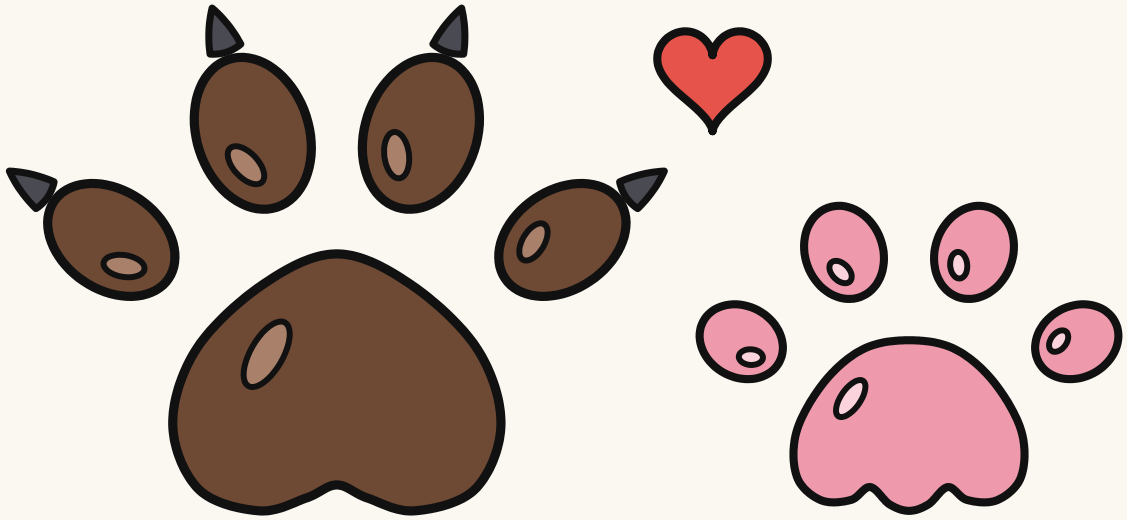
How to Draw a Paw Print

10 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

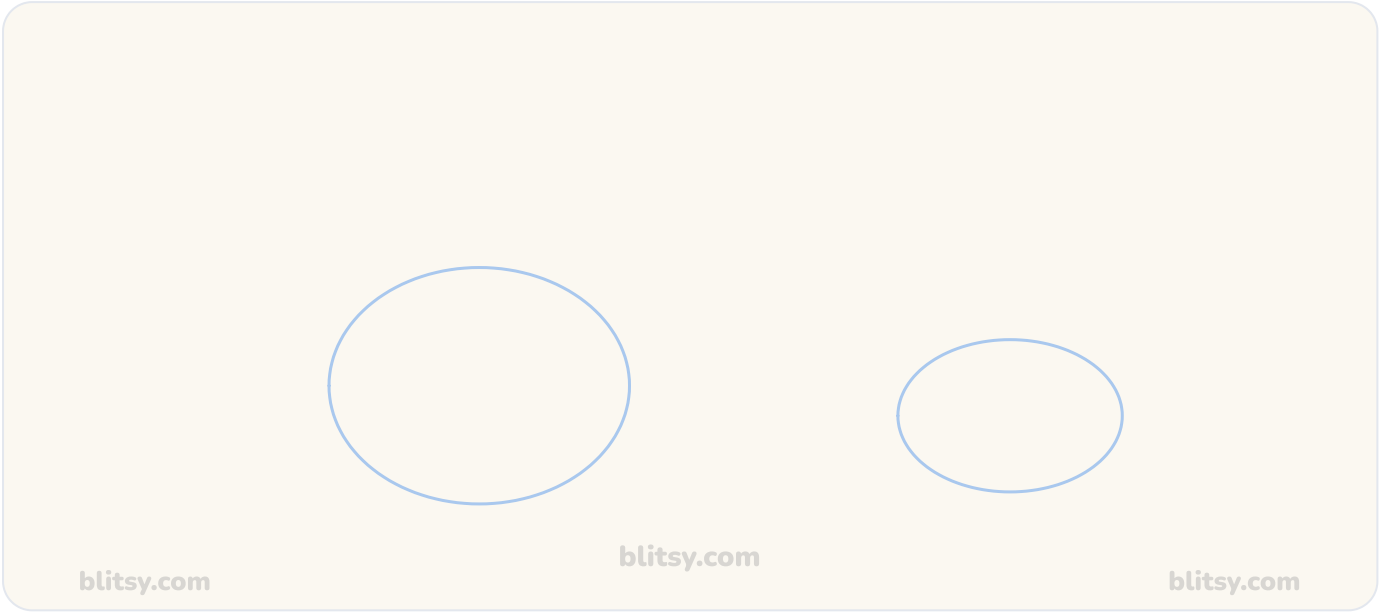
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

