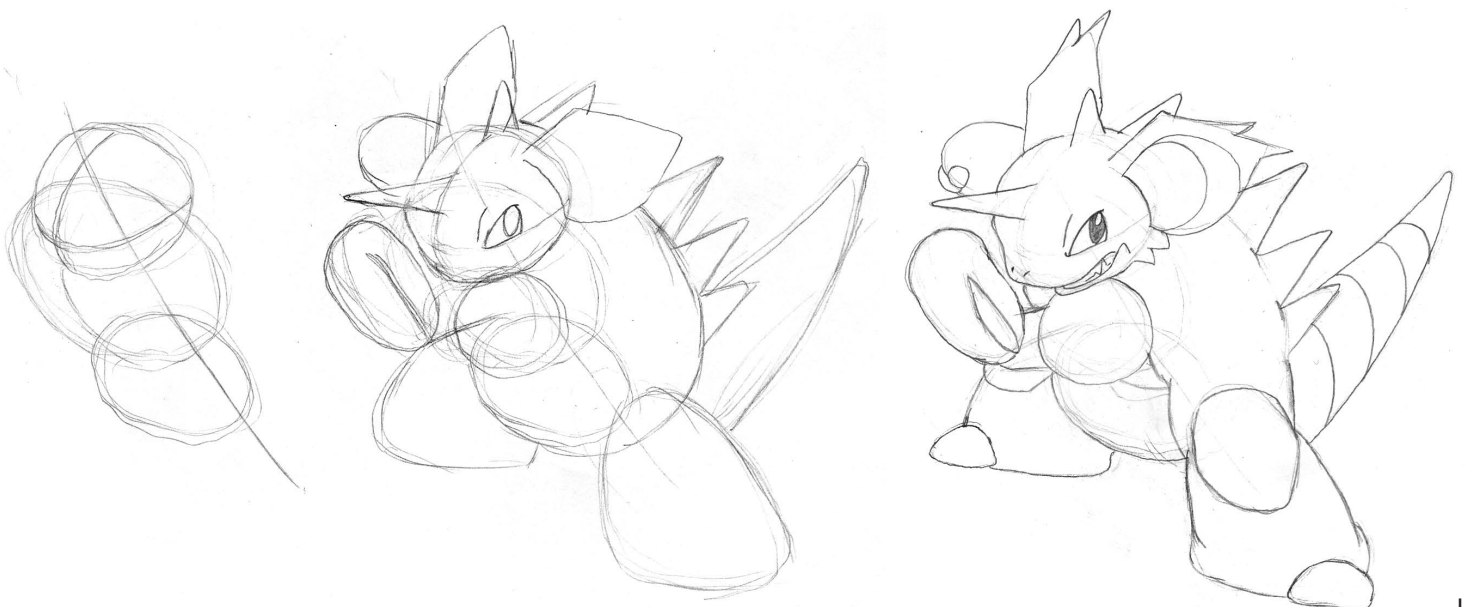
Because of the bipedal and almost human shape nature of the large Nidos, you can create some very interesting and dynamic poses for them using a human model. You would be amazed at what you can create when you push the limits of their design.

