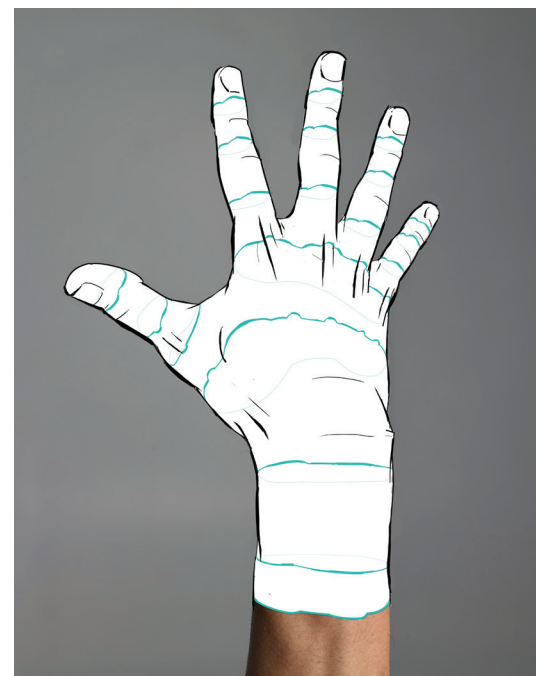
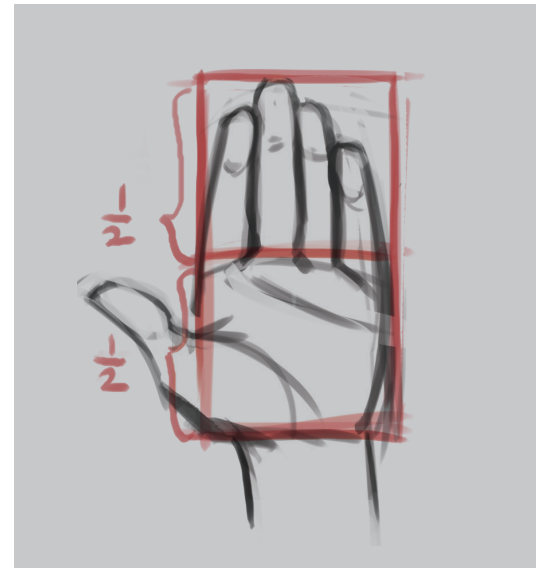


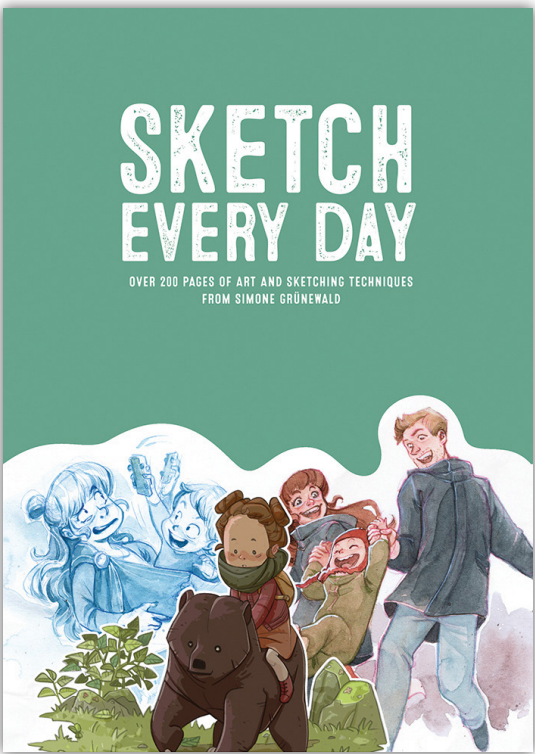
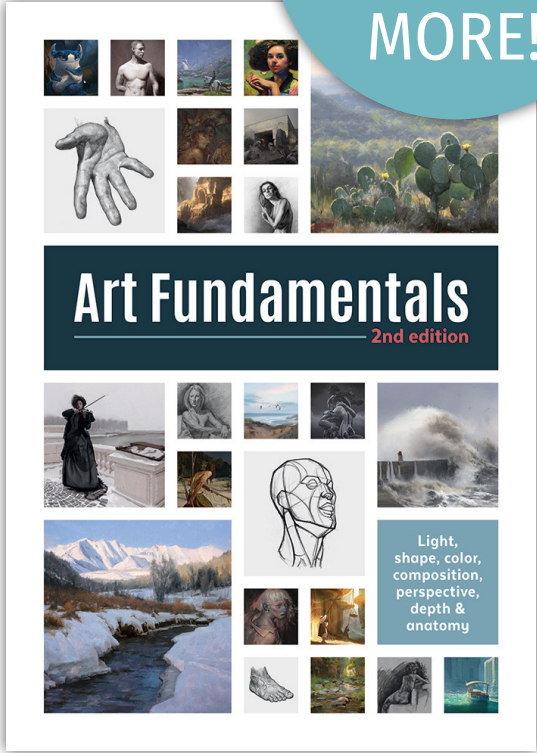
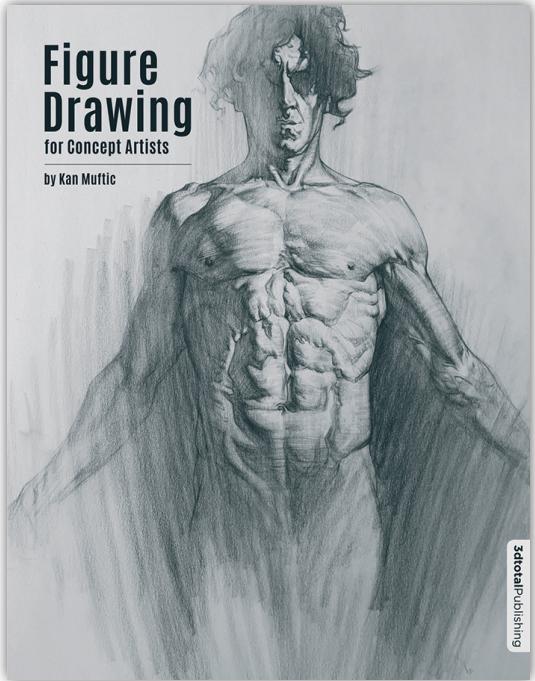
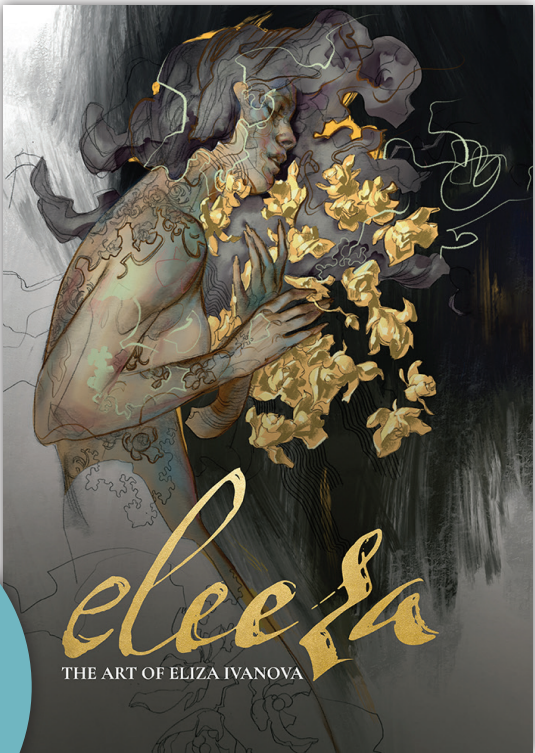
HANDY HINTS

A COMPILATION OF TIPS ON DRAWING HANDS

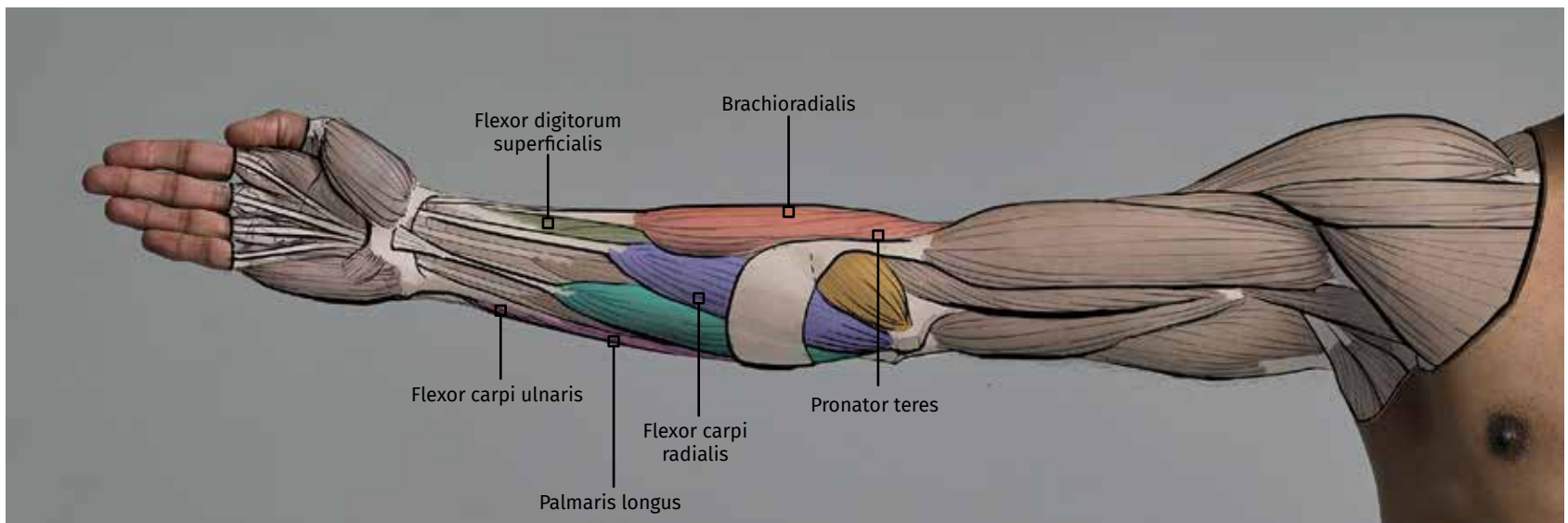


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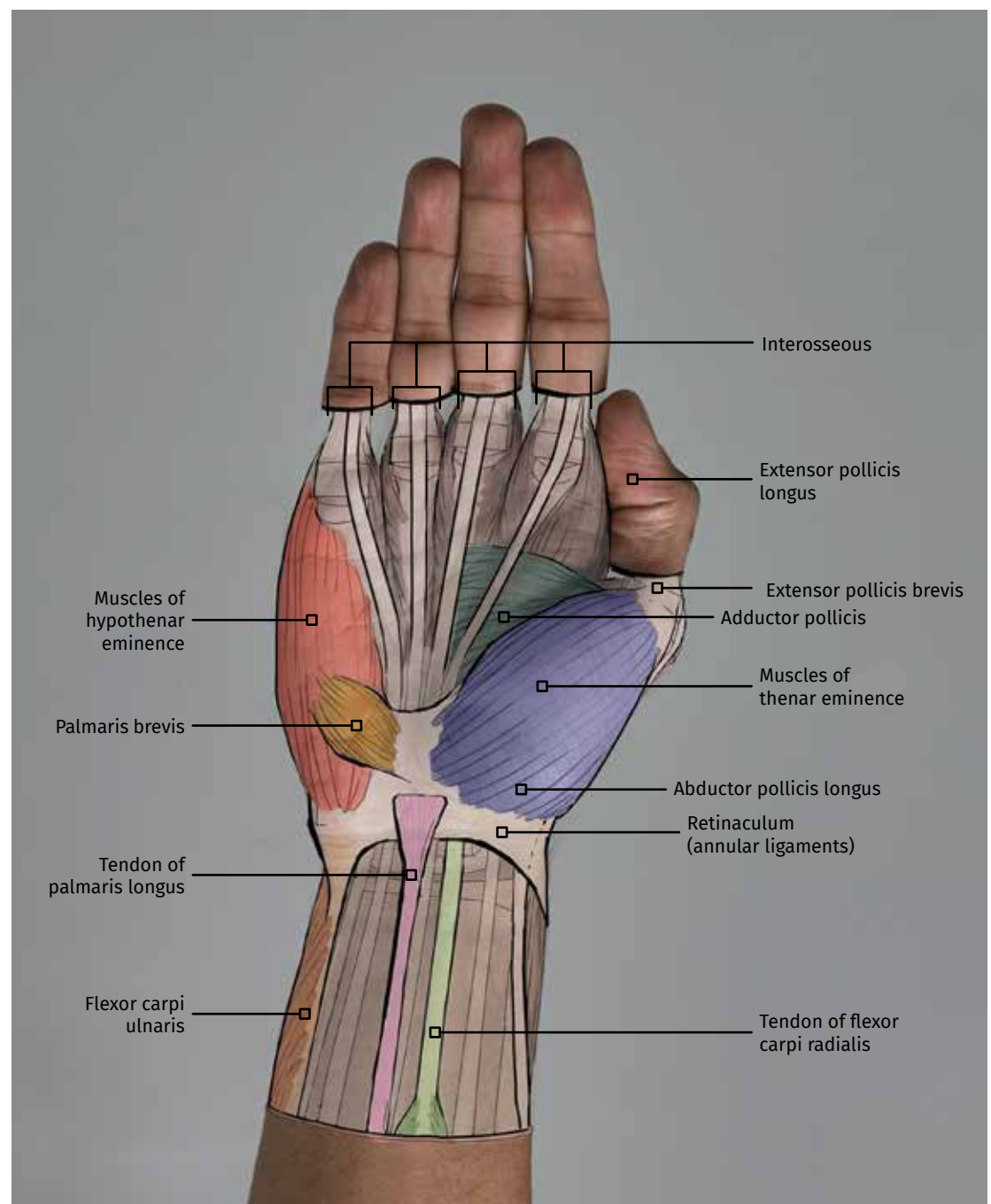


The hands

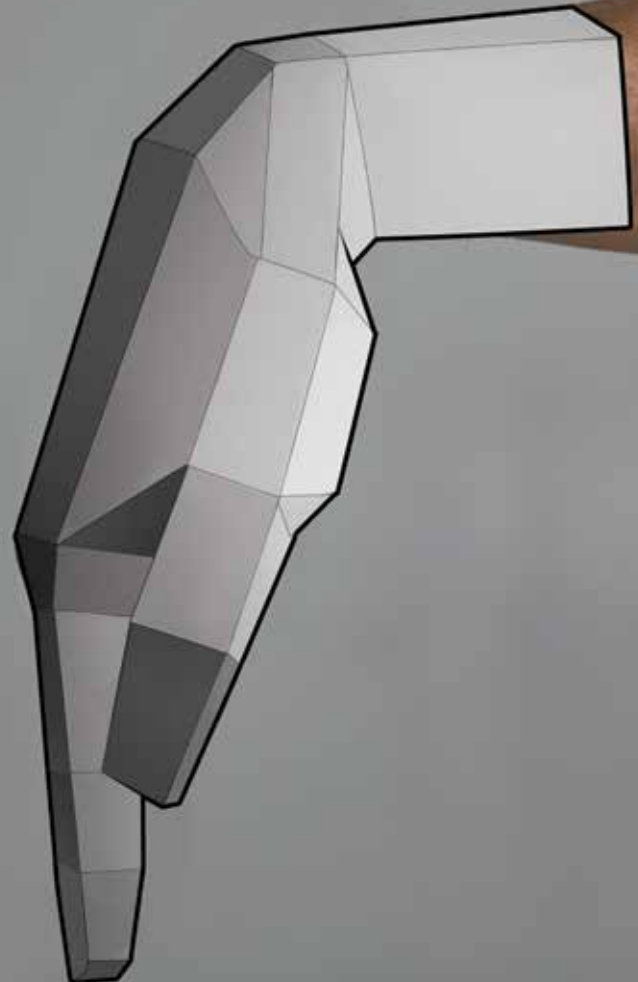
The hands consist mostly of fat, tendon, and bone, with the fat mainly on the palmar (anterior) side, and the tendon and bone on the back (posterior) of the hand.