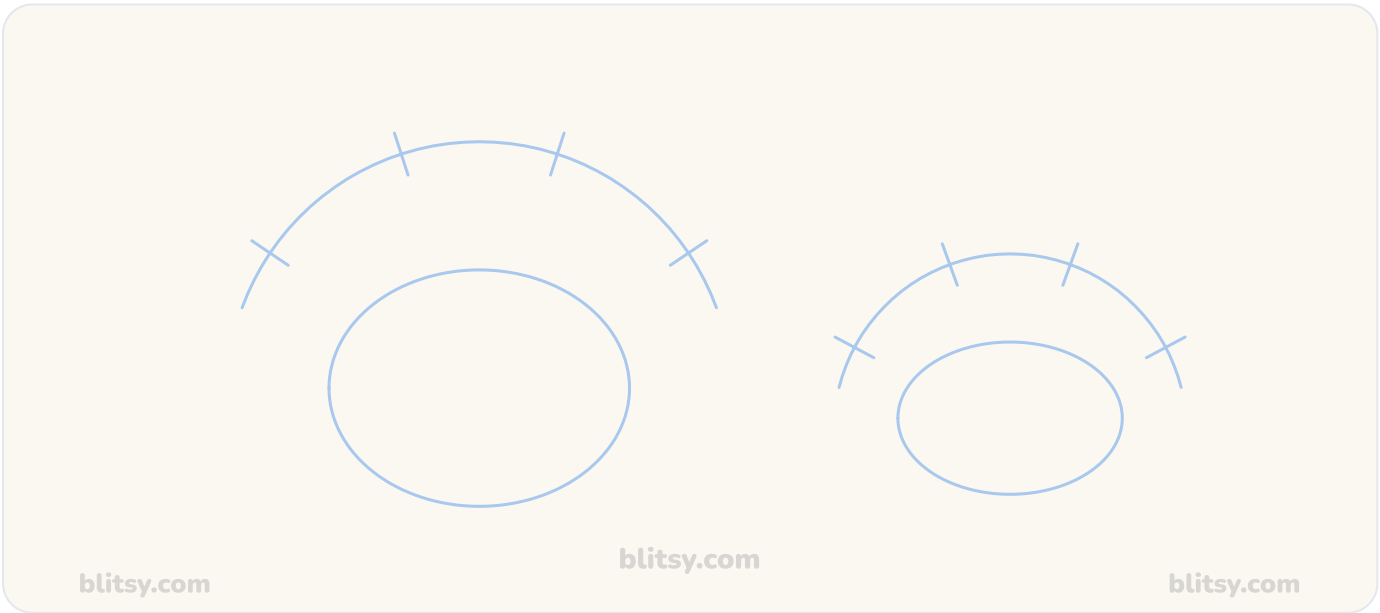
STEP 1 Sketch two pad ovals



Turn your paper sideways and draw a big oval on the left half, a little below the middle of the page. This is the dog's main pad. Then draw a smaller, flatter oval on the right for the cat. I make the cat oval about two thirds the size of the dog one, because cat paws really are smaller and that size difference is part of the charm.

