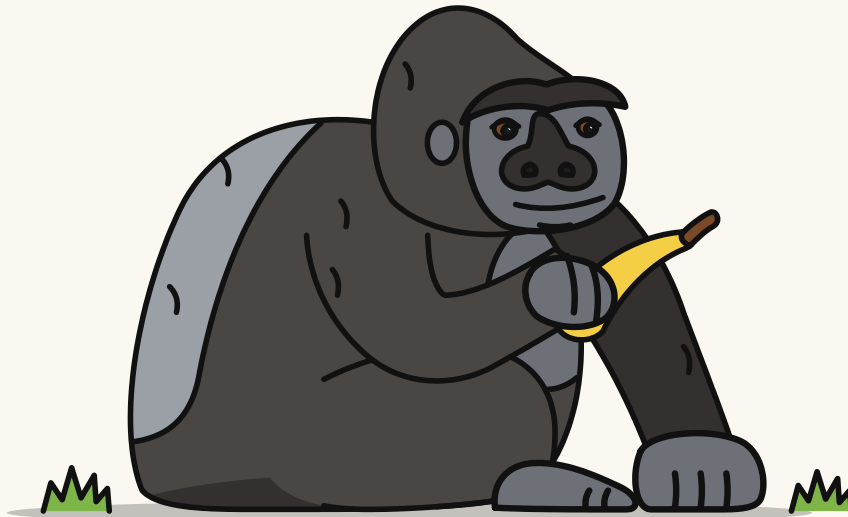


How to Draw a Gorilla

12 easy steps for beginners



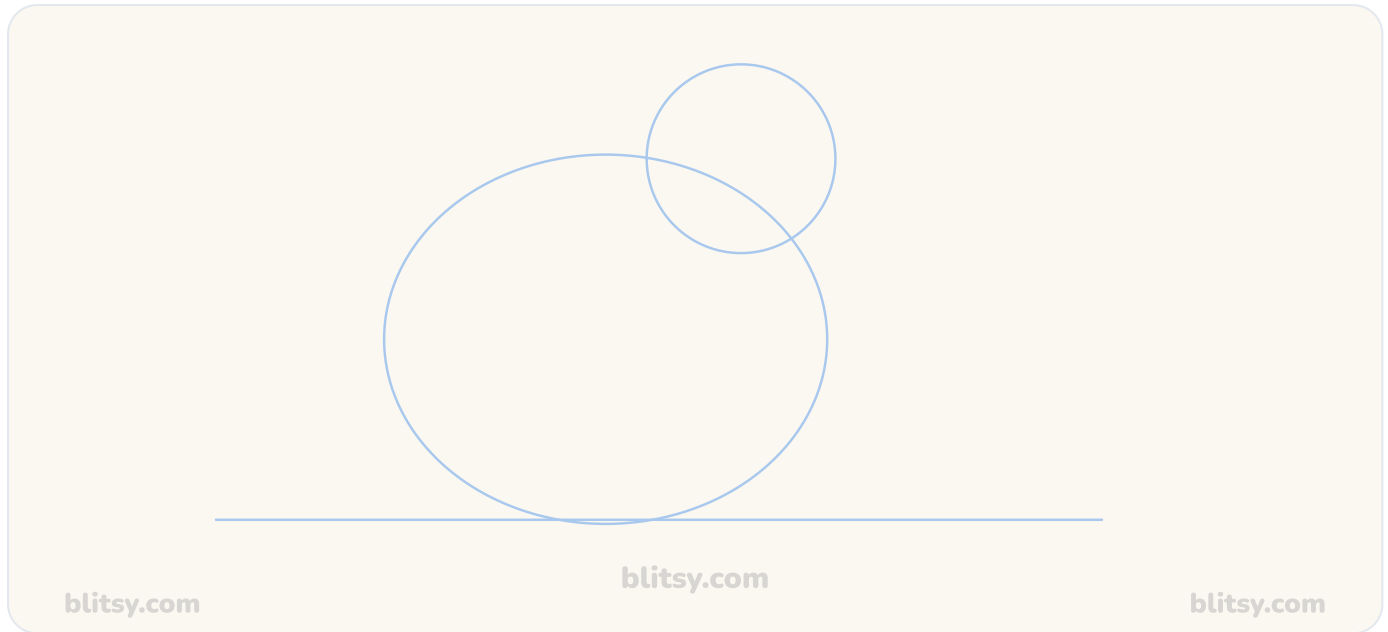
What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Plain paper, landscape