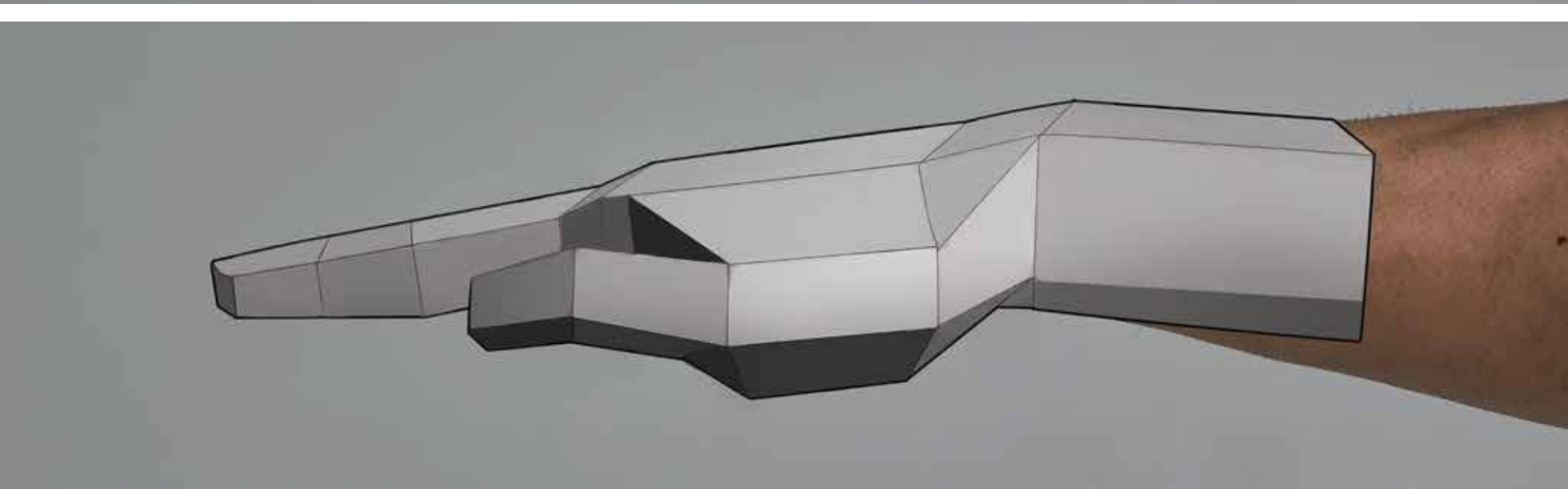
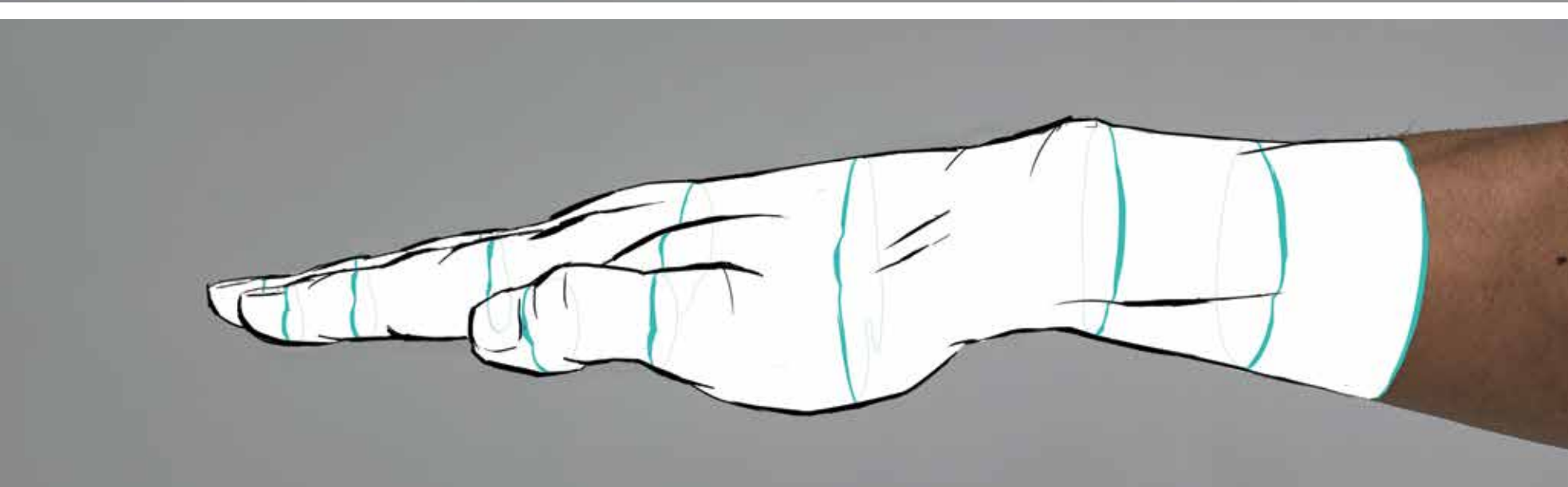
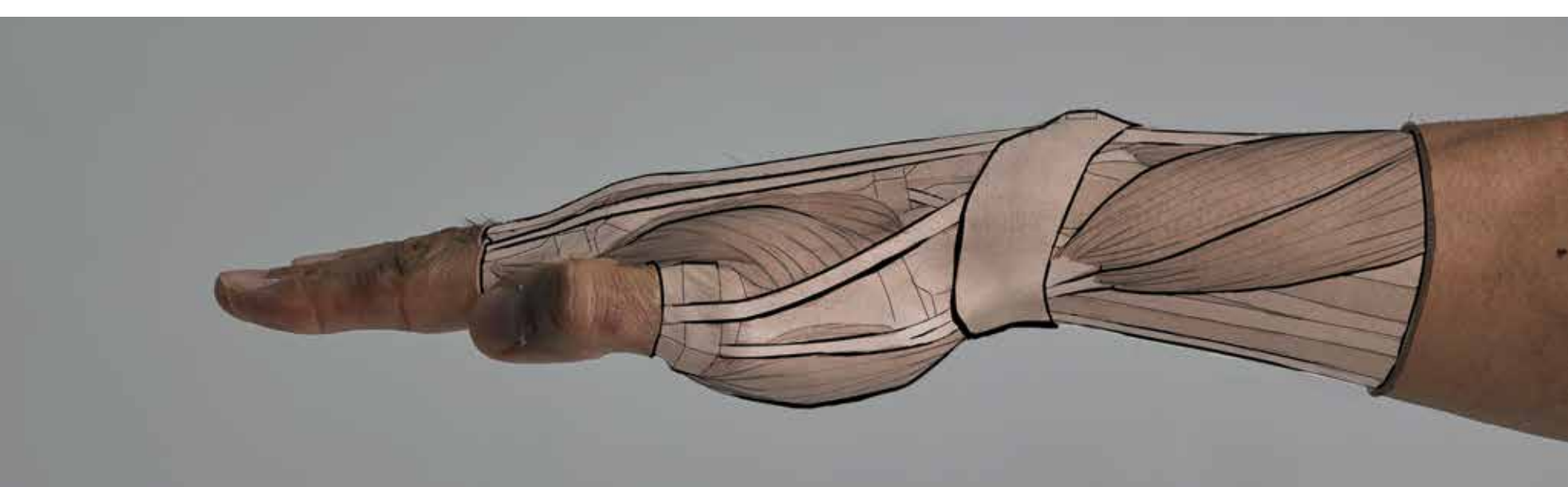
The tendons that cross over the **extensor retinaculum** and **annular ligaments** (also known as the retinaculum, this is a strong band of fibers which functions to keep the extensor tendons in alignment), are the main source of surface change on the hand. You may be surprised to hear that there are no muscles within the fingers or the thumb for flexion and extension; it is the tendons that grab onto the side of the bones and are pulled by the muscles of the forearm. The tendons of the **extensor carpi ulnaris** and the **extensor digitorum** take care of the four fingers, while the thumb has the **abductor pollicis longus**, the **extensor pollicis brevis**, and the **extensor pollicis longus** inserting into its metacarpal and the first knuckle. The muscles of the thenar eminence are three short muscles at the base of the thumb (producing a bulge) which are responsible for the fine movements of the thumb.

Between each finger and the thumb sit the **interosseous** muscles. These sit between the metacarpal bones on the anterior and posterior side and are used to abduct and adduct the fingers. Between the thumb and the index finger, the first interosseous muscles create an egg-shaped mass through the adduction of the thumb.

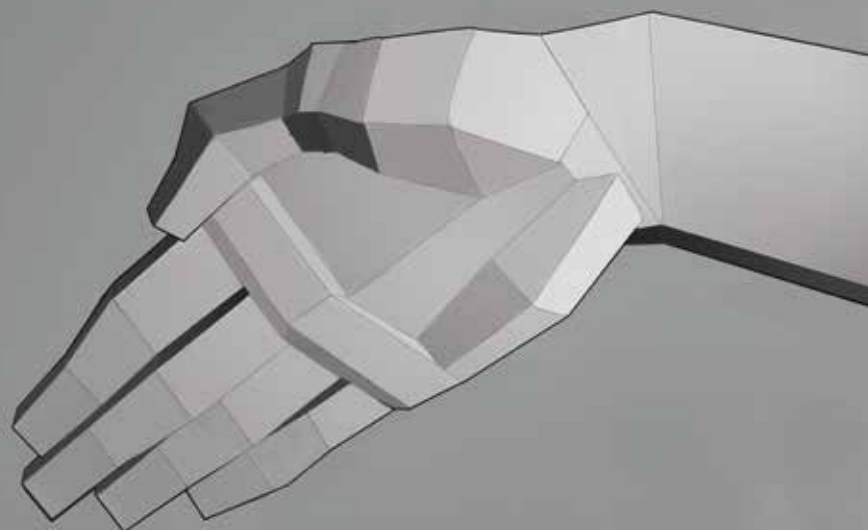
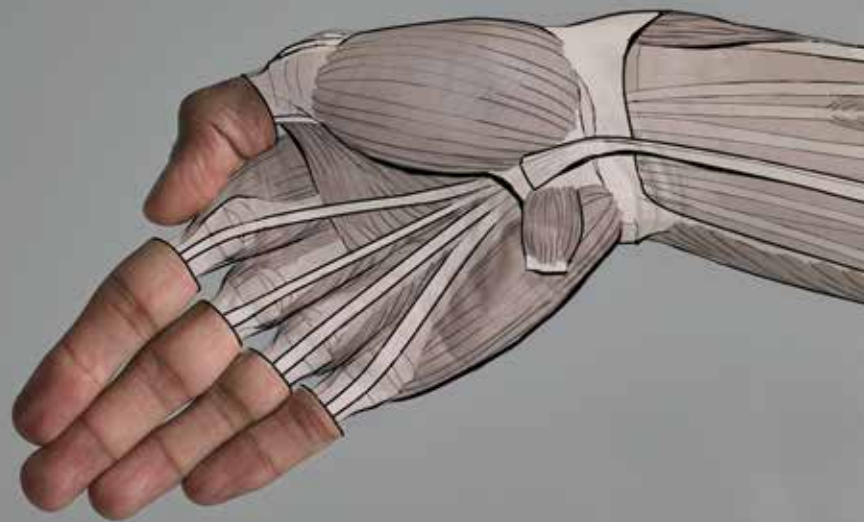


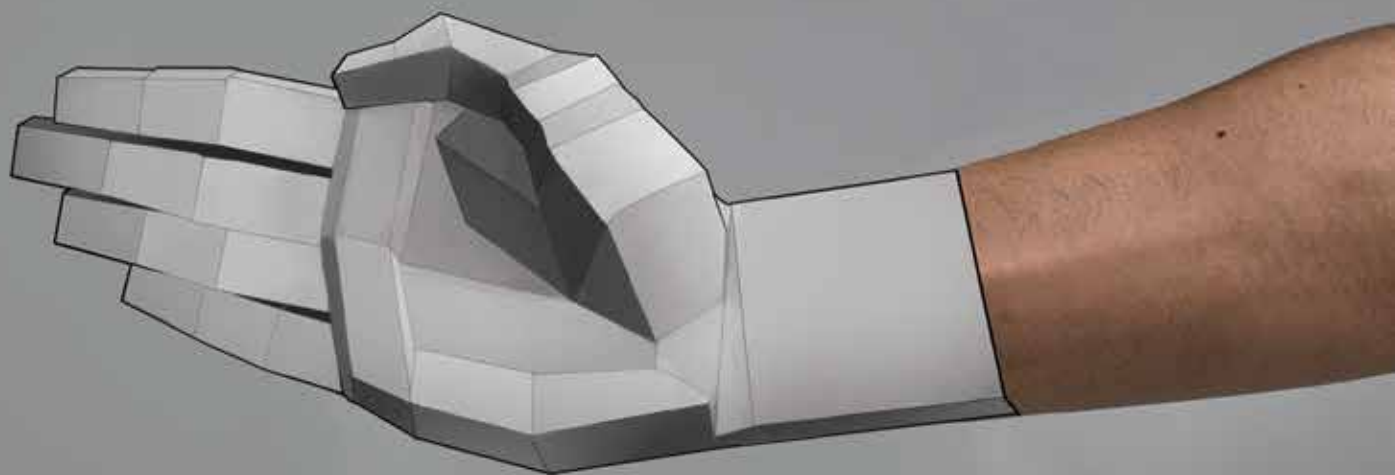
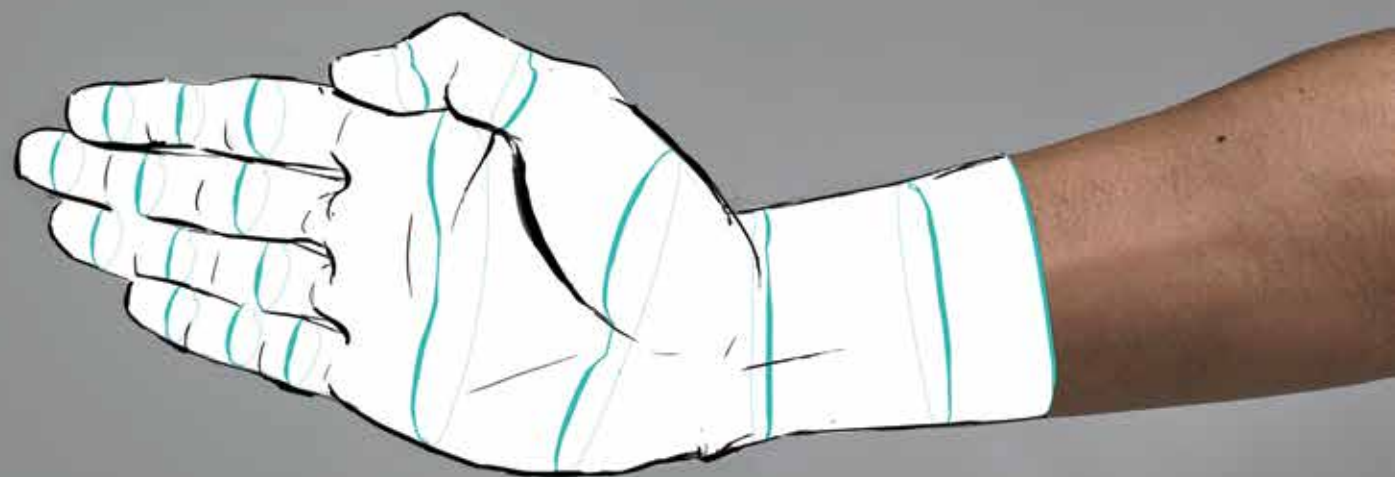
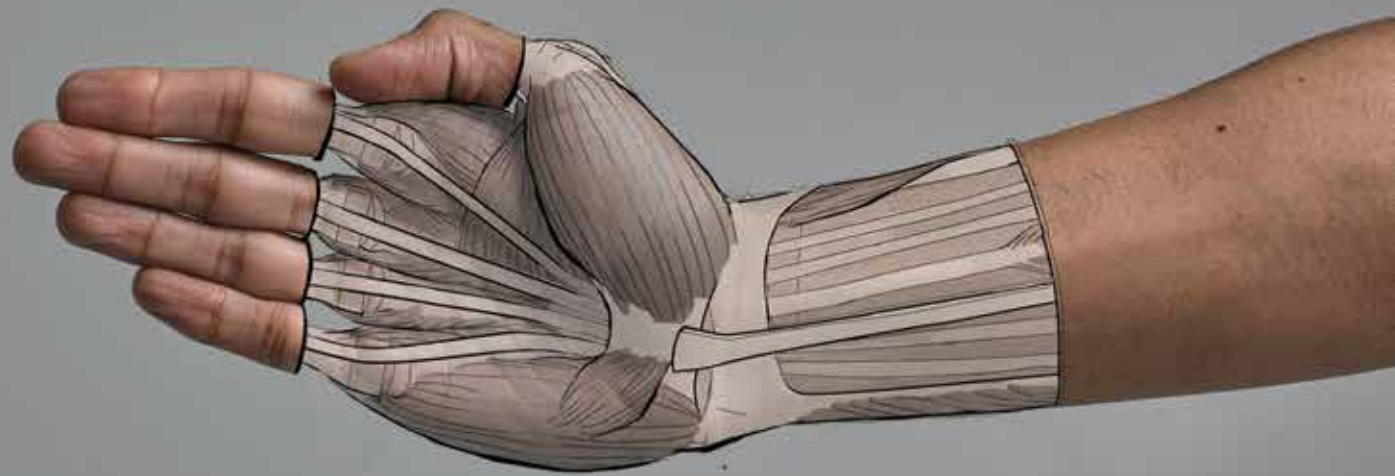
HANDS