💡 **Tip:** Leave plenty of empty paper above both ovals. The toes need that room.

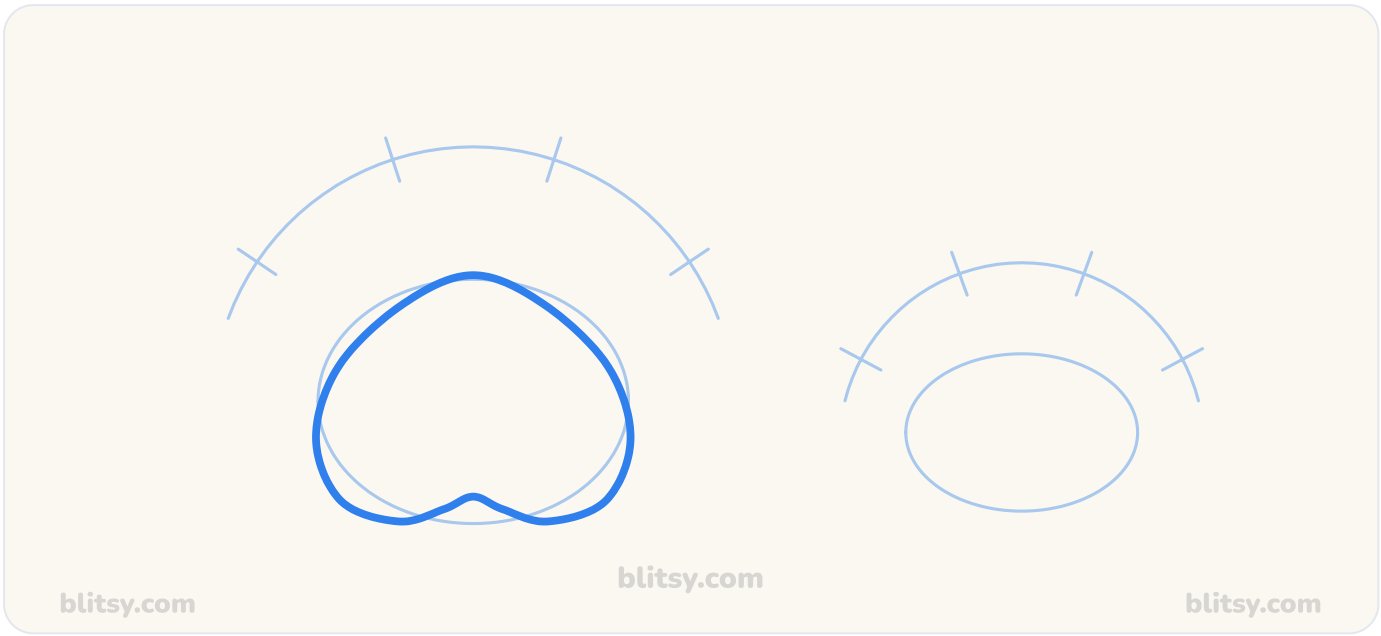
STEP 2 Add a toe arc and four marks to each



Above the dog oval, draw a curved line like a rainbow that starts beside the oval and arches over it. Make a similar, smaller arc over the cat oval. Now put four short marks across each arc. Two marks go near the top, close together, and one goes low on each side. This little fan is what keeps the toes in a neat curve instead of a wobbly line.

💡 **Tip:** Space the two top marks closer together than the outer ones. Real toes bunch in the middle.

