



# Good Posture First!

Brenda Hoddinott

## A06 BEGINNER: GETTING STARTED

Sitting correctly is very important; not just for your health, but also for improving your drawing skills. In this article, I explain and illustrate good posture for sitting at a drafting desk or other sloped surface.

*This project is recommended for artists from age 10 to adult, as well as students of home schooling, academic, and recreational fine art educators.*

**4 PAGES – 3 ILLUSTRATIONS**



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## HOW NOT TO SIT

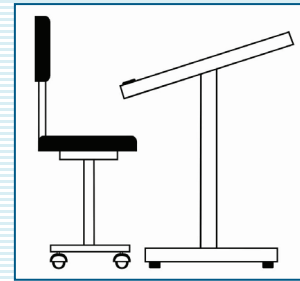
Many people do not sit up straight. They hunch or lean over too much, and twist their bodies into all sorts of positions that place their back out of proper alignment (Figure 601).

Figure 601



### ArtSpeak

Drafting desk (or drafting table) is an adjustable worktable with a slanted top.



### TIP!

Most drafting tables and some office chairs have height adjustments. You can also position your chair closer or farther away from your table.

## SITTING CORRECTLY

Good posture and a comfortable, adjustable chair can prevent your muscles from becoming strained and sore. Arrange your chair and drawing surface so you can easily move your hand, arm, shoulder, and upper body as you draw.

Refer to Figure 602 and arrange your table and chair until you can:

- ❖ Sit up straight with your feet flat on the floor (or on a raised surface such as a footstool).
- ❖ Distribute your body weight evenly on both hips.
- ❖ Bend your knees at a right angle.
- ❖ See your drawing clearly without bending your lower back.
- ❖ Comfortably rest your lower arm on the table.

Figure 602



## Warning!

**Don't attempt large drawings on a flat (horizontal) surface!**

Instead, use something to prop up your sketchbook or paper so your drawing surface is sloped.

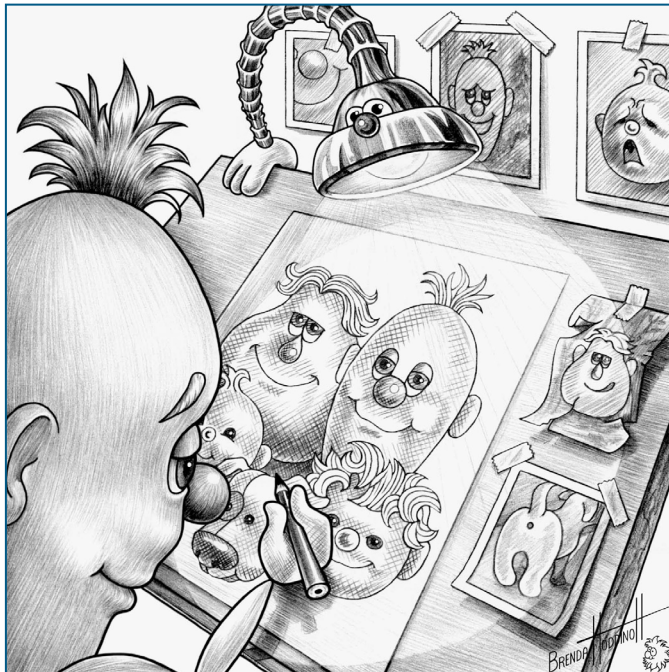
When you create large drawings on a flat surface (such as a table or desk), the top of your paper is farther away from you than the bottom. As a result, you can end up with all sorts of problems trying to draw accurate proportions. For example, if you are drawing a figure, his or her head may end up too big for the body.

Unfortunately, you usually find this out the hard way - after your drawing is complete.

Once you are used to sitting correctly, you can fully focus on drawing.

**A final note:** Make sure you have good lighting as you draw. In Figure 603, an artist sits comfortably at a drafting desk with an attached lamp shedding light on his drawing.

Figure 603



## TIP!

To prevent cramping and repetitive movement injuries, move your fingers and wrist as little as possible when you draw.

You should be moving your lower and upper arm (and sometimes your shoulder and upper body as well).

If you absolutely have to move your fingers and wrist (for example, to draw tiny details), take a break every ten minutes to relax your hand and wrist.



## BRENDA HODDINOTT

As a self-educated teacher, visual artist, portraitist, forensic artist (retired), and illustrator, Brenda Hoddinott utilizes diverse art media including her favorites: graphite and paint.

Brenda is the author of *Drawing for Dummies* (2003, Wiley Publishing, Inc., New York, NY) and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Drawing People* (Winner of the Alpha-Penguin Book of the Year Award 2004, Alpha - Pearson Education – Macmillan, Indianapolis, IN). She is currently writing two books on classical drawing.

*My philosophy on teaching art is to focus primarily on the enjoyment aspects while gently introducing the technical and academic. Hence, in creating a passion for the subject matter, the quest for knowledge also becomes enjoyable.*

>Brenda Hoddinott<

Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, Brenda grew up in the small town of Corner Brook. She developed strong drawing and painting skills through self-directed learning.

During her twenty-five year career as a self-educated civilian forensic artist, various criminal investigation departments have employed Brenda's skills, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In 1992, Brenda was honored with a commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in 1994, she was awarded a Certificate of Membership from "Forensic Artists International".

In 2003, Brenda retired from her careers as a forensic artist and teacher to work full time writing books and developing her website (Drawspace.com). This site is respected as a resource for fine art educators, home schooling programs, and educational facilities throughout the world.