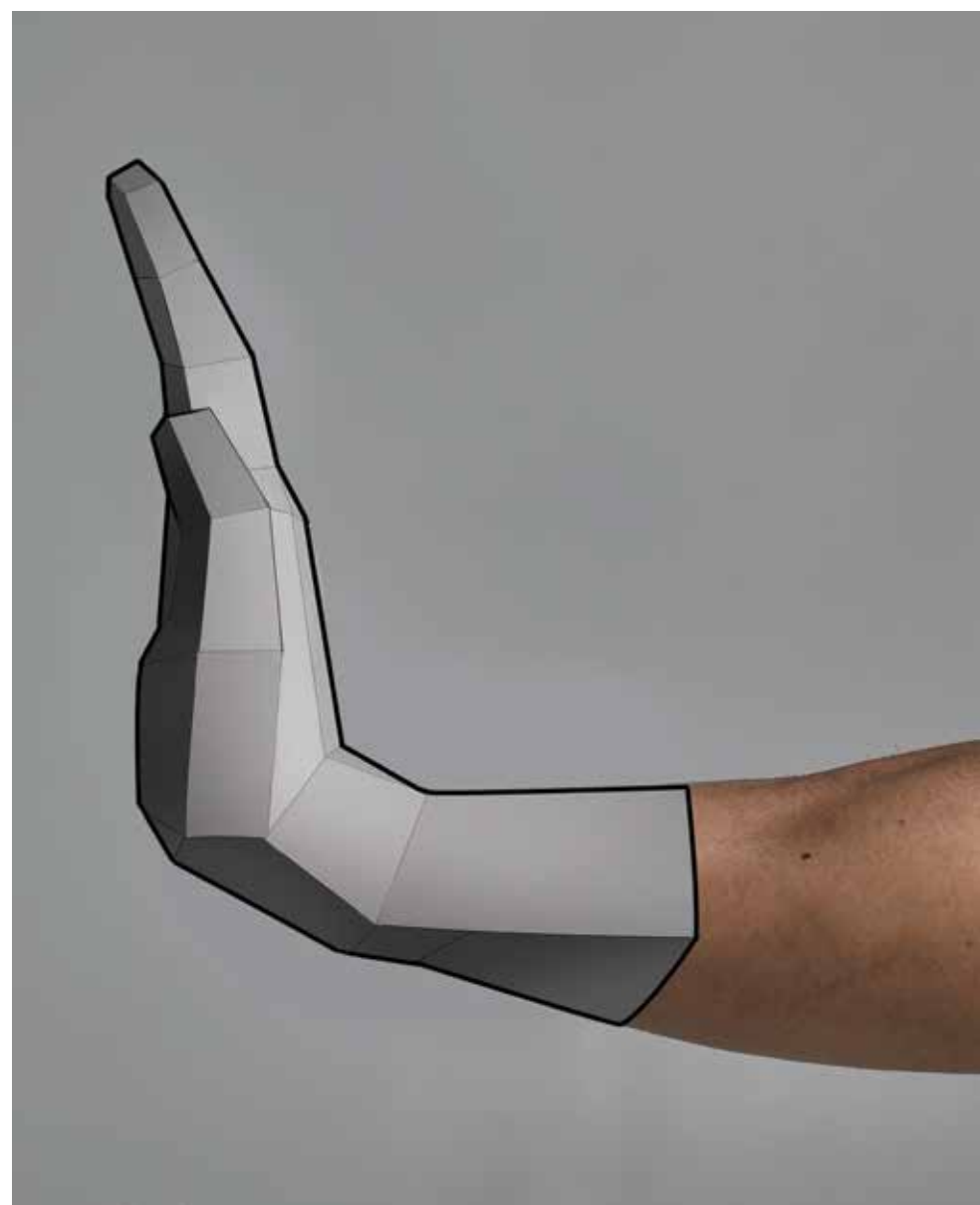
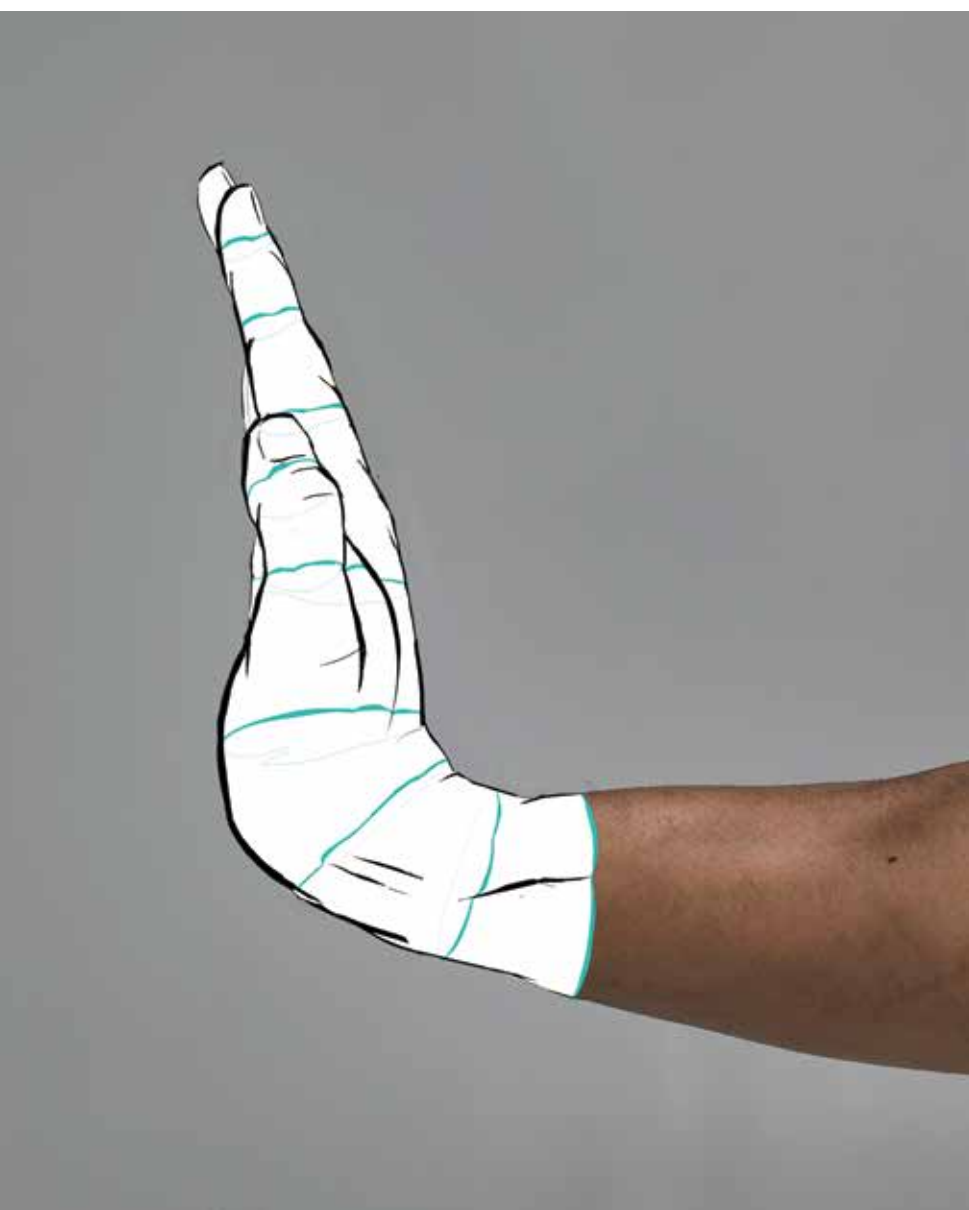


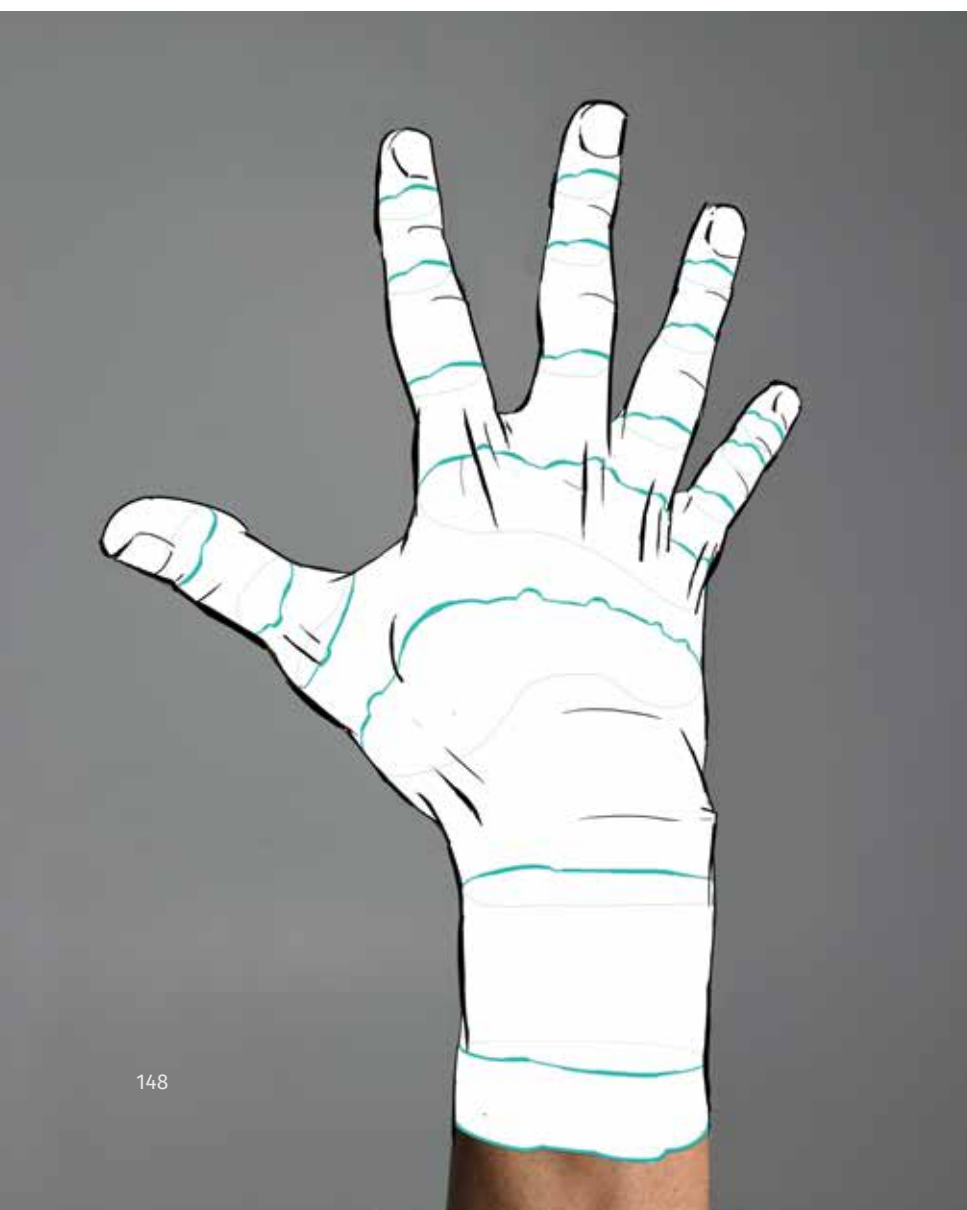






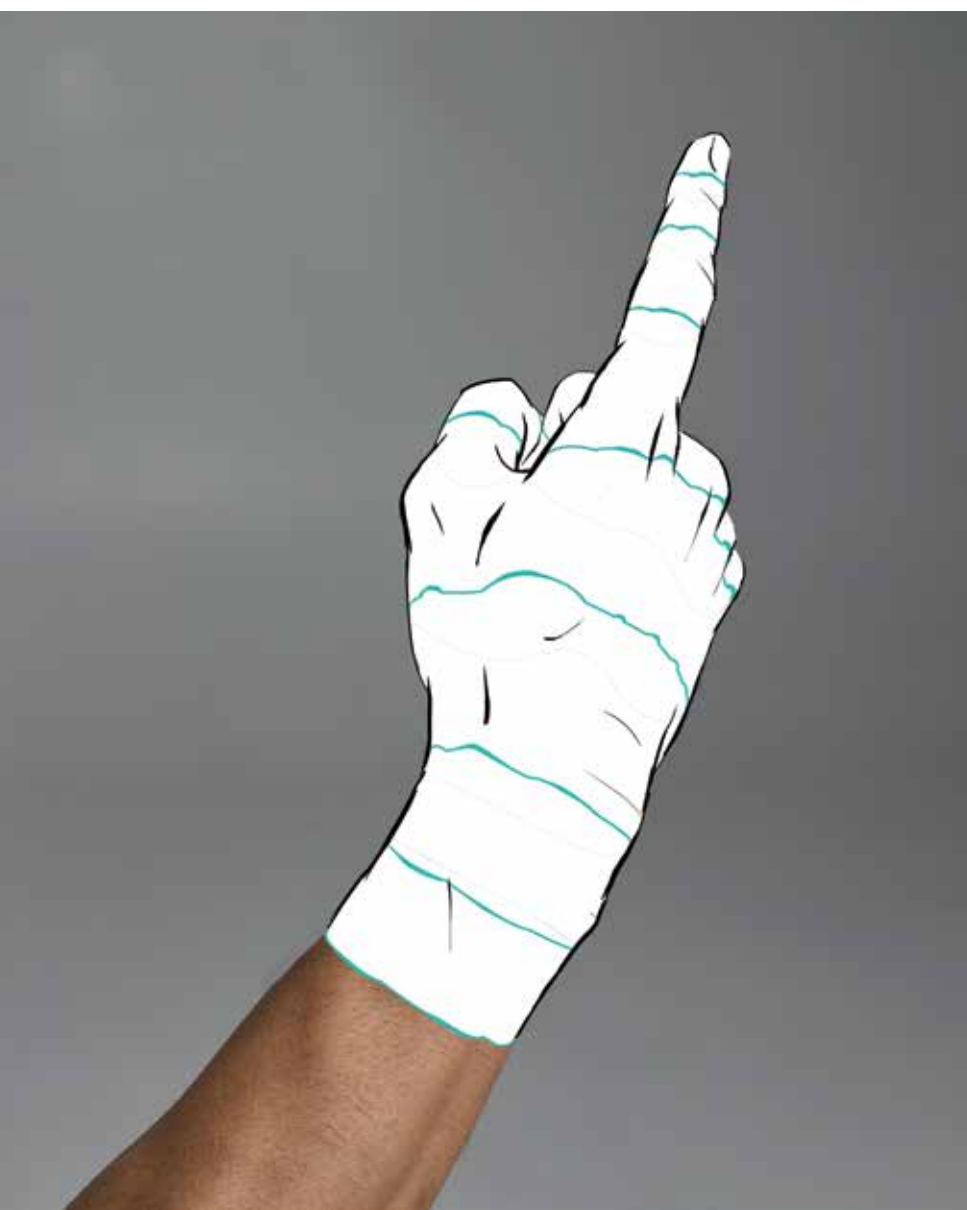


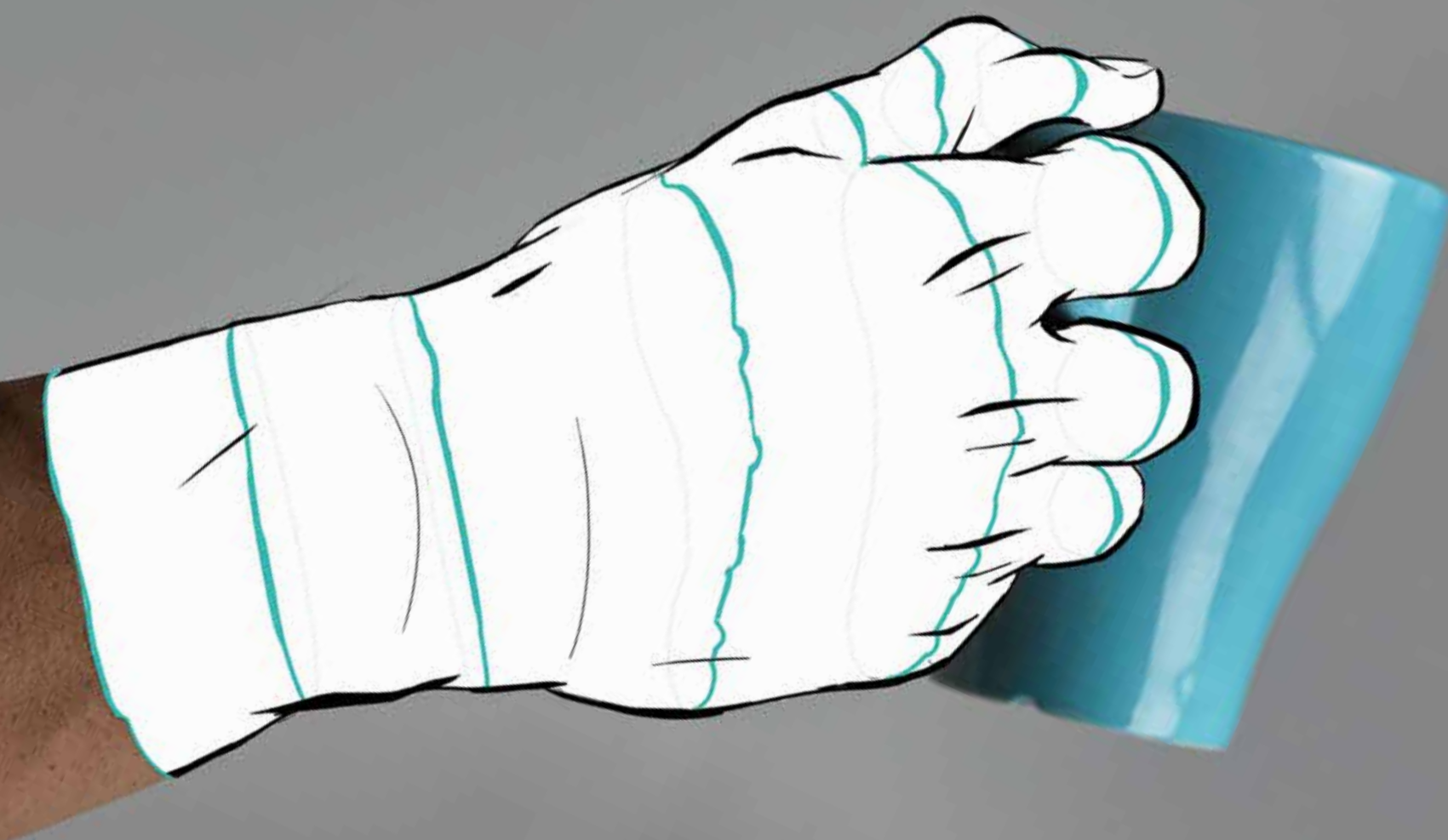
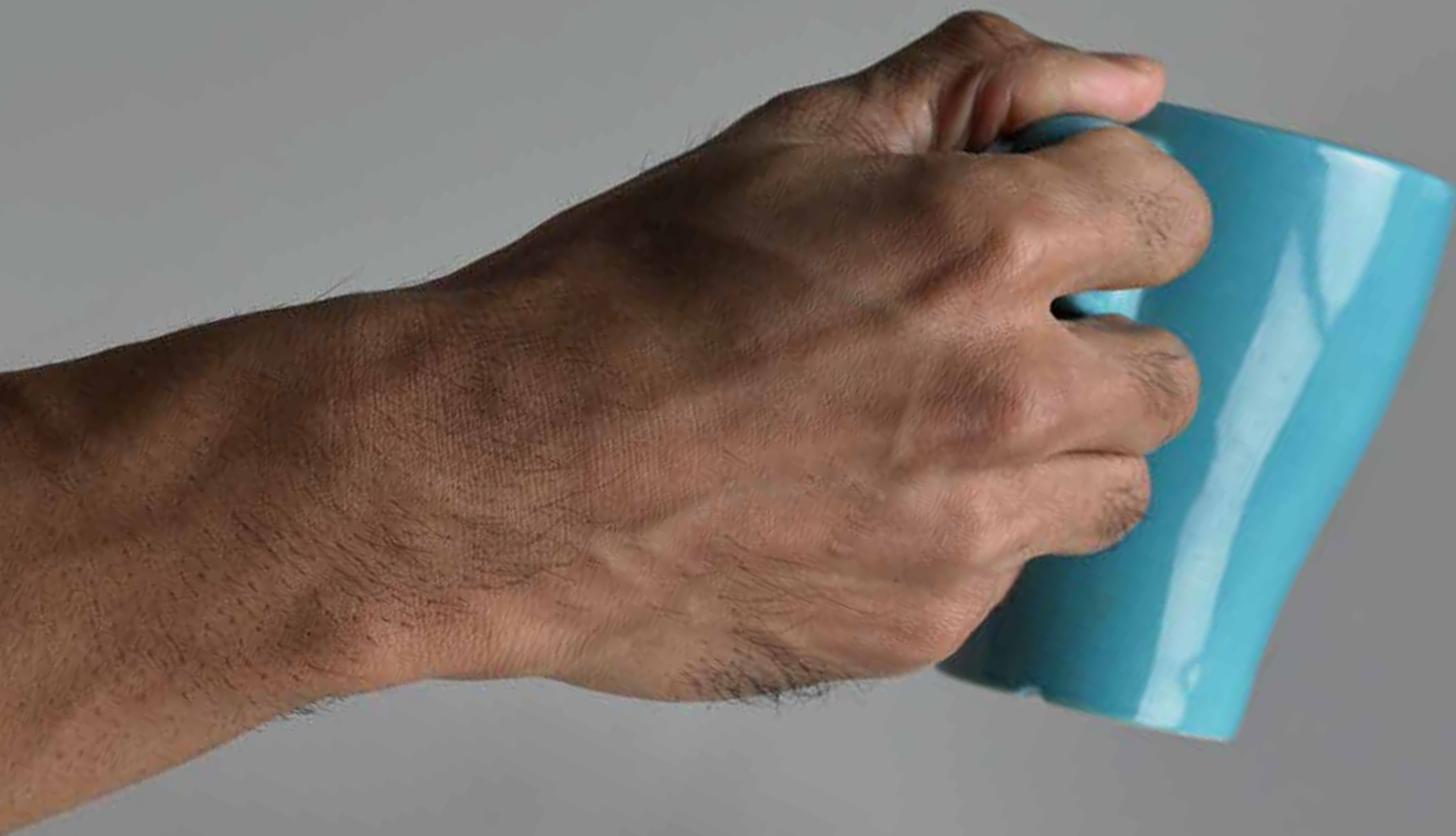