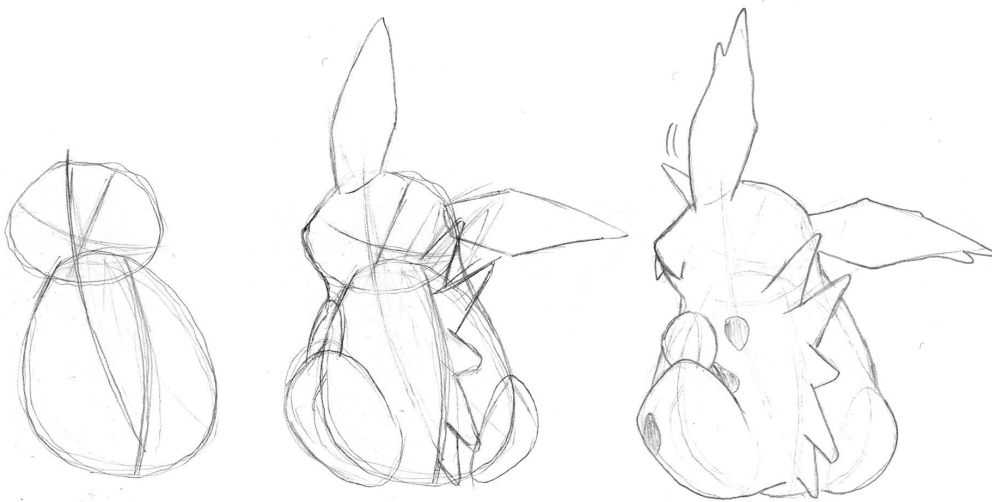
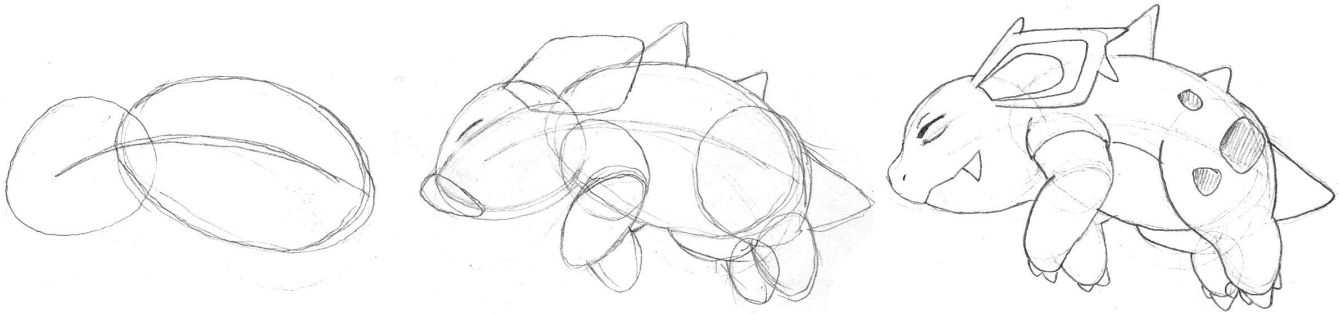
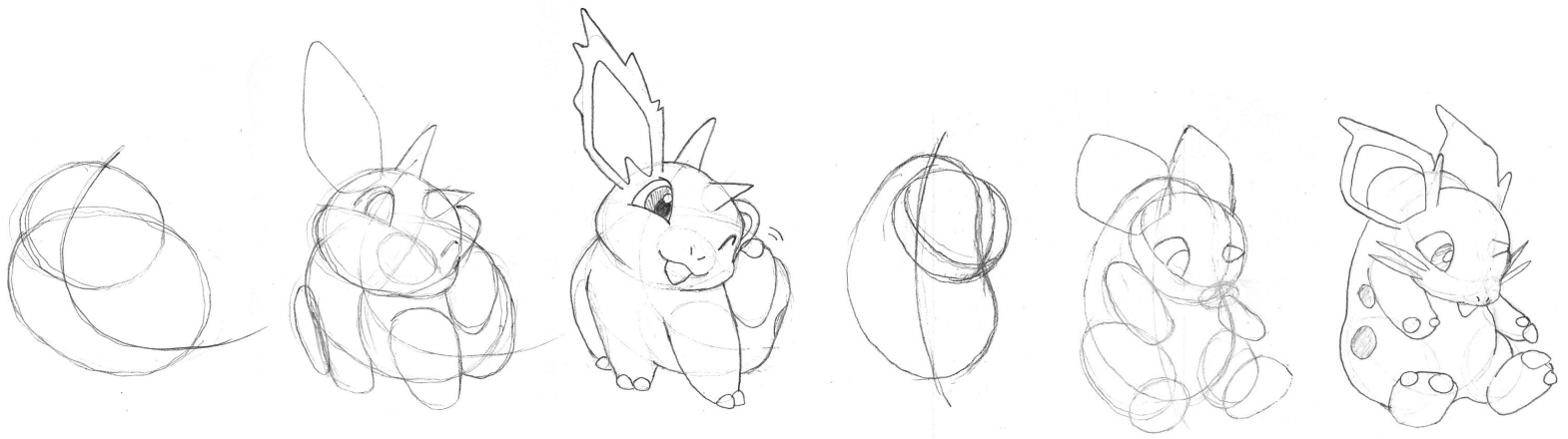


It is suggested that you build a skeleton for more extreme poses, especially if you can't readily visualize where each part of the body is supposed to be. This, along with your line of action, will serve as a clear direction for what you want to draw.



The Nidoking below makes use of some perspective. Nidoking also has a total of six spines, Two of which rest on his head, with the other four running down his back.





When Nidorino sits down, his back would be arched over with his head far in front of his forearms. However, this shows him a little more upright, showing alertness in the same sense that a rabbit would. Nidorino's spines are also rather flat and thin.

Nidoqueen's tail is divided into three segments, with a spine coming out of the middle segment.



You've reached the end!

Well, I hope you had fun learning how to draw a family of spiky, spotty Pokemon. Whenever you need a little help, just remember this guide is easily accessible and will remind you of all you need to know. And remember to learn more about drawing principles on your own. With those in hand, you will be able to create some really amazing works.

Well, I'm done here. Thanks for reading, and happy drawing!