How to use this guide

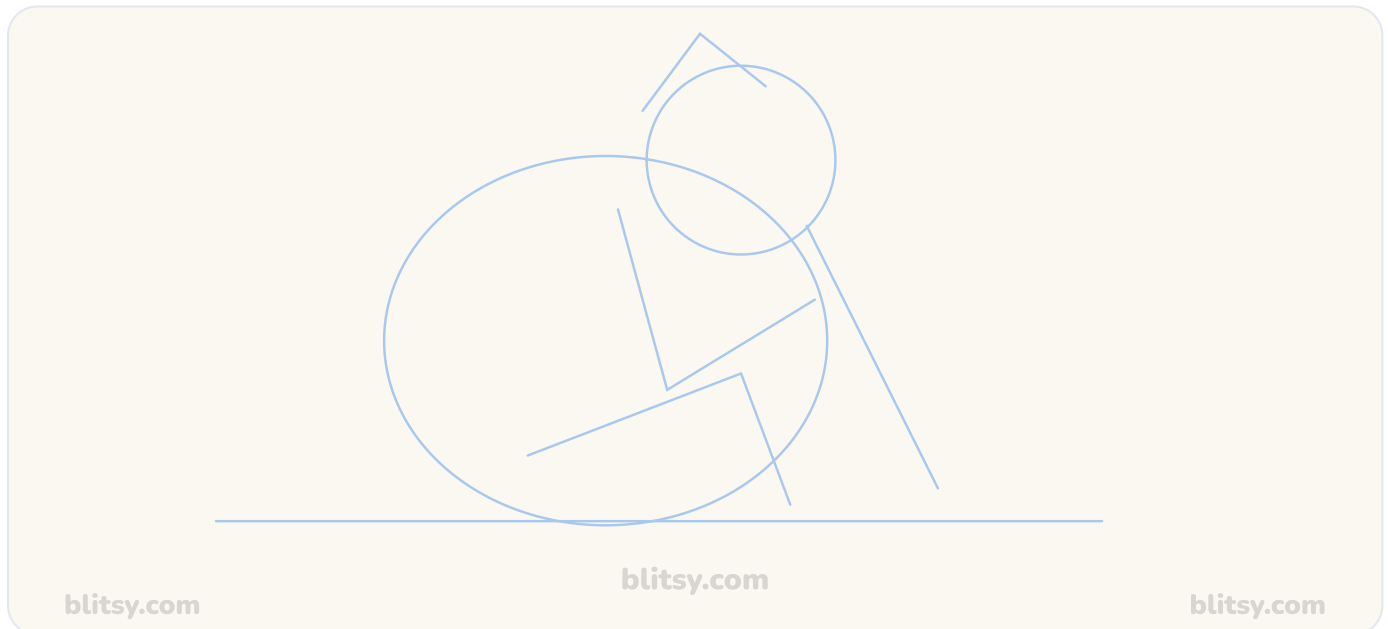
New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

[Read the full tutorial online →](#)

STEP 1 Sketch a ground line, a body oval and a head circle

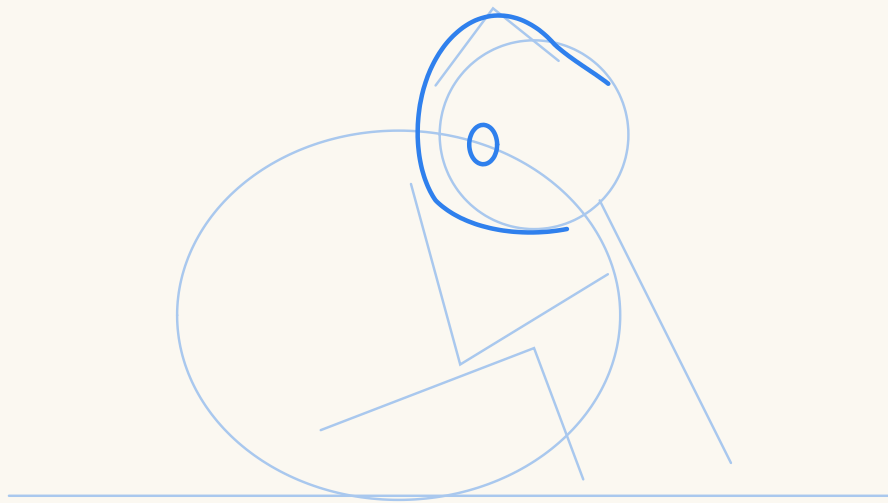
When I teach this one, I begin with a long ground line near the bottom of the page. Sit a big, slightly tall oval on it for the body, a little left of center. Then add a circle for the head on the upper right of the oval, overlapping it. On a gorilla the head looks small next to that huge body, so keep the circle to about half the oval's width.