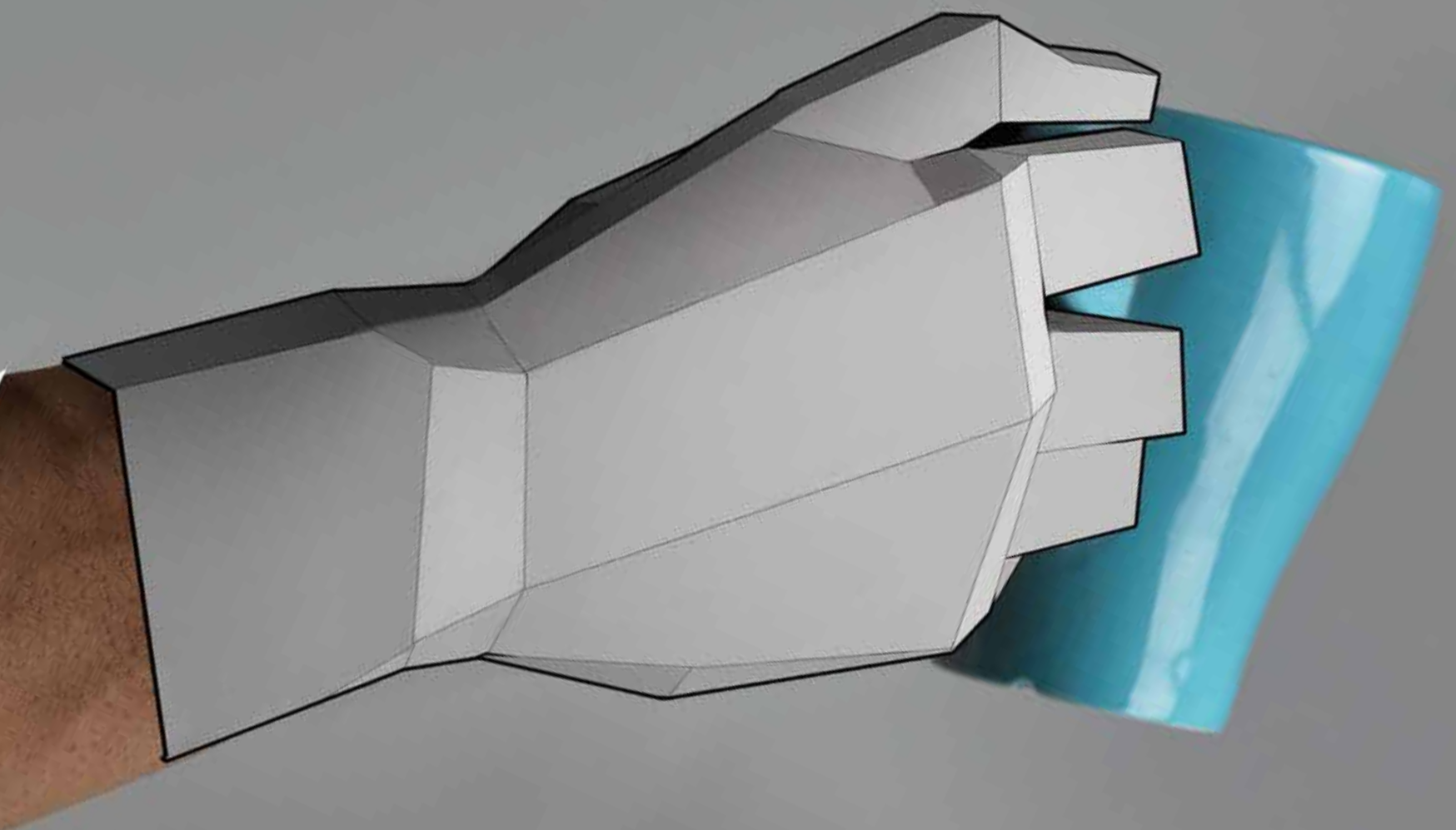
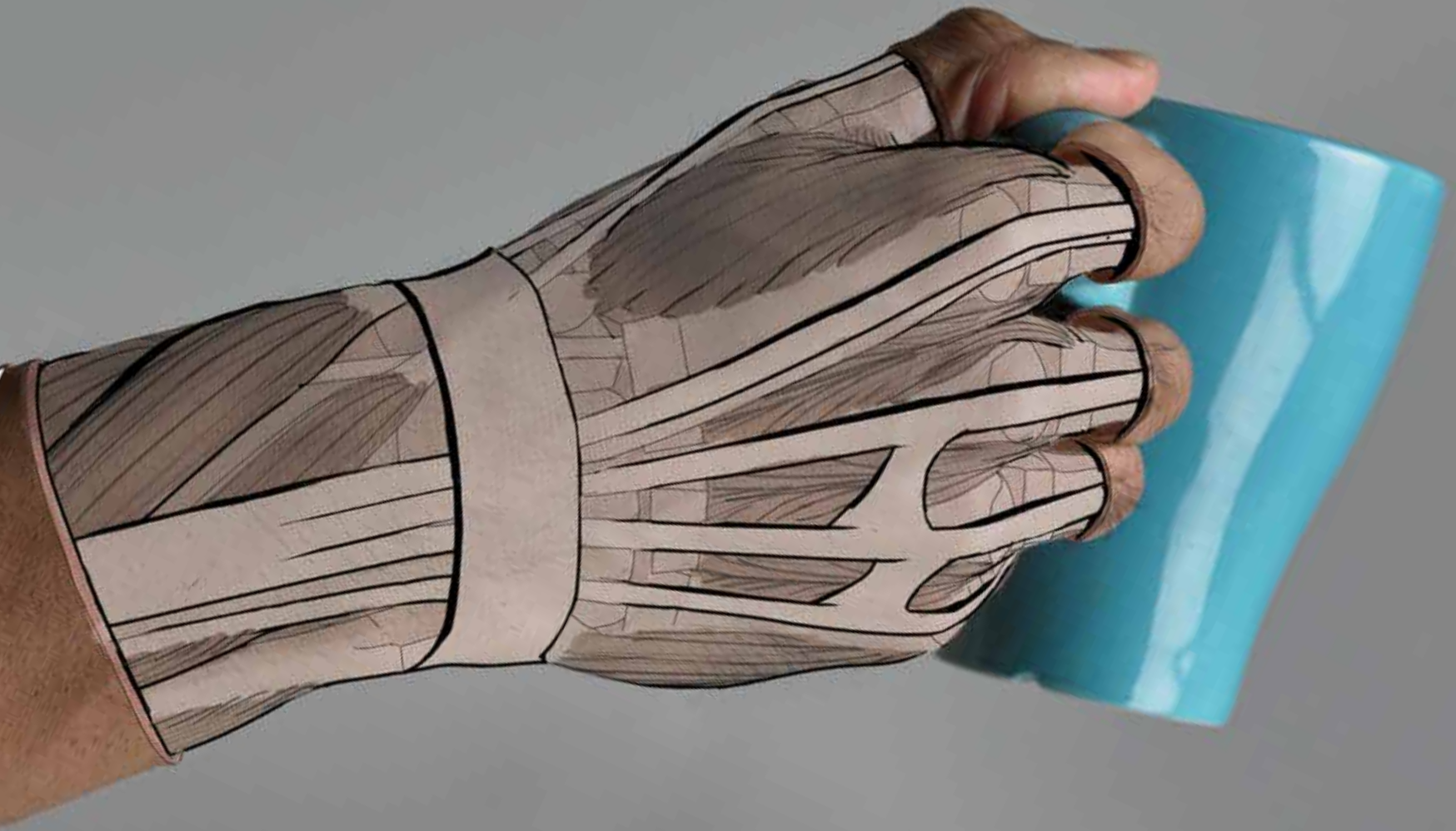










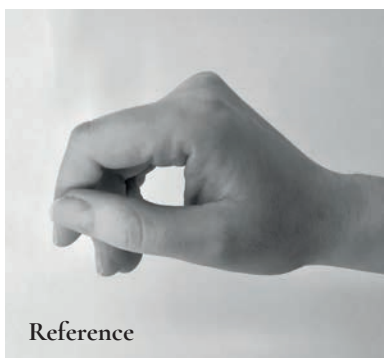


Silhouette sketching

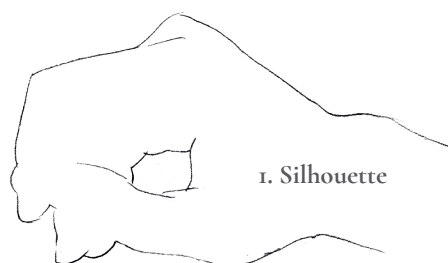
Silhouette sketching requires a certain level of anatomical drawing proficiency and trust in your lines, but depending on your skill level and artistic goal, you can still achieve brilliant results. I was never good at sketching volumetrically (a sphere for the head, for the body, and so on). Even though I can technically do it, the result doesn't look as dynamic as I'd like. But when I switched to drawing the silhouette first, it profoundly changed how I viewed drawing. I now experiment with design right away and play around with negative space; detailed anatomy can be added later. Even working this way, I keep an eye on the volumes, especially when I get into the details and anatomy.

Find your way

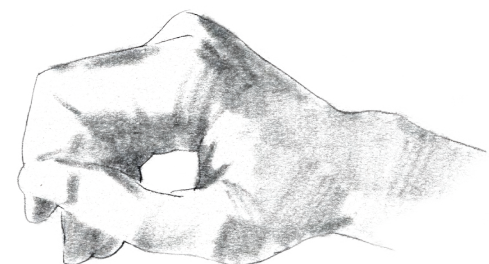
It's important to mention that I don't think that the method I describe here is better than sketching volumetrically first. However, if one method doesn't work for you, try alternatives until you find what works for you, technically and creatively.



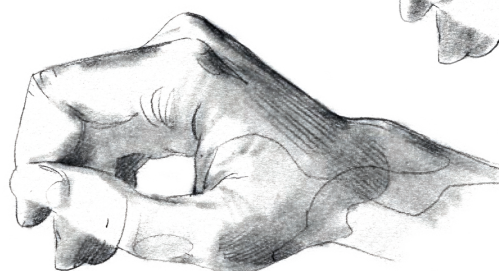
Reference



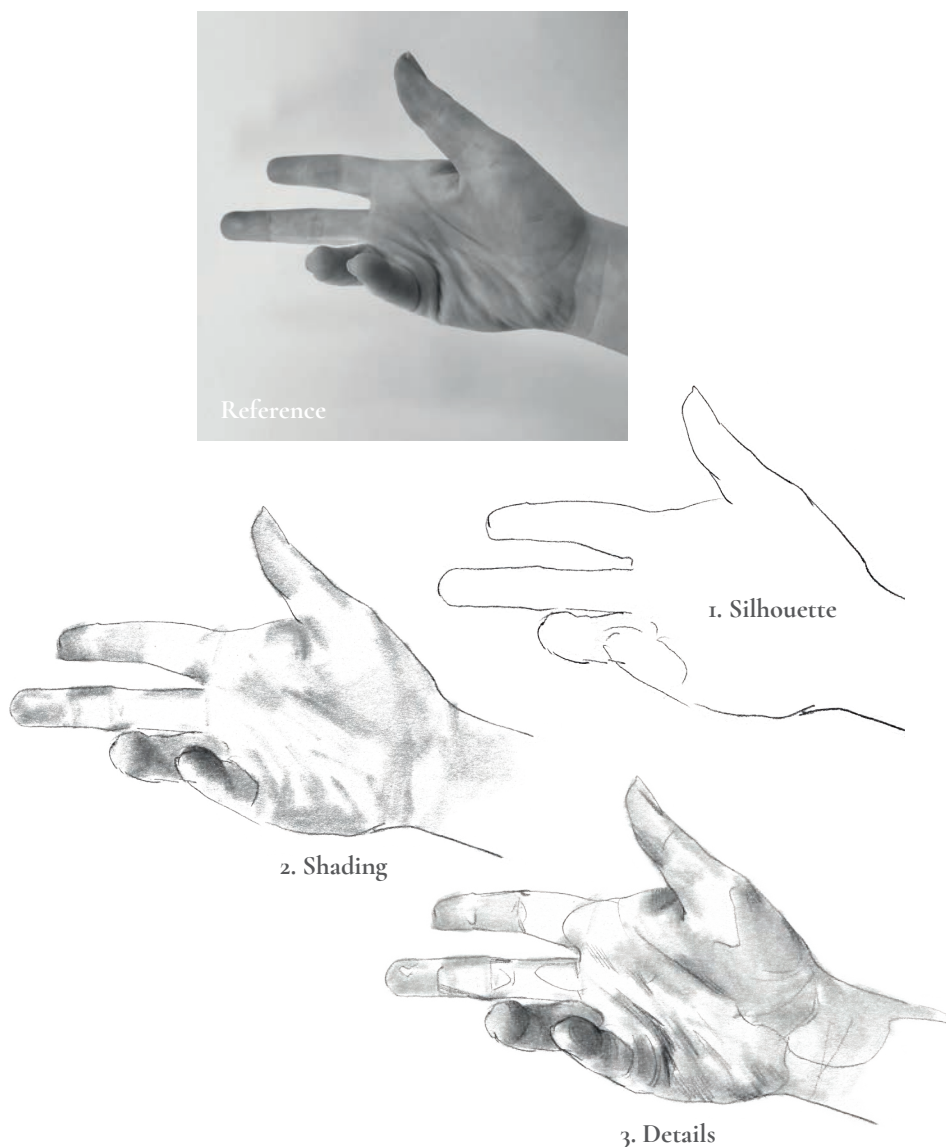
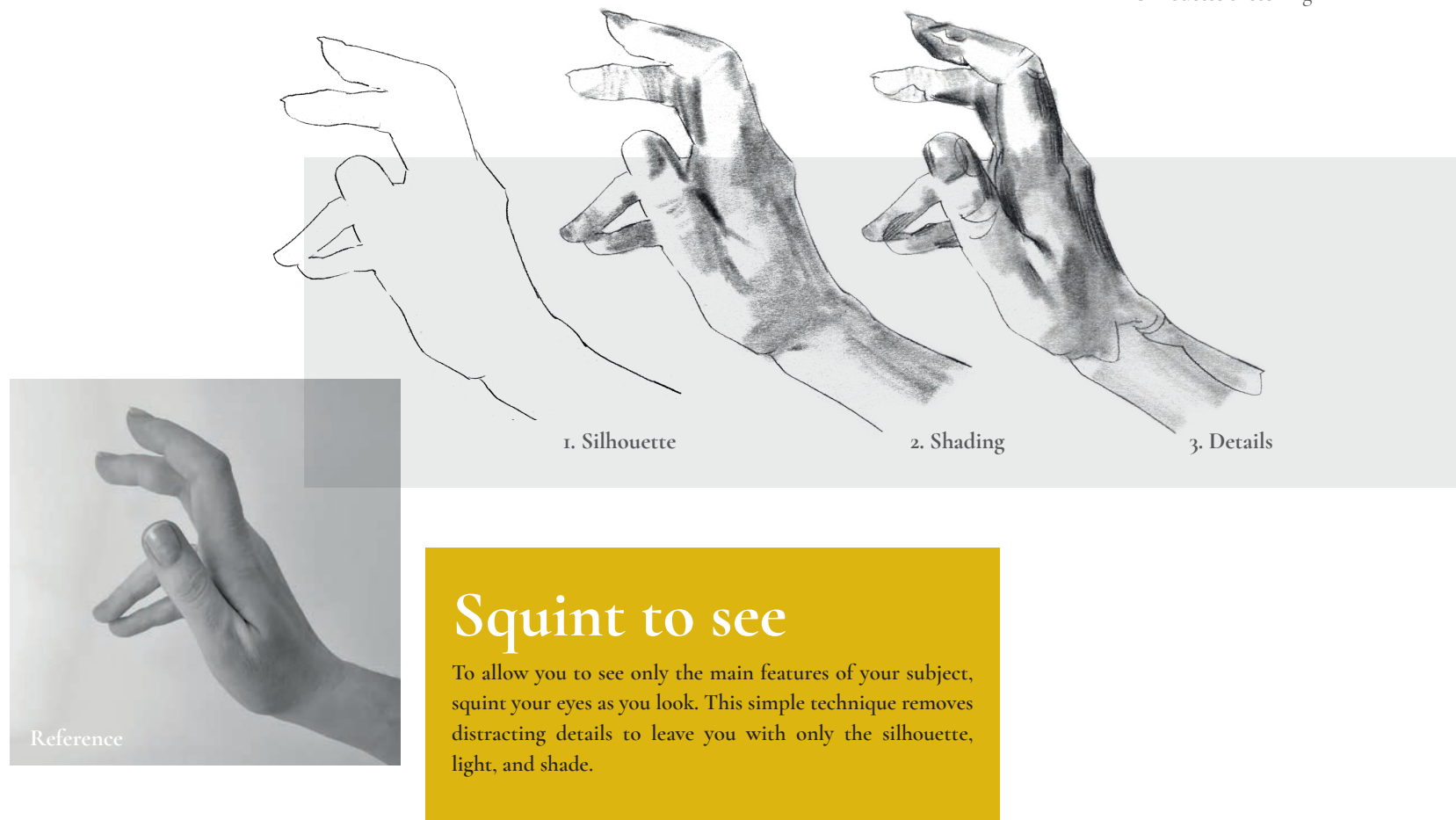
1. Silhouette



