

PACKS!

TUTORIAL



HOW TO DRAW A RAT

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Hi,
I'm Melanie, and I do a lot of illustrations for **PACKS!** right now. As many of you seem to like the style of our game, I will give you a little tutorial on how to draw a rat.

FIRST OF ALL ...

I will only introduce my very own approach. There are countless ways to draw and not a single one is „right“. Finding your own way to work is a process which can take years and years to develop. :)

COLLECTING IDEAS

To create a good picture, you have to know what you want to draw! It may sound self-explanatory, but it's important nevertheless.

We want to draw a rat for the Packs! game, so we have to choose a horde, a gender and maybe some details that make your character special, like scars, mutations etc. For this example I decided to draw a tough Sharptooth, one of the fighters!

RESEARCH

No matter what you want to draw: Search for references!

It's difficult to draw completely on your own, and references will make your picture a lot more realistic. Abstraction and style are coming later, so for now take a real model or a photo. There are tons of free resources and stock photos on the internet. That is what makes this step so easy today, even if you don't have your own little fellow-rodent at home! ;)



STARTING A SKETCH

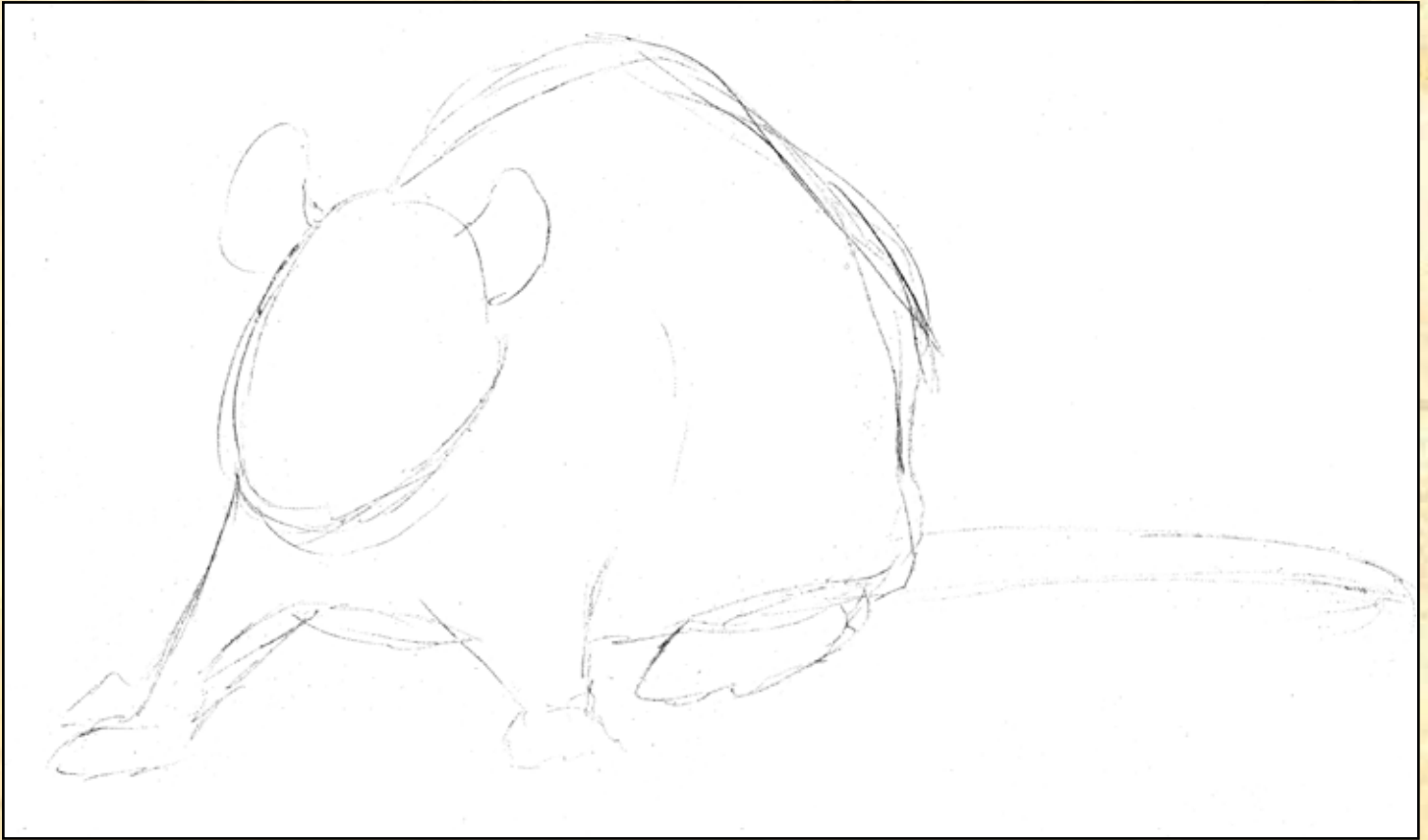
I chose this little cutie here as a reference. It's a free stock photo from DeviantArt, the photographer is [Harpyen](#).



Chose a picture as reference.

Use a thick kind of paper for your work! You will have to erase your lines several times and normal office paper will crumple very easily during the process.