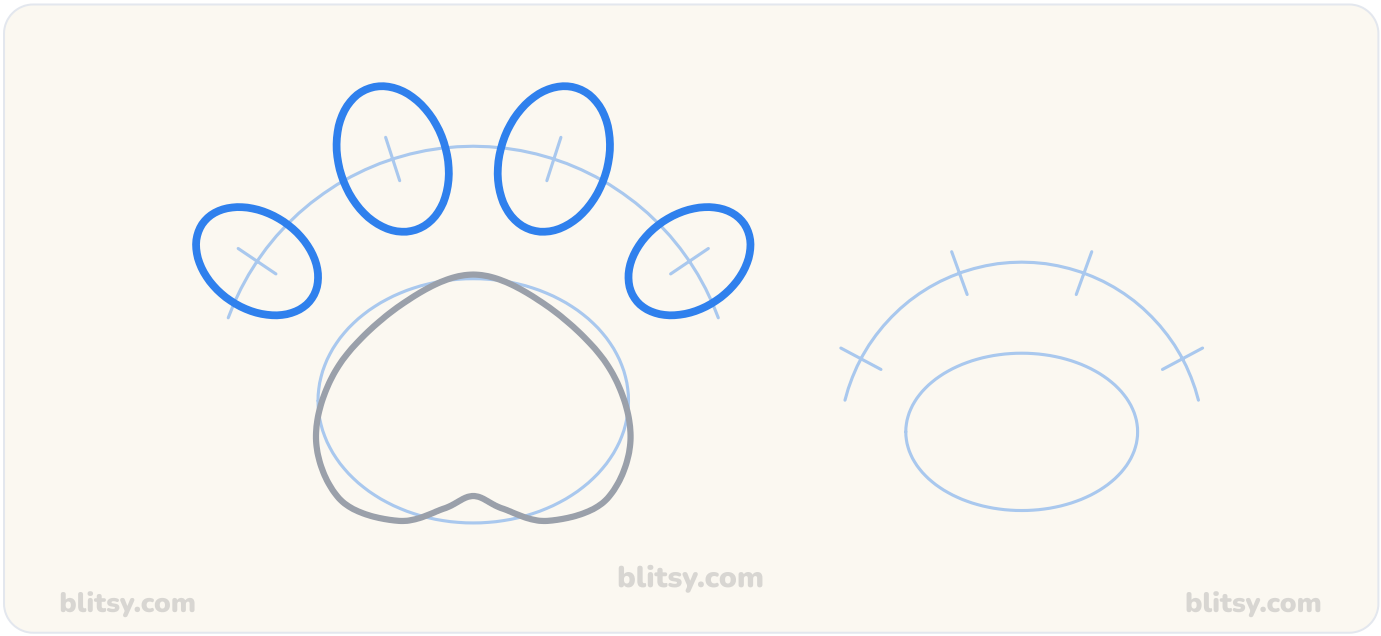
STEP 3 Draw the heart-shaped dog pad



Inside the big oval, draw the main pad like an upside-down heart. Start at a soft, rounded point at the top, curve out wide on both sides, and finish with two round bumps along the bottom. The little dip between the bumps should be gentle. When I demonstrate this, I tell people to think of a heart standing on its head.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the top point blunt. A sharp tip turns the pad into a guitar pick.

