

USE TOOLS THAT WORK FOR YOU

Do you need a pencil grip, wider or shaped handle for your tools? Does your chair need to support crossing your legs? Bring your tools to you, modify your instruments to make your art as pain-free as possible so you can make more art!!!

The Pencil Grip, Original From \$12.99

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WARM UP

THIS IS WHAT YOU SKETCHBOOK OR PRACTICE TIME IS *REALLY* FOR!

So that media has put a lot of pressure on sketchbooks being full of really worked and trying new things. Draw on packing paper. Draw simple shapes and forms.

What kinds of movements do you need to practice the techniques you want to get better at? Sprains, line weight, shading?

When you get started doing your art for the day, spend a little time just handling your tools and get a sense of how you feel in the moment.

ADJUST PRESSURE ON YOUR TABLET REGULARLY!

Pressure Sensitivity Adjustment

Pressure Sensitivity Adjustment

Lighter

Are you pressing harder than usual?

Output

Pressure

Click Threshold

Sensitivity

Pen Computer Digital Pen Store

JOINTS GAIN FLEXIBILITY AS THEY ARE USED - NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FLEXIBILITY IN THE ARMS BEFORE AND AFTER LIFTING. THE SAME WILL APPLY TO YOUR ART.

Notice how your ability to stretch and achieve a range of motion and pressure or tension changes throughout a workout.

Recruiting larger joints and muscle groups to do artwork means that instead of using only tiny flexors in the hands and wrists to do repetitive activities, the body can spread the work across many more parts of the body and thus resist and repair the wear and tear that repetitive motions place on the body. Anecdotally, that has helped many people in studios. I've worked in a rest developing carpal-tunnel syndrome, but I am not a clinician, so remember to speak with a healthcare provider to learn more.

It is also helpful to begin thinking of a drawing after lifting. The same will apply to your art.

Work in a larger form if you can

Forming it with your shoulders

Stand as upright as you can comfortably

Mount the level up

Range of motion

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Remember to stretch

Wrist extensor stretches

1. Hold one hand at chest level with the elbow bent.
2. With the other hand, grasp the thumb side of the hand and bend your wrist downward.
3. To increase the stretch, bend your wrist toward your little finger.
4. Repeat the same exercise with a straight arm.
5. Switch hands and repeat.

Wrist flexor stretches

1. Hold one hand at chest level with the elbow bent.
2. Grasp the fingers of that hand with the other.
3. Pull the hand back gently.
4. Repeat the same exercise with a straight arm.
5. Switch hands and repeat.

On the previous page, an infographic shows the ideal placement of a monitor and keyboard or tablet for computer-based artwork. The point is to work with all the major joints in a neutral position. But even a neutral position will cause pain over time, which is why it's so important to take breaks periodically to stretch. It can also be useful to change positions from a seated to a standing position, or take a walk during a break.

Don't let yourself get too pressured with your art - burnout can be another type of injury.

TAKE BREAKS

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THERE IS ENOUGH SUFFERING IN THE WORLD

www.ashtonmackenzie.com/zines

In addition to my own sketches, some outside resources were used in the creation of this zine.

We do not need to suffer for our art as well.

Image credits by page:

- Hand anatomy (1) | [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wrist_extensor_compartments_\(numbered\).PNG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wrist_extensor_compartments_(numbered).PNG)
- Ergonomic desk arrangement (2) | <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169>
- Exercises for hands (3) | <https://www.health.harvard.edu/pain/exercises-for-pain-free-hands>
- Shoulder anatomy (5) | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gray326.png?usekin=vector>
- Pressure Adjustment interface for pen tablet (6) | <https://support.kuon.com/en/support/solutions/articles/44002457763-how-to-adjust-the-pressure-sensitivity>
- Pencil Grips (7) | <https://www.tygcollections.com/collections/pencil-grips-1>
- Kneeling Chair (7) | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Varier_Variable_Monochrome_Kneeling_Chair_Design_by_eter_Opsvik_1979.jpg?usekin=vector

Further reading!
<https://uncivilizedbooks.com/draw/>

All art is political; and it will be hard to make more political art if we're all suffering from joint pain

Take care of yourself: make more art

Ashton Mackenzie

Created in 2025. Share with everyone who needs a reminder to take care of themselves!

ART COMES FROM YOUR BODY

Take care of yourself: make more art

Ashton Mackenzie

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Repetitive stress injuries are painful and can sometimes end whole art careers. Drawing, painting, illustration, textile and jewellery work, playing instruments, sculpting, carving - whatever your media, it is possible to cause a repetitive stress injury with art.

Monitor at arm's length away

Wrists straight, hands at or below elbow level

Adjust chair height so knees are about level with hips

In this zine, the aim is to inform about tools and practices to prevent injury. I am not a licensed medical care provider, so please speak with a doctor, physical therapist, or other care provider for individual needs especially if you are currently in pain. I'm going off of lots of experience in different art and yoga studios and observations about what has worked for others there.

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