

the artist

-->



Awesome! I can't approve more.

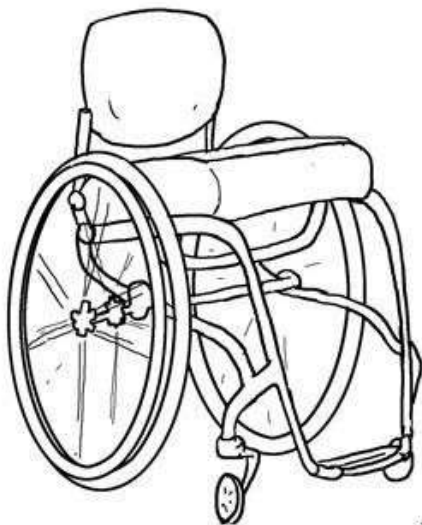
Drawing characters who use wheelchairs is a bit different than drawing standing characters, because of obvious posing differences.

But to start, you need to know what parts of a wheelchair you will draw. So, without further ado, here are 3 wheelchairs!

Tilite TR series  
3

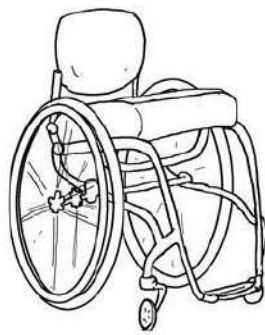
Quickie GPV

Invacare  
tracer



The wheelchairs on the left are the ultralight, sporty kind. I have one of them (the quickie). The one on the right is a more standard one you might find in hospitals or as the public wheelchair in grocery stores or the mall

This wheelchair has a really thick cushion - it's pressure relieving, which you need if you use your chair full time and especially if you have a spinal cord injury.



This one has the one I use - it isn't pressure relieving, but is still useful.



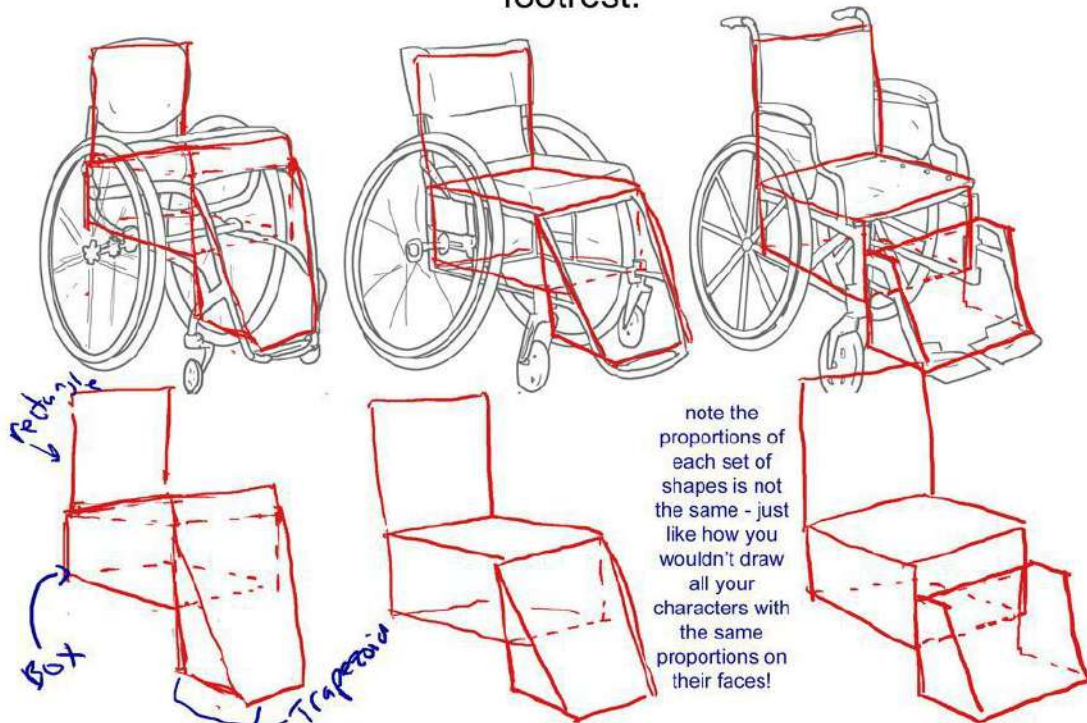
This wc has the smallest caster (Front) wheels. They are the most handy for turning in small circles



This wheelchair has no cushion - you do not want to sit on it for long.

This one has the biggest caster wheels - they are useful for not "tripping" when your front wheel gets caught on an obstacle.