2. Shading



3. Details



1. Silhouette

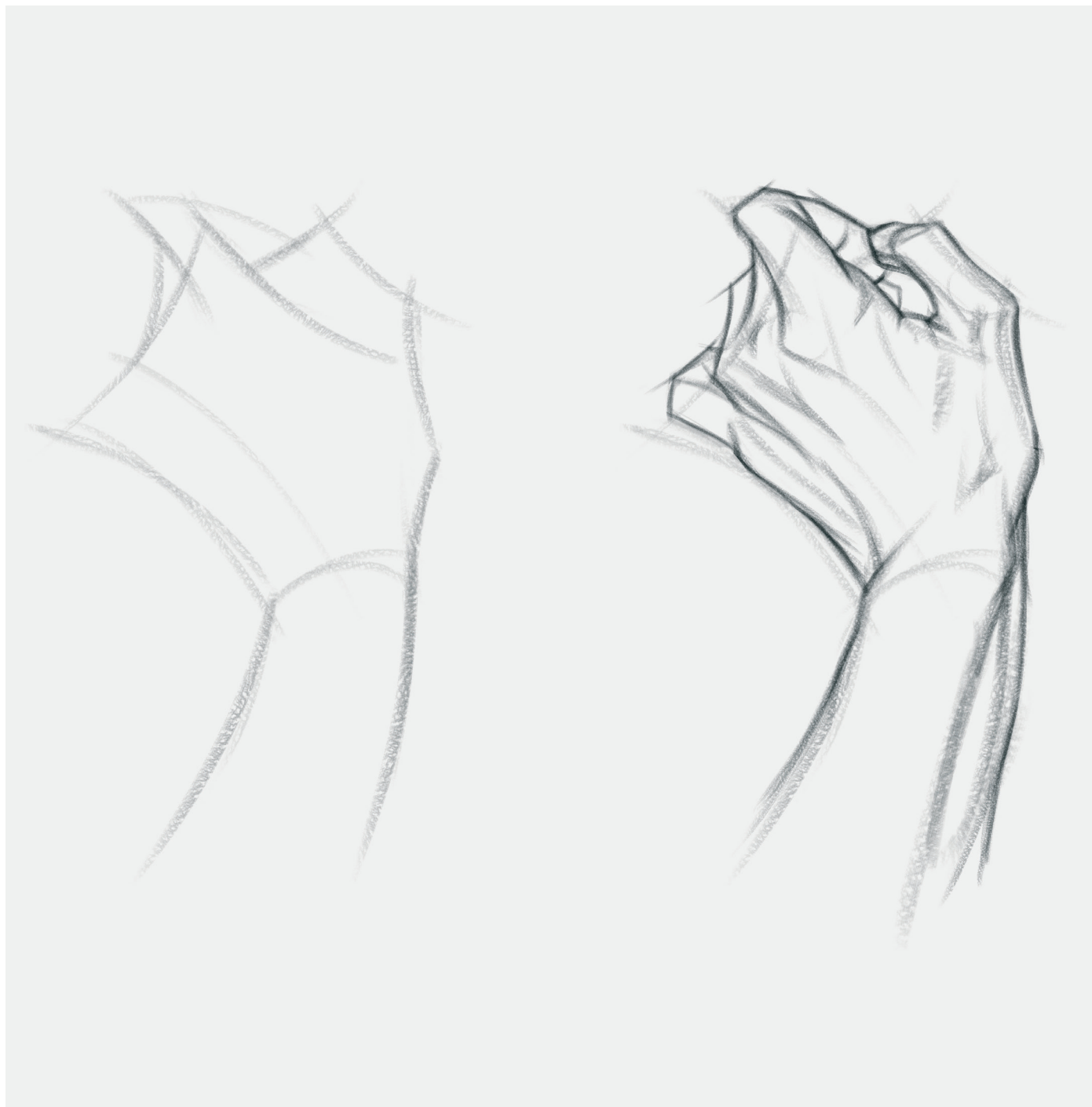
When sketching the silhouette, I think about the overall shape first, and the space it covers on the paper. After years of drawing, I inherently pay attention to the anatomy. But, even if things aren't anatomically precise, that's not a concern. In fact, I like pushing and stretching the silhouette, then filling in the blanks with details that give the illusion of realism, when in fact it's a pushed drawing. This method is more like chiseling details in a stone sculpture than building with clay from the inside out.

2. Shading

Next, I add the shadows, thinking about the broader shapes first and roughly adding those in. At this stage, I'm still working with the outline of the silhouette alone, checking the reference photo for shading only without adding any more lines.

3. Details

Finally, I layer the details, creating the darker areas. I now add the extra outlines that sit on top of the shadows to take the shape beyond a simple silhouette.



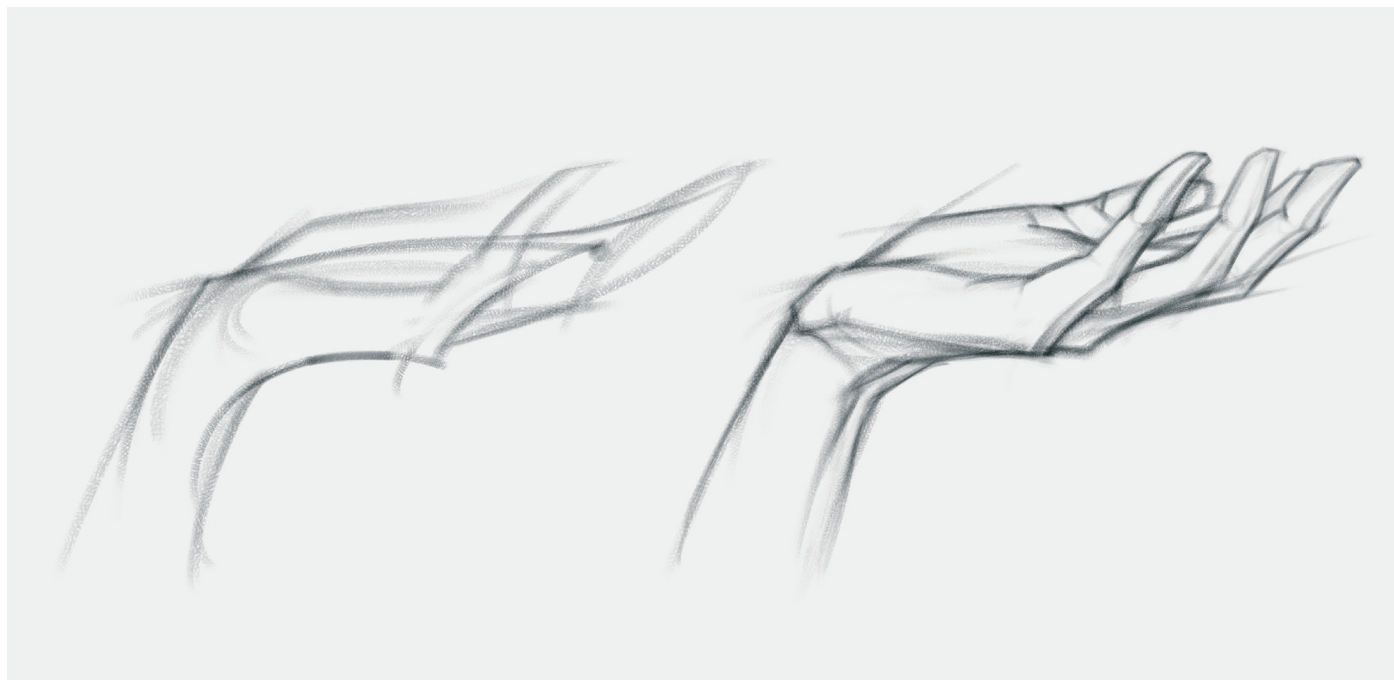
Hands

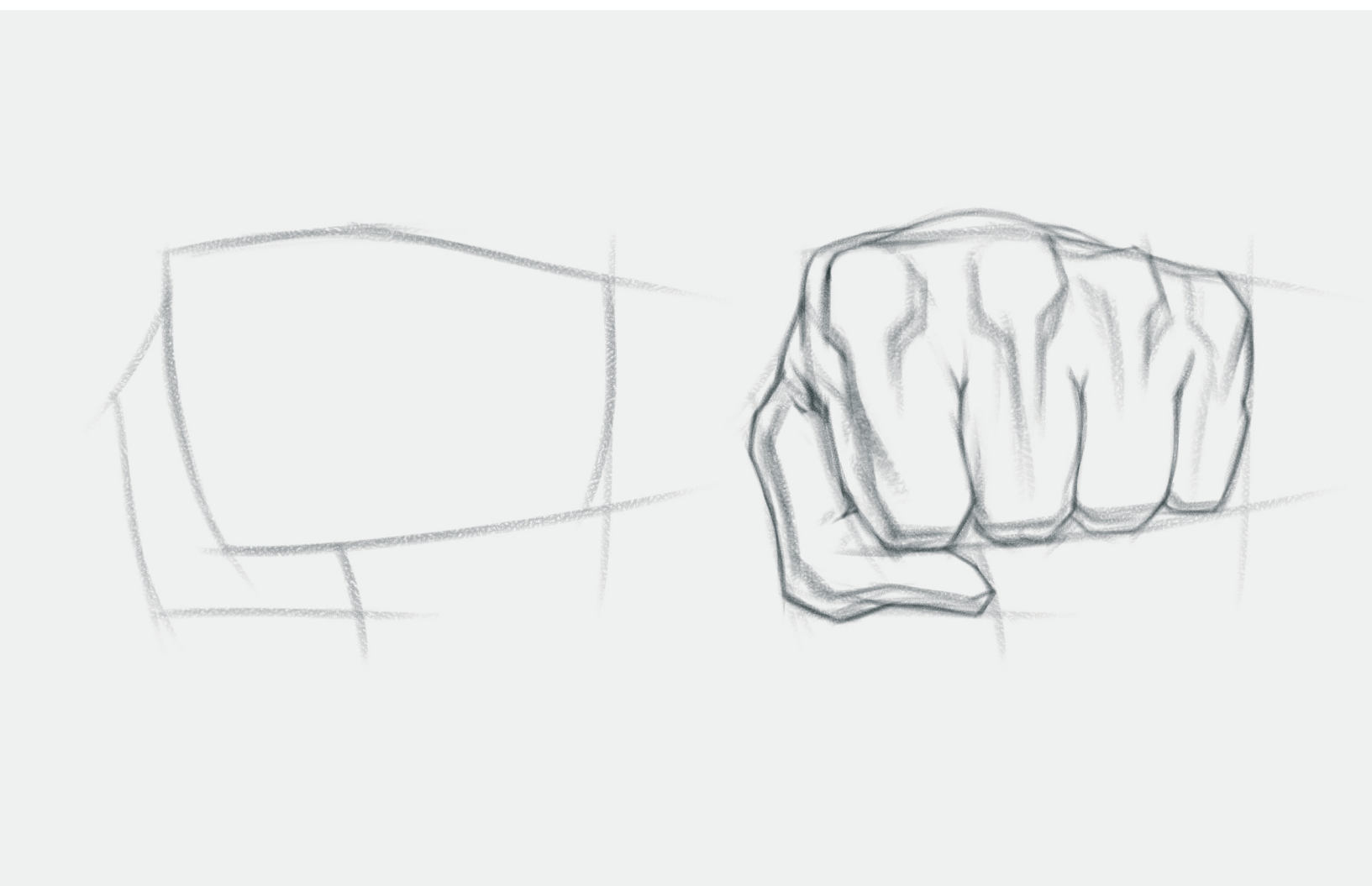
No doubt some of the most challenging things to draw, hands can actually be quite fun. The incredible complexity of the hand's structure can be overwhelming and requires a decent level of anatomical knowledge. I approach them as shapes, just like I do with the rest of the body. I like to find the silhouette and gesture of the hand first, then adjust the drawing to fit

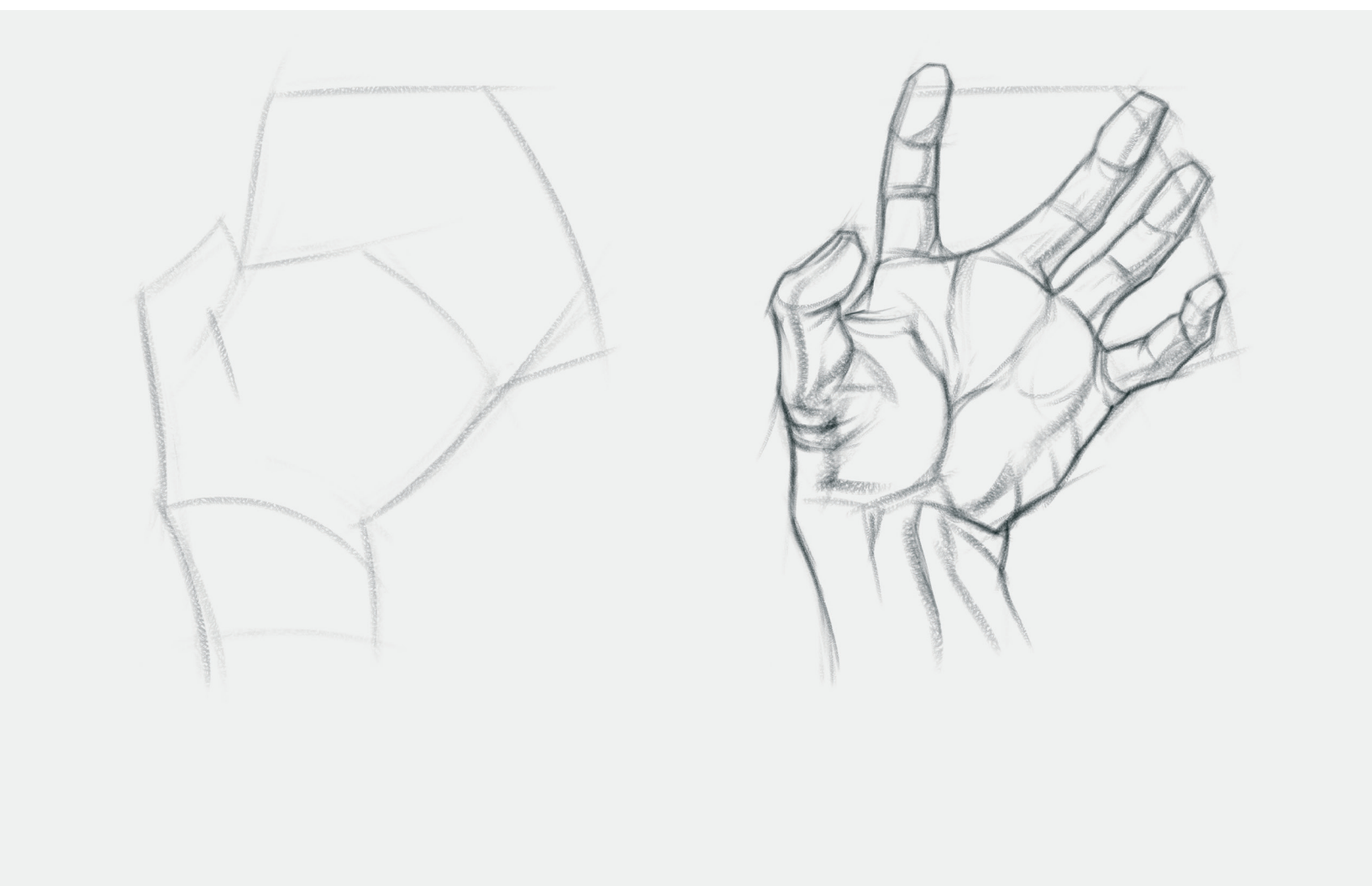
anatomical requirements. The sketches here illustrate how the hand can be broken down.