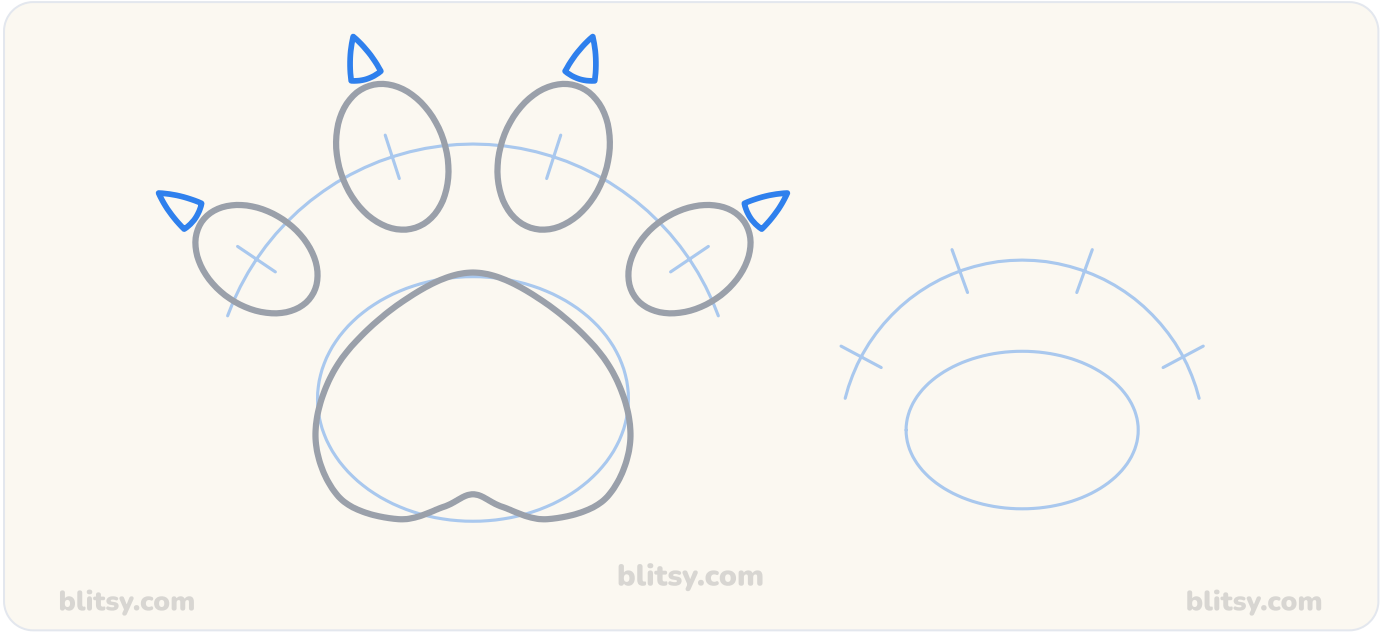
STEP 4 Draw four oval dog toes



Center one oval on each mark of the dog's arc. The two middle toes are a little bigger and stand up almost straight, while the outer two are smaller and lean outward like they're pointing at the sides. Leave a clear gap between every toe and the main pad. Most beginners push the toes right against the pad, and the whole print starts to look like a flower.

💡 **Tip:** Tilt each toe so its long side points back toward the middle of the main pad.