Now start with a pencil and draw the forms you see. Have a look at the proportions of your reference and try to copy them.



Draw the basic forms.

The strokes are very light and thin. I had to saturate the picture for the tutorial, so the original piece is much brighter than what you're seeing here. Don't start out too dark. Use your pencil with very little pressure. That makes it much easier to erase the lines later on.

DETAILS

I focussed on the most important spots, like the face and the paws. I rarely use reference lines, but it may help you to understand the form, so I drew them here to show what they look like. Your strokes can be a bit darker now. Don't be afraid of mistakes! It may take a few attempts to hit the right spots.

It is really important that you draw what you see, not what you know! Rat eyes are perfectly round marbles? Yes, but *in your picture*, they aren't! The perspective of the head makes them look more like rounded triangles.



The next step is to define more details.

The style of **PACKS!** is quite comic-like, so you don't have to be peerperfectly close to the reference. It will just help us to make the rat look good in the end. If the paws are too big, or the nose is too small, don't worry! :)

FUR

This is the first aspect that really helps with the personality of your character. I decided that my rat is kind of a long haired guy with a wild hairdo and something like a mane to make him look more impressive.



Now for the fur.

I used quick strokes and followed the direction of the outlines and the hair in my reference. Pay attention to this point and it will make your rat's fur much more realistic! If you want to have a rat with short fur, just shorten your strokes. Follow your outlines and draw a lot of little „Z"s.

By the way, the paw looked odd after all the fur. o.O
I had to fix that in the next step.

BRING YOUR CHARACTER TO LIFE

I wanted my fluffy fighter to look more battle-scarred, so I added some of those. Scars are not just plain lines on a body! Scars are healed wounds and (in this case) spots without fur. Don't just draw a line to show a scar. Draw the edges that show the naked skin underneath. The edges are furry, so use the same strokes as you used before for the fur.

Think about what inflicted these scars on your fighter. Was it the claw of a Blackwing? Or the tooth of another rat? Try to make it visible. A claw has several toes that carve parallel lines. They don't have to be totally straight because a fight is dynamic and not all of them may have hit with the same power.



It's time to add some more personality! This step depends on your ideas.

My own rodent here lost the tip of his tail and a few pieces of his ears, but you can add whatever you can imagine. I also decided to give him bigger claws and bigger teeth to point out that he is dangerous! ;)

At this stage I also fixed one of the paws and erased the earliest sketch lines to prevent myself from getting distracted.

MORE DETAILS AND STYLISATION

I added more scars, more fur lines, got rid of the more distracting lines and developed the overall look by adding a facial expression, the pupils and the sparkling spots in the eyes. These light reflections are very important as they give your rat some life. Don't forget them! :) The pupils follow the perspective of the eye, so take care and don't draw them just as perfect circles. If the rat's head is not looking straight to the left or right, they look more like an oval.



Now define your character and give him the final polishing.

I also began to stylise the forms to get closer to the comic-look. You can make harder edges and literally overdraw the important parts. I made the paws bigger, the mane more fluffy and gave the eyes a more evil look with some eyebrow lines.

INKING

There are many helpful tutorials about inking in the internet, so I won't dive too deep into this topic.

Take a black or a colored fineliner pen to ink your drawing with. Important is that the fineliner is not too wide or the lines will absorb the details you've already added. The liner should have a good quality because you're gonna erase all the pencil lines after inking, and the ink should stay on the paper! ^^ I used a 0.3mm liner for this step.

First, erase all the lines that could distract you during the process. This is not extremely necessary if you have some practice, but it might be helpful for beginners. Now ink your whole drawing by following your strokes. The more confident your lines, the better they will look! Try not to follow the lines with a lot of small strokes, but instead with one motion.



The inked picture before erasing the pencil lines

When you think you're done, erase the pencilwork. I'm sure you will find some empty spots in your drawing (I do most of the time). Feel free to add more fur lines or some details to fill these spots! I always call this step „cleaning up“ because all the messy lines disappear and you will get a neat clean lineart. :)



The picture after erasing the pencil lines

LIGHT, SHADOW AND THE COMIC-LOOK

To get a good comic look I took a very thick fineliner (1.0mm) and followed the outer shape again. I didn't draw anything inside at this point.

After that, I took a 0.5mm fineliner to highlight the important body parts that would have disappeared in the fur if we didn't point them out, including the ears, the head, the paws and every spot of scarred skin.



Highlight the important body parts with a fineliner.

Light and shadow are tools for the more experienced, so just skip this part if you're not sure how to do it. Or make a photocopy first, in case you are dissatisfied with your results.

Shading is almost a kind of science. There are good tutorials on the internet, but it takes a lot of practice to do this right. Shading is about understanding forms, about how light interacts with different surfaces, and that's quite a truckload of work. I just want to say two important things about it in this little tutorial.

1. Decide where your light comes from. This will show you which part of the rat casts a shadow and which doesn't. I decided my light came from the upper left corner of the picture.
2. Only draw shadows if you're sure! In our case the belly and the chest are definitely very dark parts of the rat's body, because almost no light can touch these areas.



After shading is our Sharptooth done.

Tadaaa! Our Sharptooth is done! :) Thanks for reading!

Kind regards,
Melanie Philippi