Ensuring that you can accurately represent these difficult areas will add believability to your concept art, and allow you to produce them more quickly.

These pages
Hand sketches
developed from
gestures.





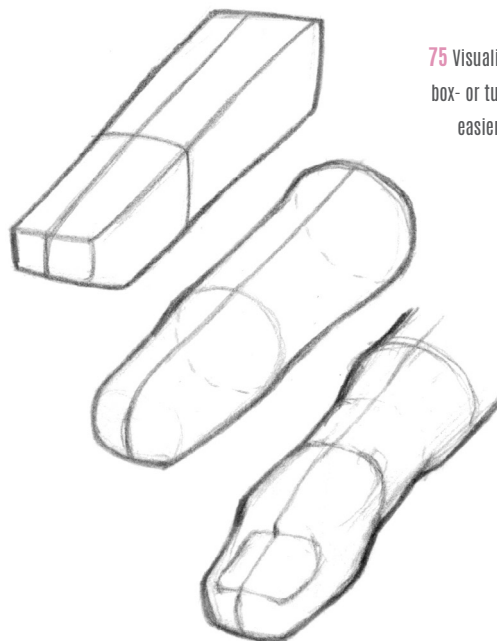


THE HAND

The hand can be a very complicated structure to draw, but as with drawing anything, it can be simplified into forms that are easier to understand. In this section we will look at how to approach the challenging anatomy of the hands and see some examples of believable poses.

The fingers

First, let's look at the anatomy of the fingers. As illustrated in **image 75**, you can visualize a finger as a round, tube-like shape or a long, box-like shape. Always start out with simple, basic forms and do not let the complexity of the fingers get in the way. Little details can always be added later when the basic form has been established. **Image 76** shows the underlying bones and placement of the finger joints.



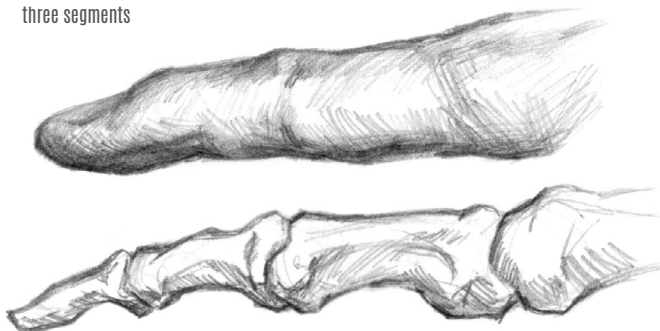
75 Visualize the finger as a box- or tube-like shape for easier blocking out

The back of the hand

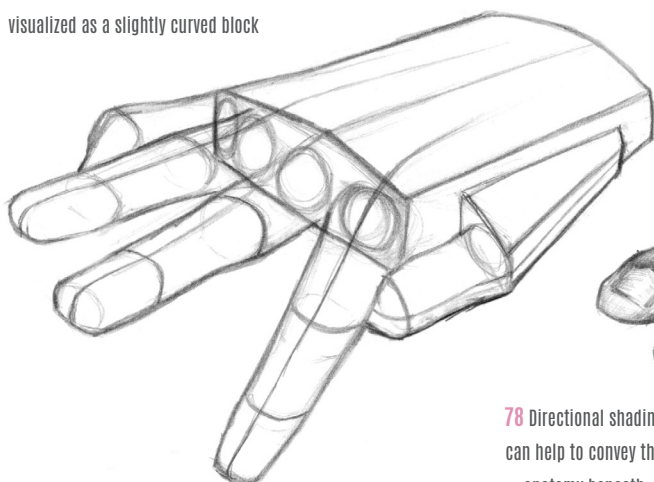
Image 77 shows a drawing of the top part of the hand, broken down into basic geometry. You can see that the structure can be simplified into a broad box shape, though the top of the hand curves a little, peaking at the middle knuckle.

In the rendered version of the hand (**image 78**), pencil strokes pass across the hand from the pinky to the middle finger. From the middle finger to the thumb, however, the strokes change direction to follow the underlying forms. Construction lines and rendering can be used in this way to suggest the subtle muscle and bone variations under the skin.

76 The underlying bones of the fingers create three segments



77 The back of the hand can be visualized as a slightly curved block



78 Directional shading can help to convey the anatomy beneath

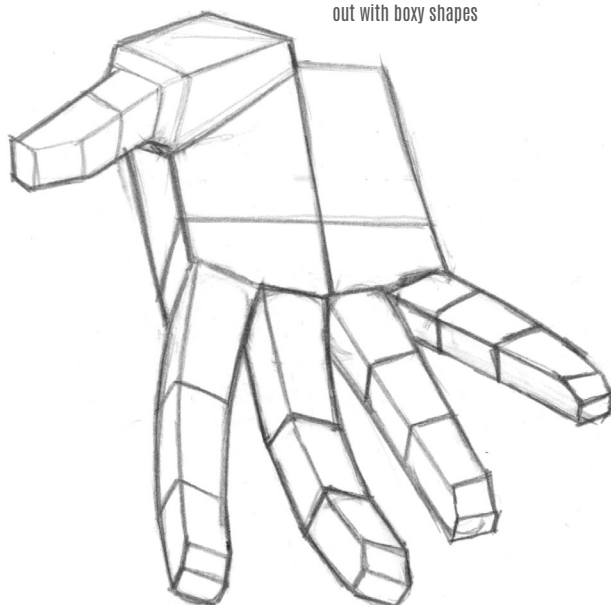


The palm of the hand

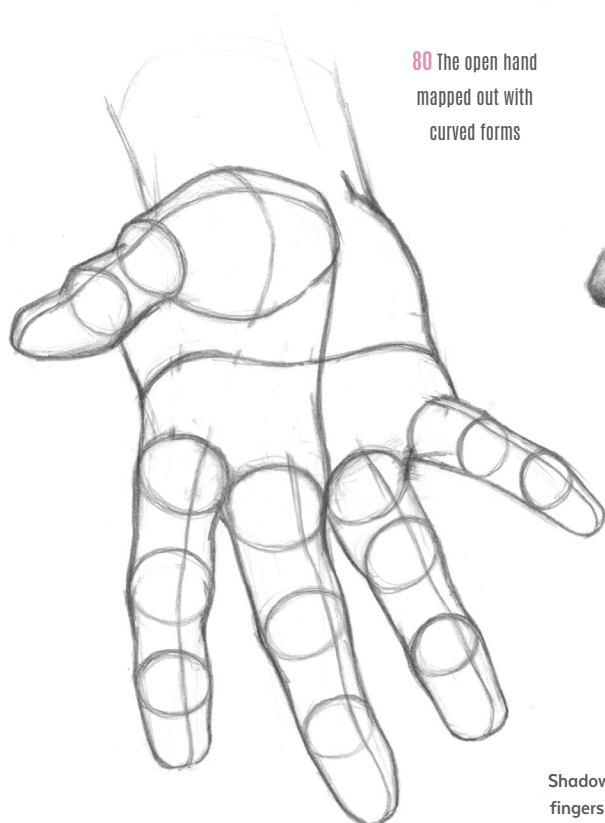
Drawing the palm side of the hand can also be simplified into a box shape, but you have to take into account the greater peaks and valleys of the palm. **Image 79** shows the hand with the palm side up. From this angle, the bulges of muscle in the palm are blocked out using box-like protrusions. The large muscle leading to the thumb almost sits on top of the palm. The more organic construction style of **image 80** shows how to round out those boxes to create a more muscular, human feel.

When rendering the hand, it is helpful to think in both a circular and more box-like manner. To simplify the hand, approach it in a box-like way, creating straight strokes that go across the form. To achieve more complexity, take the more organic approach, creating strokes that wrap around the form. The rendered hand in **image 81** shows how the strokes should follow the construction lines, either with the form or against it, to realistically depict the pull and stretch of skin over the muscles and bone structure.

79 The open hand mapped out with boxy shapes



80 The open hand mapped out with curved forms

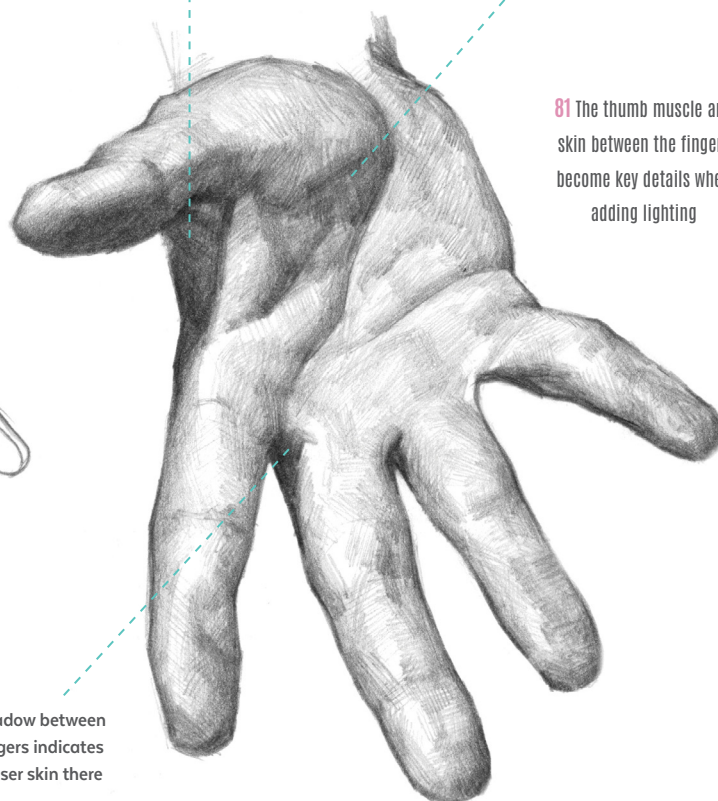


Thumb casts strong shadow in this lighting

Ball of thumb is a prominent shaded form

81 The thumb muscle and skin between the fingers become key details when adding lighting

Shadow between fingers indicates looser skin there



Drawing tendons

Image 82 shows the way the tendons come down from the forearm and branch out in the hand. When the hand is arched in extreme emotion, or when the skin is drawn (as in aged skin), these tendons stand out vividly in the hand and bulge over the knuckles. Be sure to capture the intensity of these ridges, as they can have a massive impact when you are trying to convey an emotion or personality through your subject's hands.

Image 83 shows the hand as a basic outline rather than a block of constructions. From this point, the tendons can be sketched in to show how

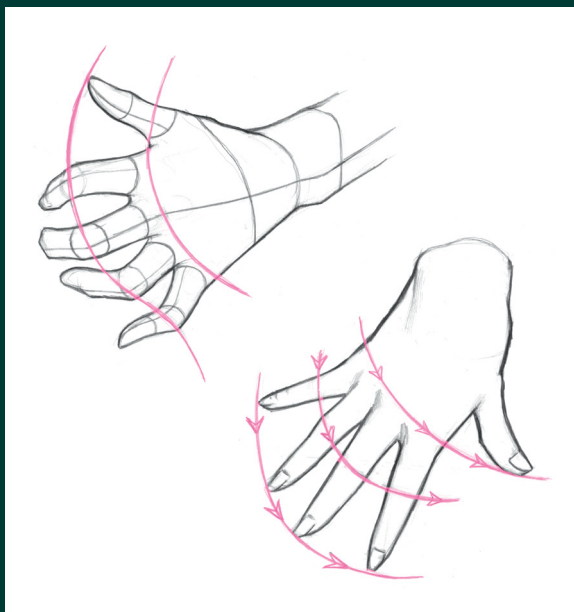
the surface of the hand would be broken up by ridges of tendons (**image 84**). Many artists like to include a line down the center of each shape, in this case flowing down the fingers, to add a three-dimensional element and help with understanding the forms of the subject.

The finished drawing (**image 85**) shows how the sketched tendons have been incorporated into the skin texture of the hand. On the index finger, you can see how finding the central construction line of the subject helped to draw the tendon and the crevice in the middle of the knuckle.

Rhythm lines

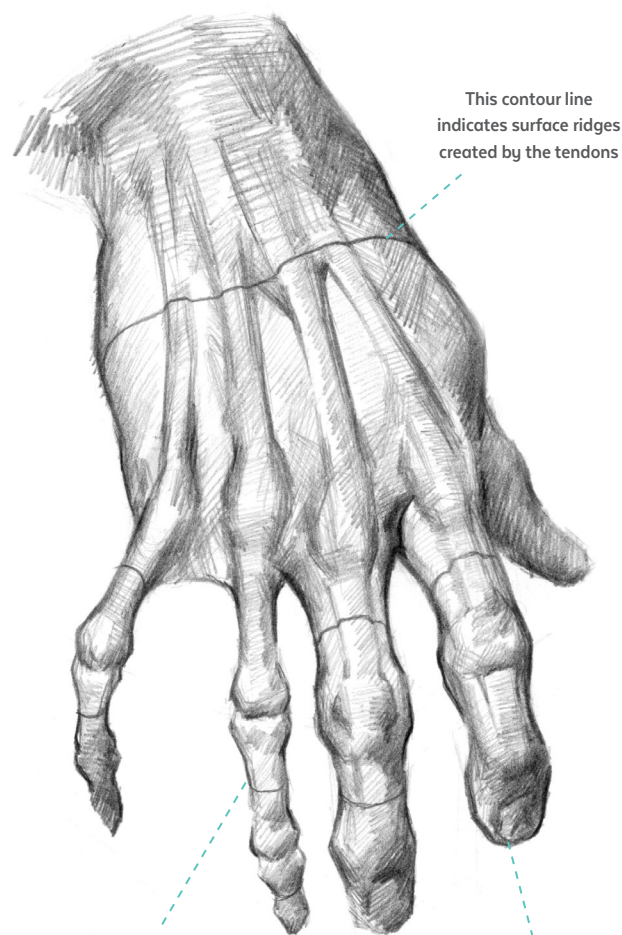
A valuable technique for drawing hands is using rhythm lines. Pictured below are two drawings demonstrating the use of rhythm lines to create dynamic hand poses. A rhythm line is simply a way to create a sense of flow in your work, keeping the proportions of the structures correct while transferring them into a new position. This is essential when trying to gauge the lengths of the bones between the knuckles, for example, which can have a massive impact on the believability of the hand.

You can invent any rhythm lines when it comes to drawing, but following the lines of the knuckles always works well when drawing hands. For example, in the second pose shown here, the rhythm line of the knuckles flows smoothly into the thumb, which helps when drawing its length and direction.