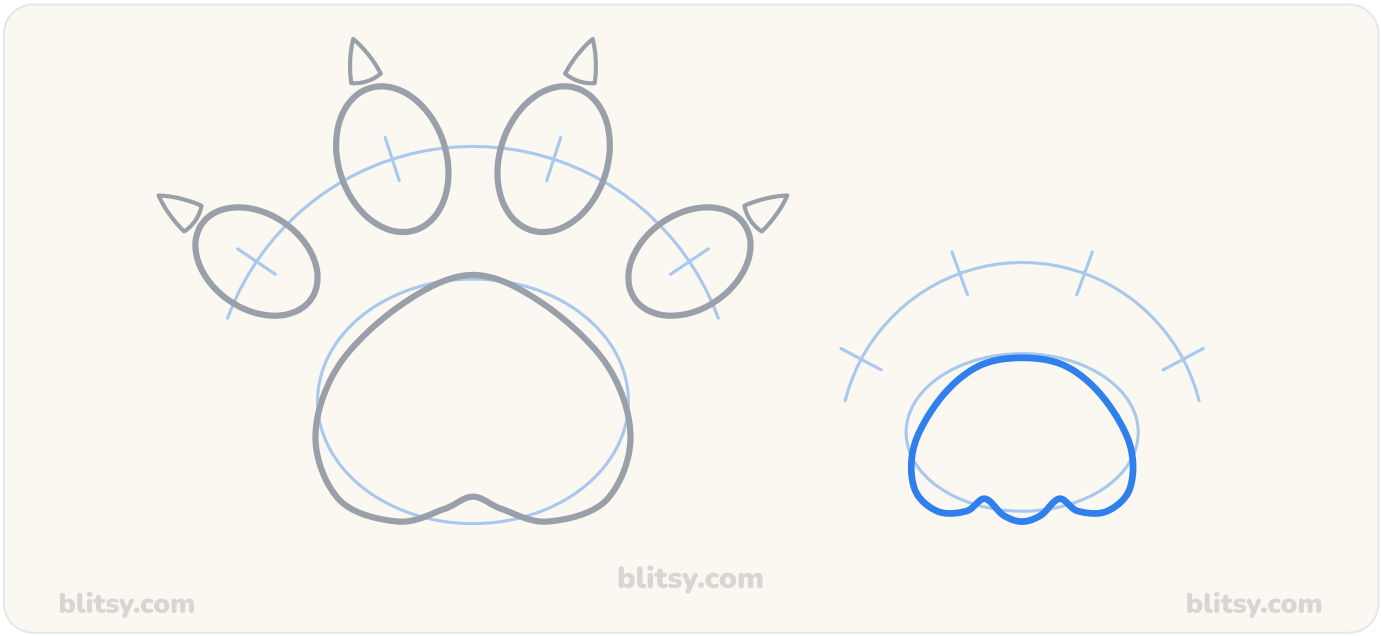
STEP 5 Give the dog print its claws



Dogs can't pull their claws in, so their prints show a small claw mark at the tip of each toe. Draw a short, pointed shape just beyond every toe, pointing in the same direction the toe leans. Keep them small, about a third the length of a toe, and leave a tiny space between each claw and its toe.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the two curved sides of each claw first, then close it with a short round base.