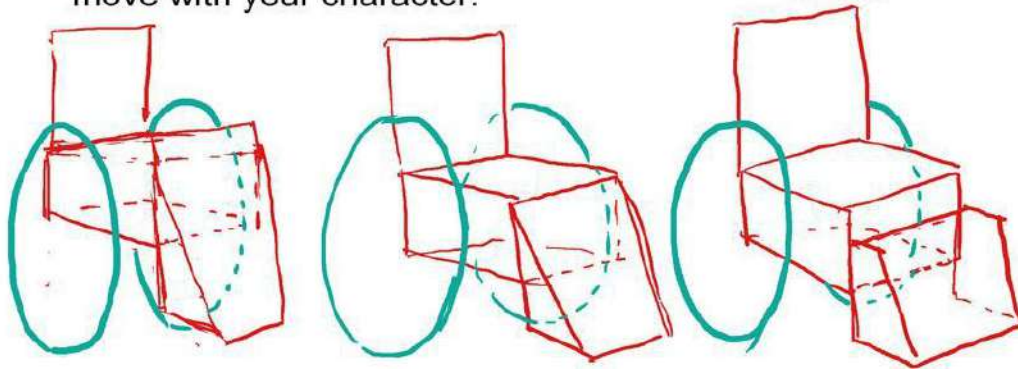
Like with all complex drawings, you want to break it into simple shapes first. I normally have a box underneath the seat, a rectangle for the backrest, and a trapezoidal thing for the area from the box to the footrest.



note the proportions of each set of shapes is not the same - just like how you wouldn't draw all your characters with the same proportions on their faces!

These are the most important shapes, because your character will rest on them and they will move with your character.

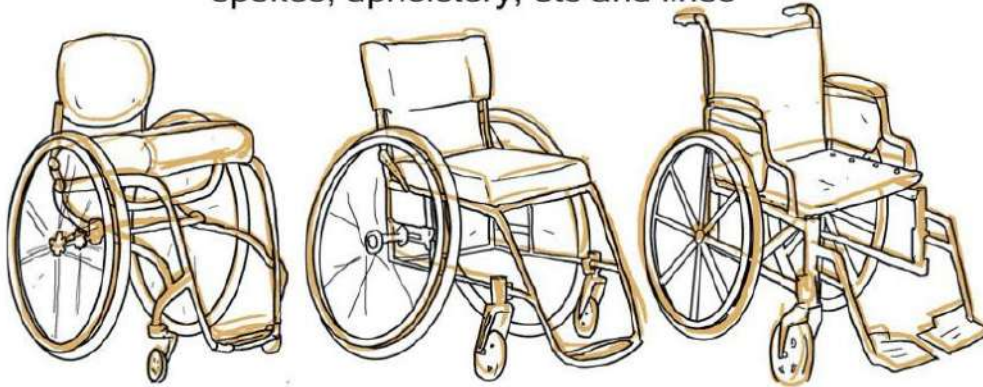
Next shape is the wheels - two circles



The next stage is everything else that's structure - front wheels, handlebars, cushions, foot rests.



you can then do detailing like axles, spokes, upholstery, etc and lines



Once you get your wheelchair basics, you need to find out which kind your character uses. Here are three characters who each use one of the example WCs.



Patience uses the invacare. She needs one with a better cushion, but circumstance prevents it. Notice the chair is a bit wider than her hips - it's not custom fitted. Also notice she has to turn her elbows out awkwardly to move. The high armrests prevent a smooth push.

Her wheelchair has big caster wheels and far-back back wheels. It is made for stability and difficult to turn, but also difficult to knock over.

Her chair indicates lack of resources or temporary injury, and is primarily a transport chair.

Kelley uses a wheelchair like mine - it is fairly sporty, but has a box-y frame underneath. This makes it heavier than if it didn't.

She has a mediocre cushion - it protects her, but only some. Her back wheels are further underneath her body than Patience's, which makes it possible to do the wheelie (demonstrated here).

Her wheelchair is supposed to look like one you'd use full time, but it is a little old.





Luke has a spinal cord injury. He has a very thick and pressure relieving cushion for medical reasons.

His chair is also ultralight, with no boxiness under the frame.

His chair is the newest and the lightest - it indicates his wealth/resources, but also that he needs to use on full time.

When you're choosing what wheelchair to give your character, think of both their disability and their resources and go from there.

questions to ask yourself:



is it made specifically for them or is it mass-produced or a hand-me-down (if it's custom, the seat will not be too wide or narrow in comparison to their body and their feet will rest on the footplate naturally)

Do they want more stability (further back back wheels, big caster wheels) or maneuverability (the inverse).

Do they need a pressure relieving cushion?

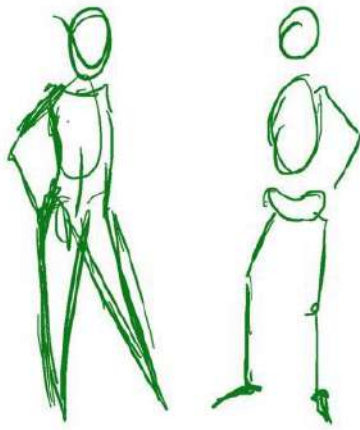
How long are they using their wheelchair per day?

How long have they needed a wheelchair?