 **Tip:** Press lightly. These shapes get erased before you color.

STEP 2 Add the crest point and the arm and leg lines

Above the head circle, draw a tent shape whose peak sits toward the back of the head. That's the crest, the tall ridge adult male gorillas have on top of their skulls. Next come stick lines: one bent arm from the shoulder down to the middle of the oval and back up to the right, one long straight arm sloping down to the ground, and a bent leg with its knee raised.

 **Tip:** Treat each stick line as a bone. Just show where the bends are.

STEP 3 Outline the tall crested head

Starting low at the back of the neck, draw up over your tent point and slope down the front toward where the face will be. The back of the head bulges out past the circle and the top rises well above it. Finish with a small oval ear on the side of the head. I keep it tiny, because gorilla ears hide in the fur.

 **Tip:** Make the crest taller than feels right. It reads better that way.

STEP 4 Draw the face mask and the heavy brow

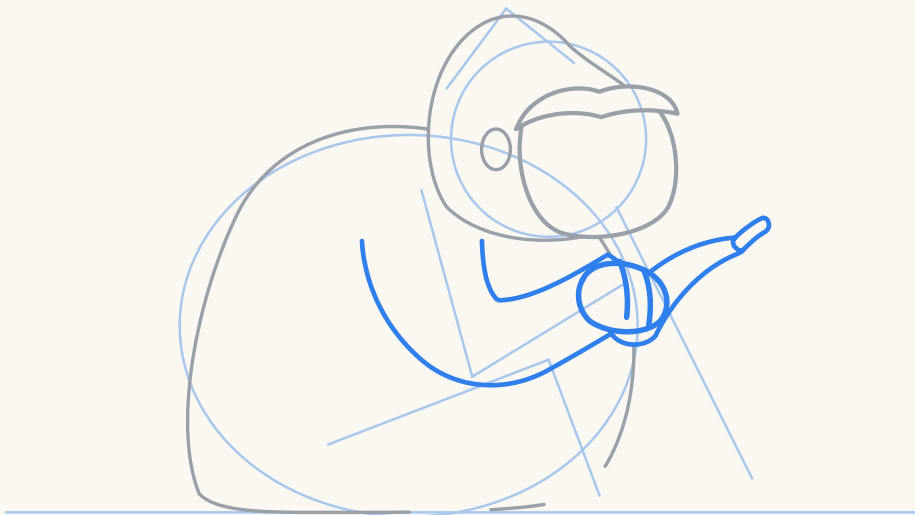
On the front of the head, draw a rounded face shape that bulges forward a bit at the muzzle. Across its top, add a thick brow ridge like a ledge sticking out over the eyes. In my experience this is where the drawing starts to say gorilla, so give the brow real weight. It should look like a shelf, not an eyebrow.

 **Tip:** Let the brow stick out past the face on the right side.

STEP 5 Shape the round back and belly

Trace around the body oval with a firm line, but change it as you go. Push the back up into a high, rounded hump behind the head and let it curve down to a wide rump on the ground. Add a short belly line under the chin, and stop where the arms and leg will cover the body.

 **Tip:** Keep the back line smooth. Bumps there look like lumps, not muscle.

STEP 6 Draw the arm holding the banana

Follow the bent stick line. The upper arm hangs from the shoulder, the elbow rests low in front of the belly, and the forearm rises toward the face. I make the forearm thick, almost as wide as the upper arm. Add a rounded hand near the chin and a curved banana poking out of it, tip pointing up and forward, away from the face.