▲ Use rhythm lines to draw dynamic hand poses without losing proportion

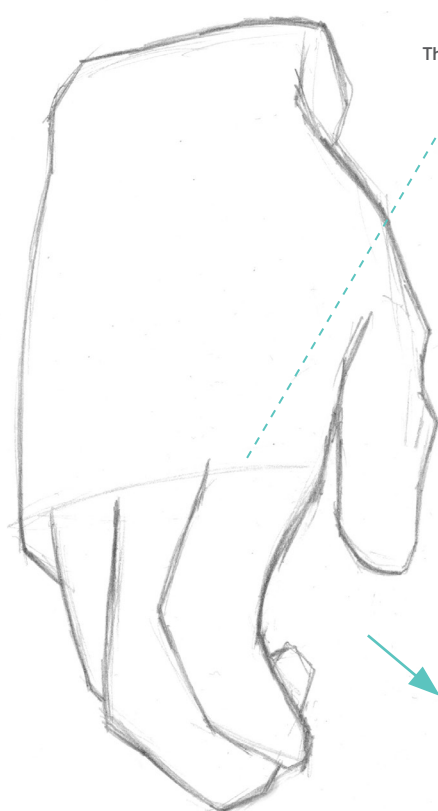
82 Depending on the pose of the hand, the tendons can be a distinctive feature



This contour line indicates surface ridges created by the tendons

The skeletal finger has three distinct sections

The fleshy tip and nail square off the end of the completed finger



83 The base of a posed hand can be sketched very simply

This faint line indicates knuckle placement



84 Finding the flow of tendons on the back of the hand

Center lines help to keep the fingers in perspective

“When the hand is arched in extreme emotion, or when the skin is drawn (as in aged skin), these tendons stand out vividly”

85 The rendered hand with pronounced tendons and knuckles



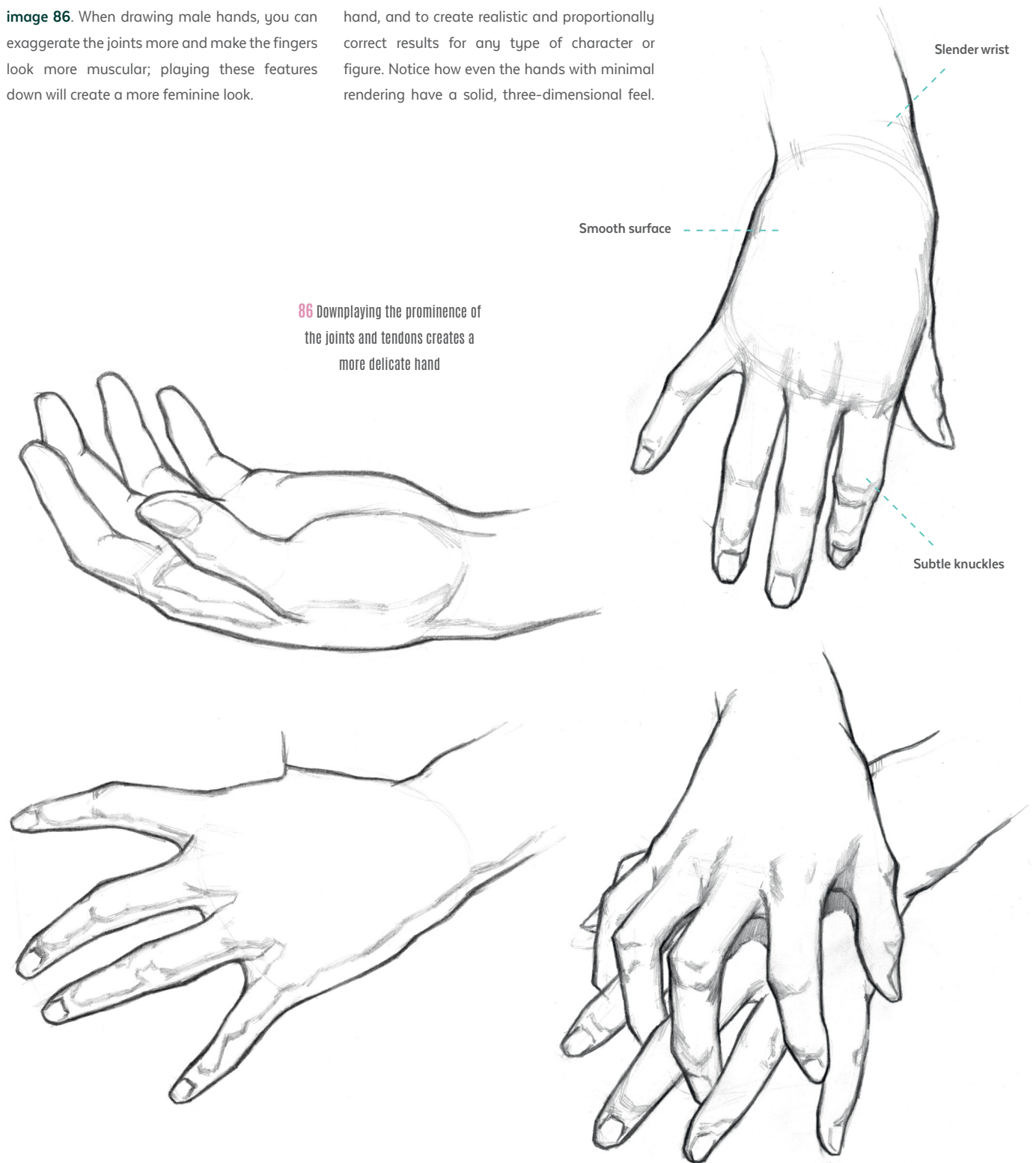
Natural groove in the knuckle follows the center line

Creating hand variety

The same construction rules apply to most hands, but when drawing female hands, you may wish to be more subtle when designing the features. Think elegant and simple, as shown in **image 86**. When drawing male hands, you can exaggerate the joints more and make the fingers look more muscular; playing these features down will create a more feminine look.

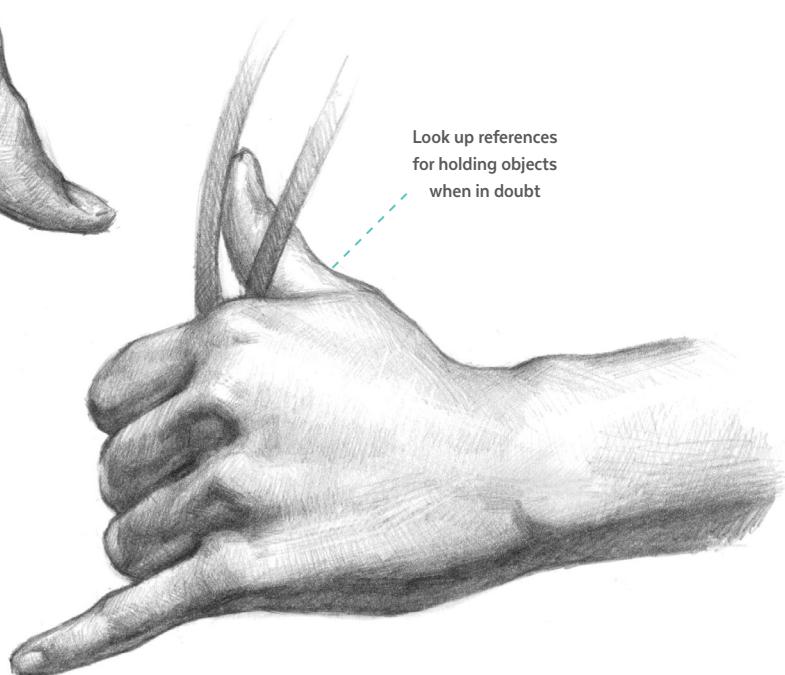
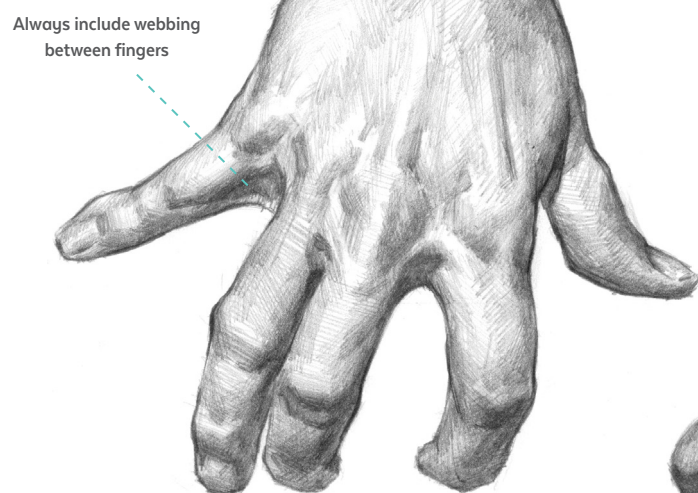
It is important to study hands in a variety of forms, trying to depict how the muscles create bulges and the tendons create ridges, as shown in **image 87**. This will help you to get a strong idea of how all these aspects are placed in the hand, and to create realistic and proportionally correct results for any type of character or figure. Notice how even the hands with minimal rendering have a solid, three-dimensional feel.

A good test of your progress in understanding form is to create a basic line drawing and see if it still reads as three-dimensional.





87 Practice drawing different hands, experimenting with proportions and surfaces in a variety of poses



HELPING HANDS

Hands are notoriously hard to master, but there are some simple ways to break them down and make them more manageable. It can be tempting to skip over them in a drawing – but don't! They are yet another opportunity to create dynamism and tell a story.

The basic proportions of a hand of any size are very simple!



In this drawing, mittens mean super-simple hands, but keeping the proportions correct is still important

FINGERNAILS

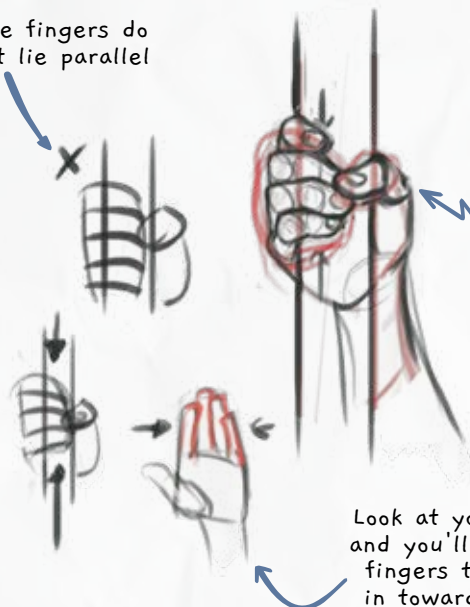
Adding fingernails can help the viewer's perception of perspective, but whether you want to add them is a question of style.

Fingernails at different angles



A foreshortened nail helps to make sense of the position of a finger

The fingers do not lie parallel



BASIC STUDY

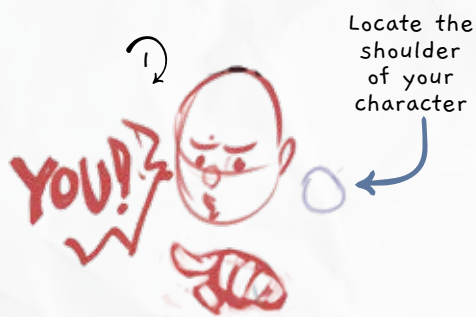
Hands can be as dynamic and expressive as faces, so here's how to make them look believable.

Stylized and finalized, the grip has strength and tension



“HANDS CAN BE AS DYNAMIC AND EXPRESSIVE AS FACES”

CONNECTING HAND + BODY



Pose the action in front of the mirror, or take a photograph, to help you get hands and fingers right

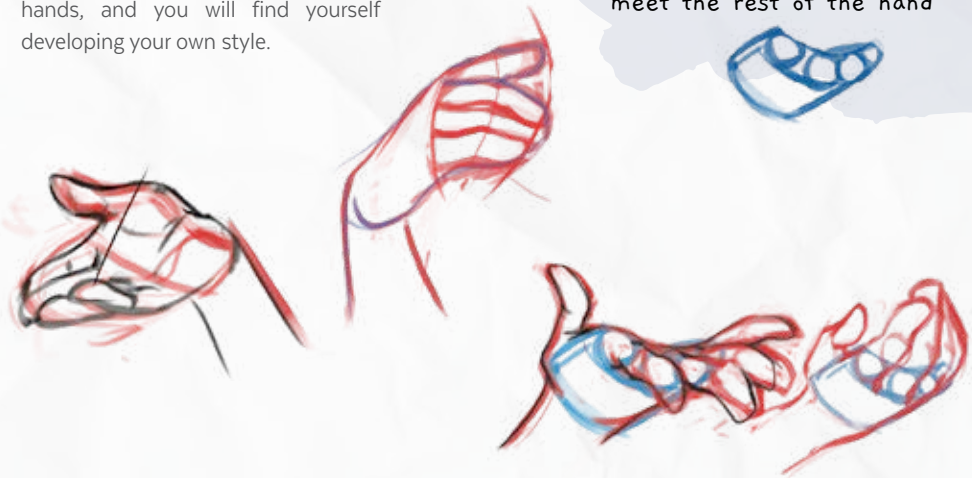
Add the elbow. The positions can vary and they change the intensity and mood of the pose



HAND POSING

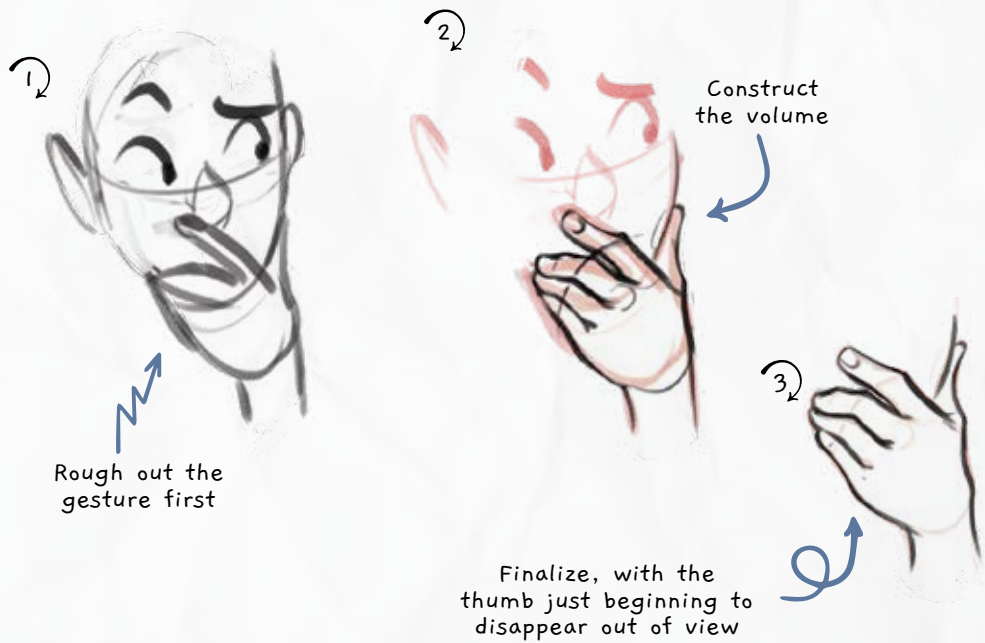
There are various ways to pose the hands, and you will find yourself developing your own style.

With more complicated perspectives, it helps me to construct the palm, marking where the fingers meet the rest of the hand

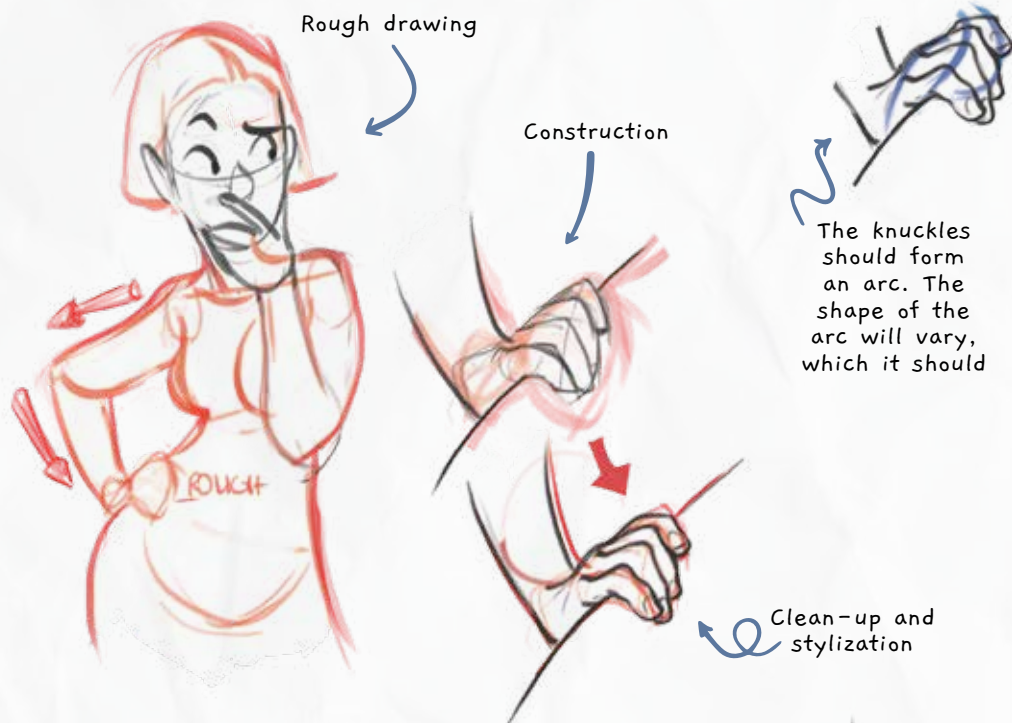


I like to separate the index or small finger from the others just a little

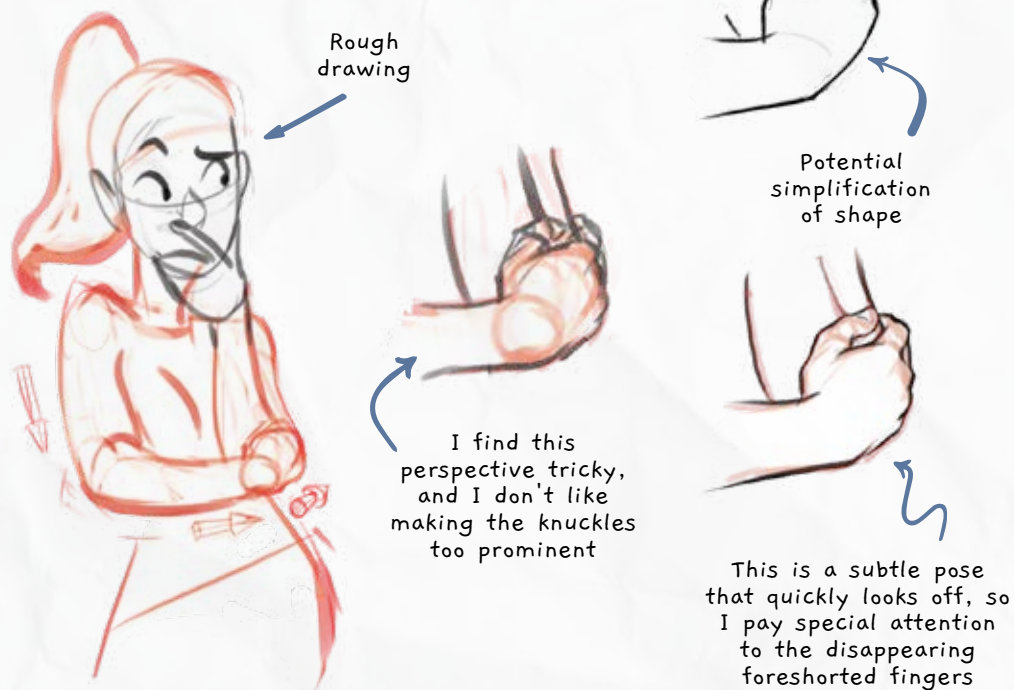
POSE: HAND ON FACE



POSE: HAND ON HIP



POSE: HAND ON ELBOW



HANDS

This chapter offers advice and approaches that I find useful when it comes to drawing hands. When I was drawing hyperrealistic work, I would spend hours building up a design that was based entirely on a reference. When the finished article looked just like my reference image, I believed I could draw anything. Although I created effective drawings, I did not learn anything about constructing my own designs because