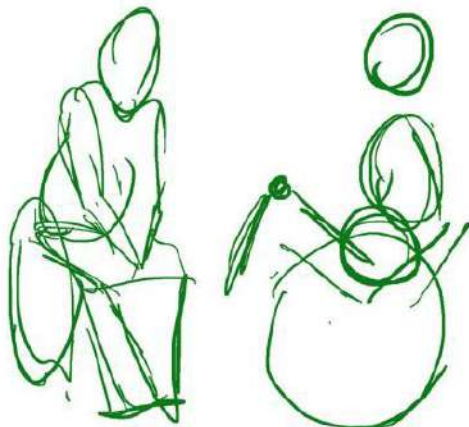
Do they have health insurance? Do they have access to a lot of spending money? How much can they spend on their wheelchair?

Are they athletic?

etc etc

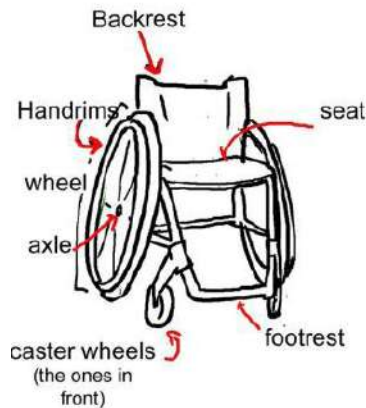


step one: most people have this sketch anatomy they put before drawing their characters for real. I kind of scribble around like on the left, but some people use skeletons on the right.



you need one of those for your wheelchair character. Important: they should have both the person's main anatomy features (usually upper body and at least hips) and the wheelchair's. For me, these are the back wheels, footrest, and seat.

Why simplify it to just those features?  
Take this incredibly quickly drawn wheelchair



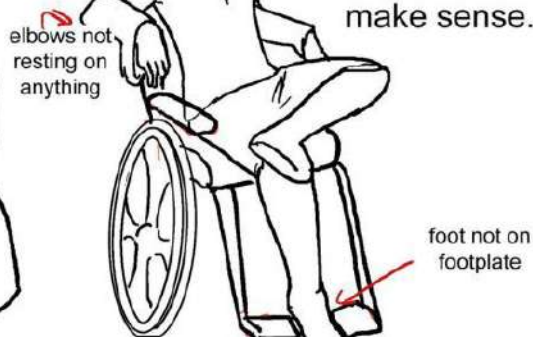
there are a lot of parts, and not all of them are essential to your pose.

Trying to draw the whole thing straight out of the gate will frustrate you.

Take a character in heavy armor: if you draw her pose without taking her armor into account, her armor will clip through her body.



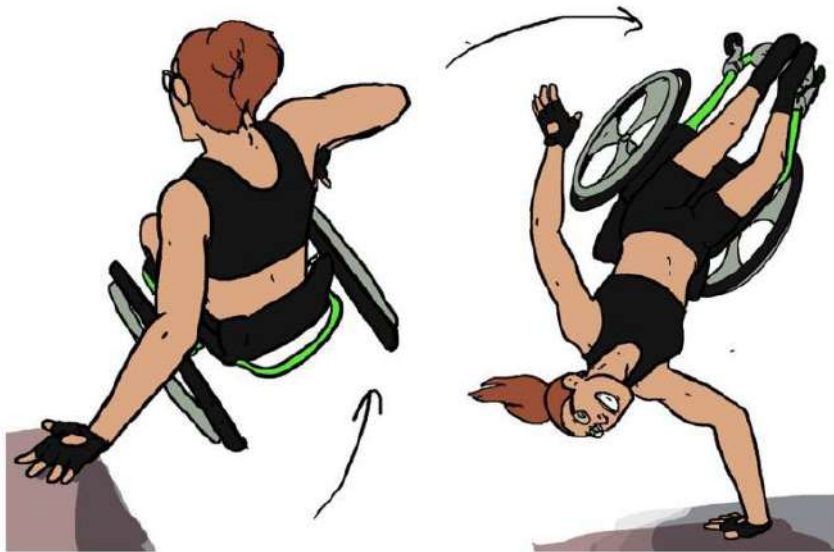
If you draw a wheelchair using character without keeping her wheelchair in mind from the beginning, the pose won't make sense.



You may say you'll just draw the chair first and then the person, but while that works for regular furniture, it doesn't work as well for most manual wcs.

Take this comic panel with characters on a couch for example - I 3d modeled the room and then drew the characters on the furniture.

It works because you don't move furniture in most poses - you rest on it. But your wheelchair needs to move with you, especially if it's an ultralight one



Take exercise Oracle - she is doing tricks. Her WC is an extension of her body. That is crucial to getting natural looking manual wheelchair users posing.

Of course, there are exceptions - if you have a clunky WC, it is harder to move with your body.

Take Paula from Young Justice - here, I drew her resting her hand on her armrest, because she has a clunker wheelchair. Her pose is already mostly static - she's sitting down - and she poses around that.