 **Tip:** Draw the hand as a mitten first. Add the finger lines later.

STEP 7 Add the bent leg and the flat foot

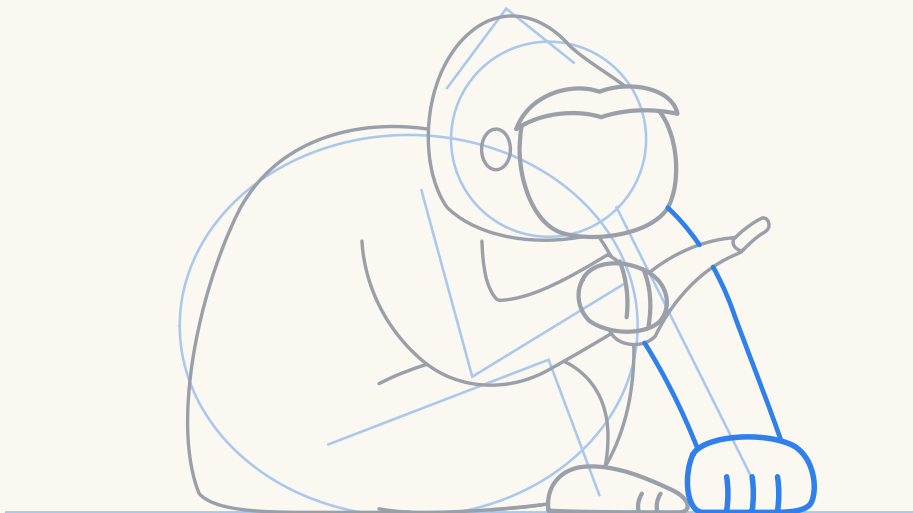
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Most of this leg hides behind the arm, so draw only what shows. Add a short curve for the top of the thigh, then the front of the shin coming down below the hand. On the ground, draw a long flat foot with its toes pointing right, plus two toe lines. Gorilla feet are wide, almost like hands.

 **Tip:** Only draw lines you can see. Skip the parts behind the arm.

STEP 8 Draw the long arm resting on its knuckles

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Gorillas walk and lean on the knuckles of their hands, and this pose shows it off. From behind the face, run the far arm down and to the right along your straight stick line. It's long, reaching all the way to the ground. At the bottom, draw a big rounded fist sitting on the ground line with three short knuckle lines.

 **Tip:** Check the arm length. A gorilla's arms are longer than its legs.

STEP 9 Give him gentle eyes, a broad nose and a calm mouth

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Tuck two small eyes right under the brow, the far one a little smaller. A soft curved lid over each one makes the face calm instead of angry. Between them, the nose starts narrow and spreads into two wide nostrils. Under that goes a long, slightly smiling mouth and a short chin curve.

Tip: Draw the lids drooping a little. That's what makes him look gentle.

STEP 10 Mark the silver saddle, the fur and the grass

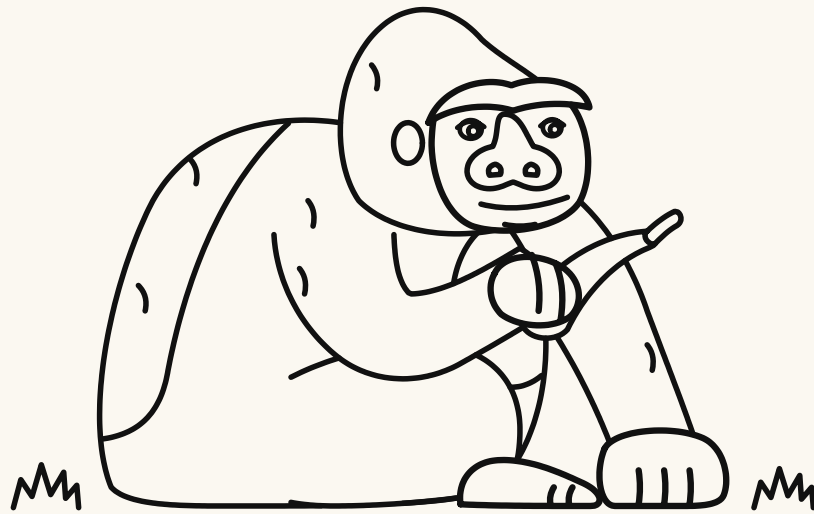
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Grown male gorillas get silver-gray hair across the back, which is why they're called silverbacks. Draw one long curve from behind the head down to the rump to separate that saddle from the darker fur. Then scatter a few short fur strokes. A spiky grass tuft at each end of the ground line finishes the scene.

Tip: Curve the fur strokes the way the body bends. Straight ones look stiff.

STEP 11 Ink your lines and erase the guides

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Go over every line you want to keep with the fineliner. I start with the head and work down and outward, so my hand never drags across fresh ink. Leave the oval, the circle, the tent and the stick lines in pencil. Once the ink is dry, erase those guides.

Tip: Give the brow and crest one confident stroke each. Wobbly ones show.

STEP 12 Color your gorilla

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Use dark gray for the fur on the head, body, near arm and leg. The far arm and a band along the bottom of the belly get black, which pushes them back. Fill the saddle with a light silver gray. All the bare skin is gray, the brow and nose black, the eyes brown. The banana is yellow and the grass green.

Tip: Color the saddle last and lightly, so it stays paler than the fur.