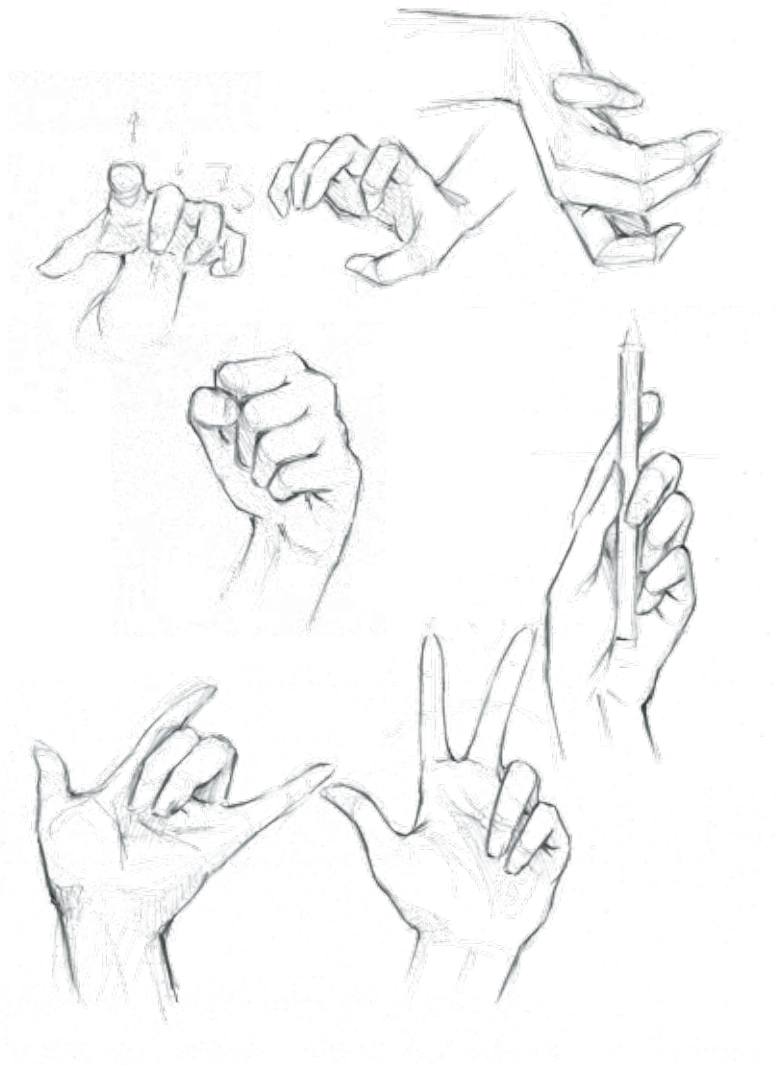
I didn't understand the fundamentals and construction. I didn't concentrate on creating the correct proportions, how light would affect the object, or the underlying anatomy. What I did learn from my hyperrealistic work, however, is that it is better to draw a thousand unpolished sketches than to overwork one drawing for a long time, because it provides you with invaluable knowledge and understanding of structure and fundamentals.

SKETCHING TECHNIQUE

When drawing hands, I aim to create very delicate designs, so I use a hard HB pencil to provide light construction lines and a soft dark B or 2B pencil for the final outline and any darker details. Some of my hand drawings are based on references and some are drawn from my imagination and memory. I will often use my left hand for reference while I draw with my right.

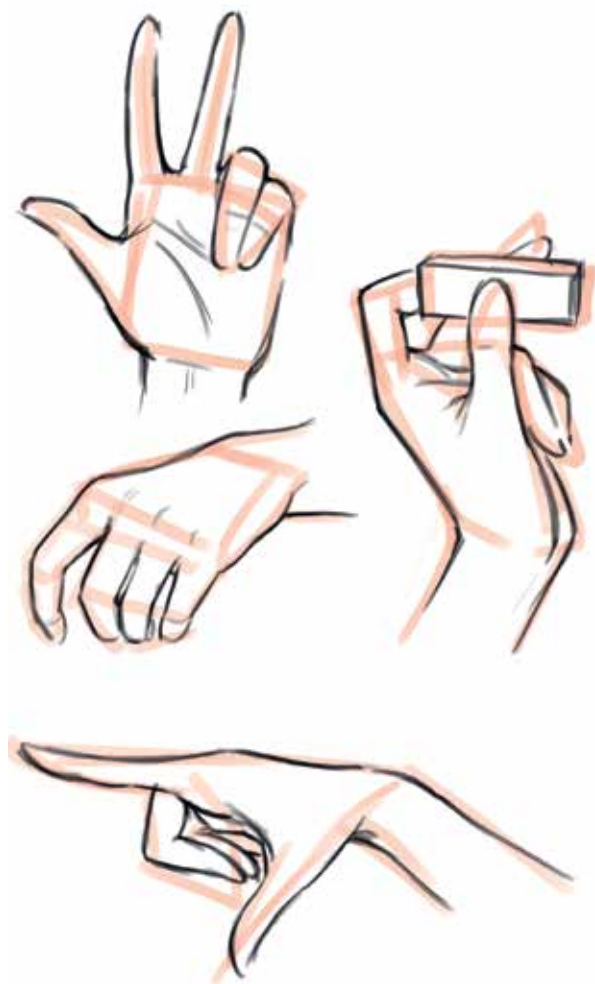
To add areas of shadow and give the hand some depth, I define where the shadows will be by adding delicate and light line shading with my HB pencil.

To develop your own style and enable you to feel comfortable drawing hands, practice is very important as it will help you to understand the overall shape and construction of a hand. The more you practice, the more you will improve!



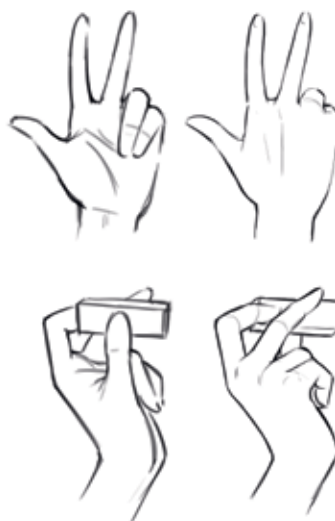
WARM UPS

One of the most useful techniques for sketching anything is to start with simplified shapes. To start a hand I draw a square shape with the fingers made up of rectangles and sometimes triangles. Breaking the form you want to achieve down into simplified shapes makes it easier to understand the construction. Warm-up sketches like these relax your hand and give your future drawings more energy.



OUTLINE

After warming up and practicing creating hands using block shapes, the next step is to establish the outline of the hand. The outline of the back and the palm of the hand can sometimes be the same; it is the finer details that will distinguish the back or the palm.



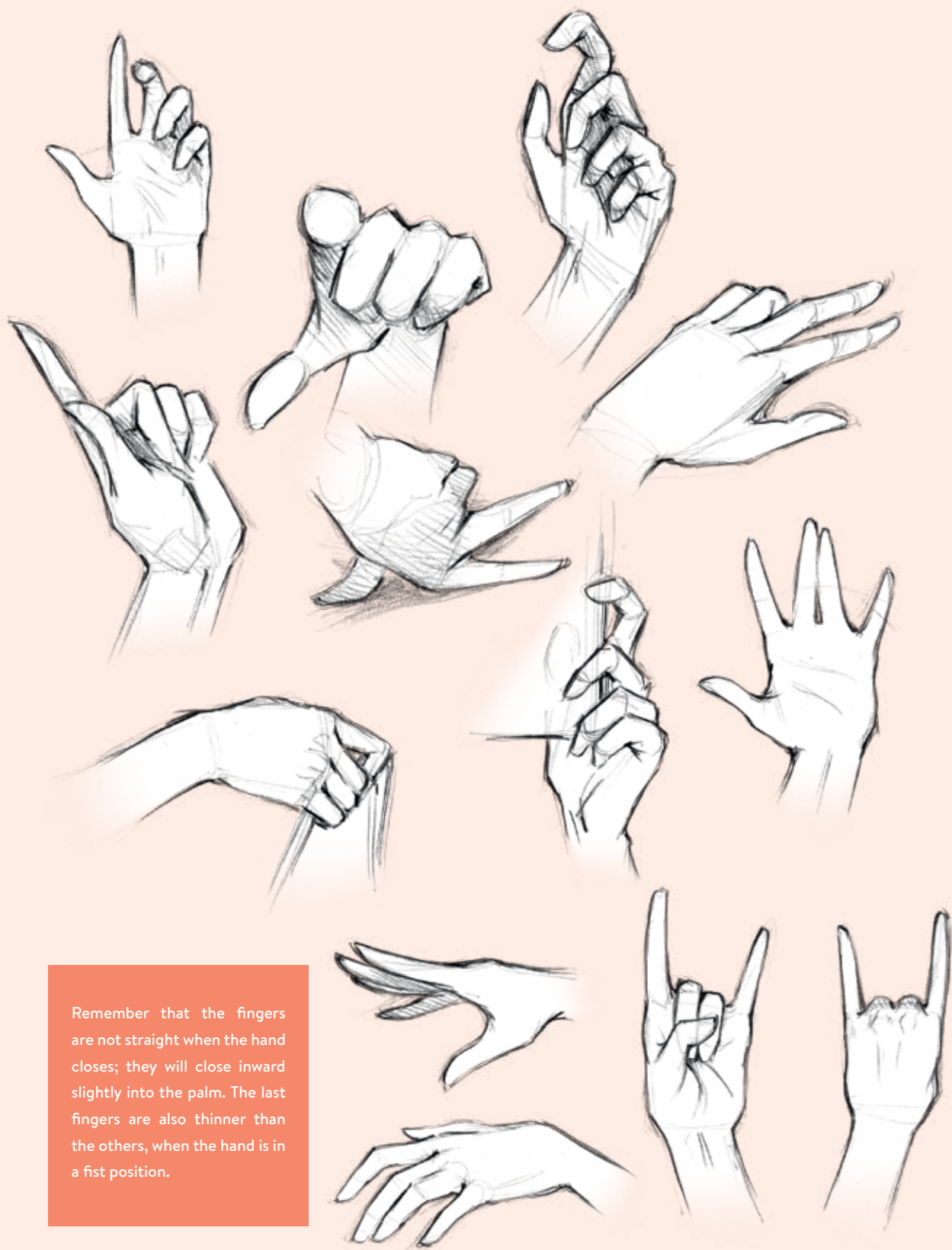


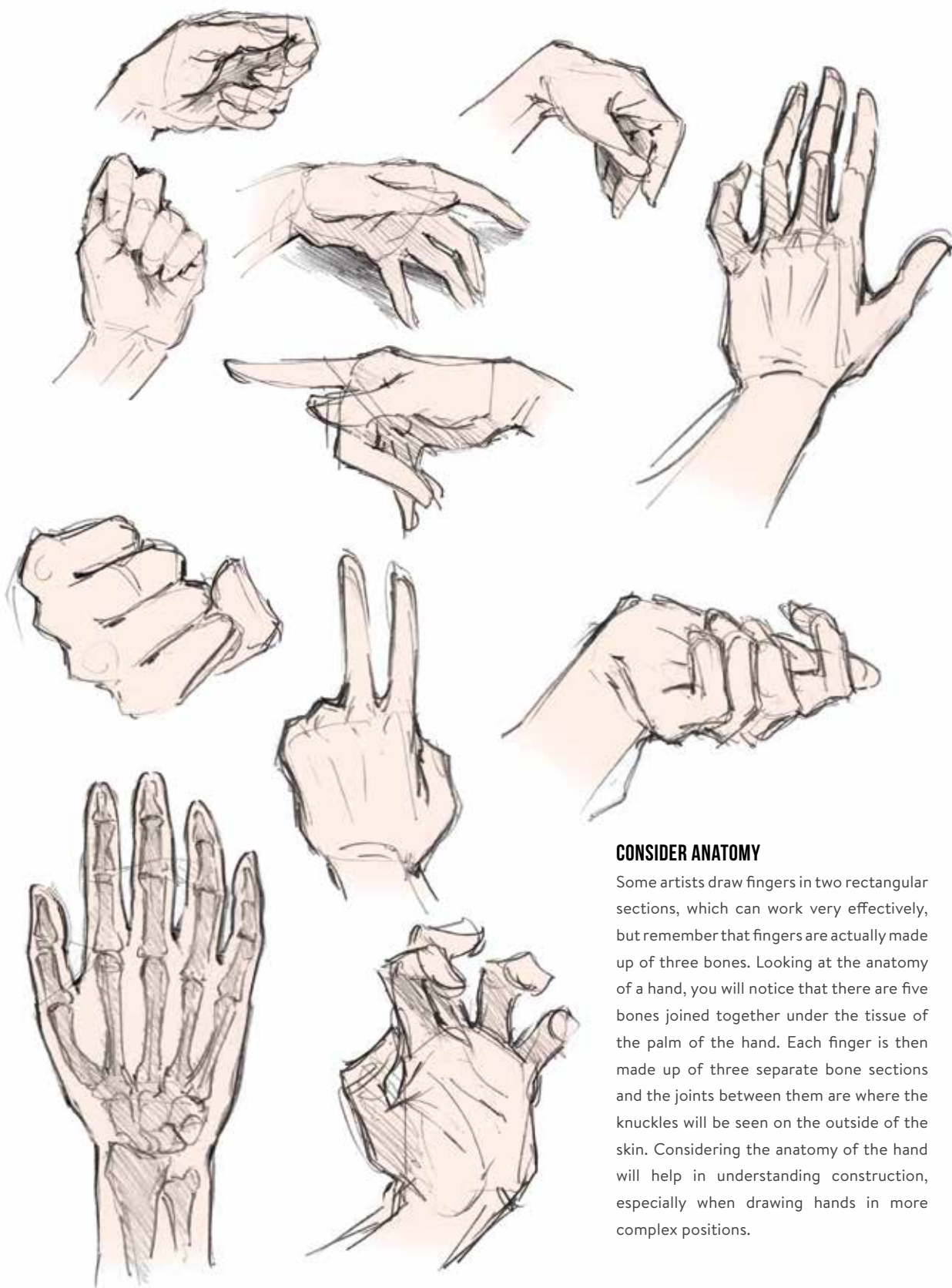
ADDING DEFINITION TO THE FINGERS

When drawing the fingers, you need to keep in mind that they are not all the same length. Also, fingers don't all start from the same position on the hand. The longest finger is the middle finger, which also starts at the top of the arc of the palm of the hand. The second longest finger is the ring finger, followed by the index finger, then the little finger (the fourth in the row), and lastly the thumb. The thumb is not only the shortest of the five, but it also comes off the palm of the hand in a completely different direction.

When drawing the back of the hand flat, you will also need to consider the placement of the fingernails – the thumbnail will need to be drawn slightly from the side. To indicate fingernails in my drawings I often end fingers with angular shapes, rather than making them oval. In general, I don't like adding fingernails to my drawings as I think they give the hand harshness and can distract the viewer from the rest of the drawing.

To construct the fingers, it is helpful to start with an arc and draw the fingers fanning out slightly from the palm of the hand. It is also important to remember that fingers are not completely straight, so make sure to study your hands in depth when drawing!





CONSIDER ANATOMY

Some artists draw fingers in two rectangular sections, which can work very effectively, but remember that fingers are actually made up of three bones. Looking at the anatomy of a hand, you will notice that there are five bones joined together under the tissue of the palm of the hand. Each finger is then made up of three separate bone sections and the joints between them are where the knuckles will be seen on the outside of the skin. Considering the anatomy of the hand will help in understanding construction, especially when drawing hands in more complex positions.

DISTINGUISHING THE BACK FROM THE PALM

There are a few distinguishing differences between the back and the palm of the hand. One of the main features of the back of the hand is the skin between the fingers, which cannot be seen from the palm of the hand. Another key difference is that the back of the hand clearly displays the underlying bone structure, such as the knuckles, whereas the palm of the hand is just soft tissue and shows distinctive wrinkles in the skin. From the outline drawing you can simply add a few extra lines to indicate the back or the palm of the hand.



INTRODUCING OBJECTS

When drawing a hand interacting with objects, it is important to pay attention to the angles that the objects create and the changes in the shapes of the overall hand shape. Look at where the fingers would sit in relation to the object and the other fingers. Again, begin with simplified shapes to achieve an overall outline of the hand.