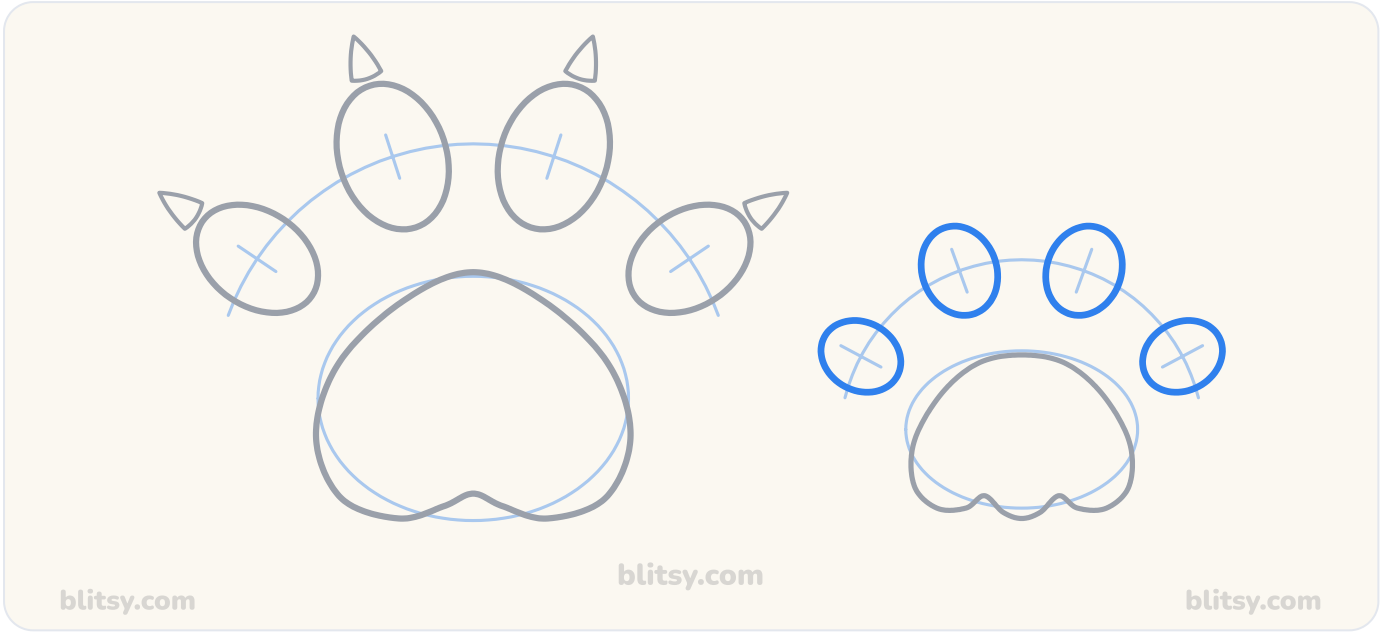
STEP 6 Draw the three-bump cat pad



Now switch to the cat. Inside the small oval, draw a rounded dome on top and three soft bumps along the bottom edge. This pad ends up wider than it is tall, which is very different from the dog's heart. Those three bumps are the detail people notice first, so take your time and make the middle one sit a little lower.

💡 **Tip:** Say "bump, bump, bump" out loud as you draw the bottom edge. It really helps kids pace it.

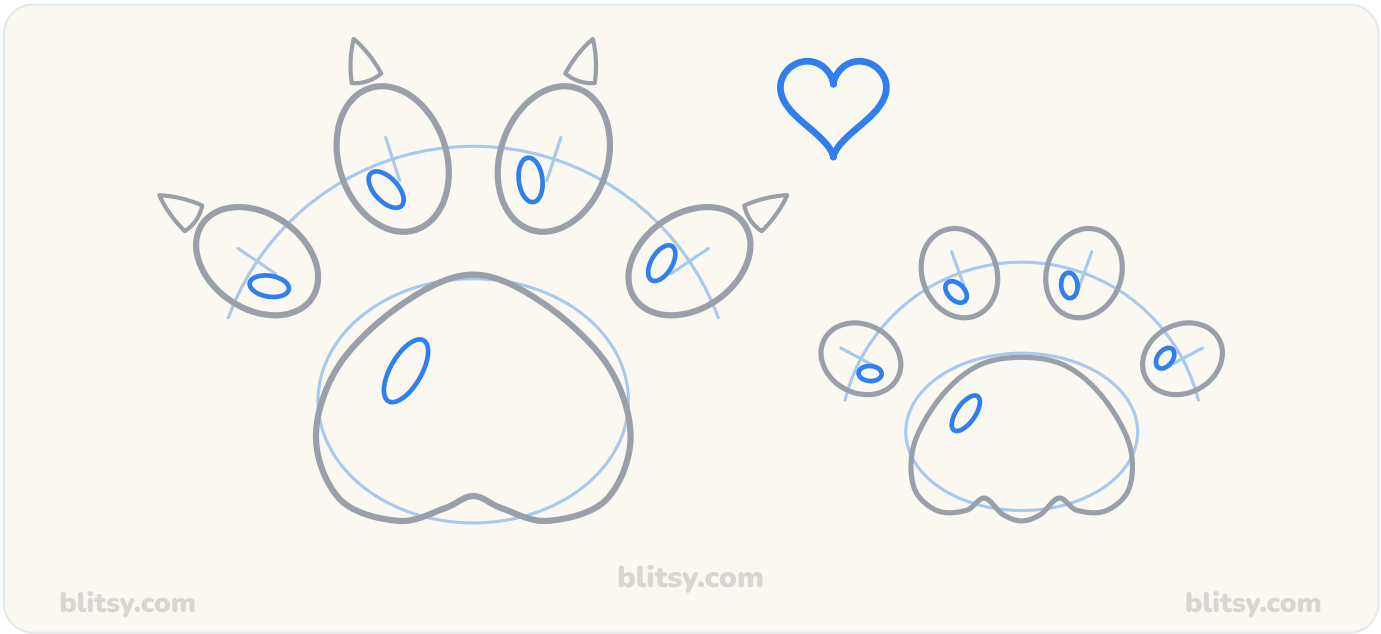
STEP 7 Add four round cat toes



Place a toe on each mark of the cat's arc. Cat toes are rounder and more like jelly beans than the long dog toes, and there are no claws at all because cats keep theirs tucked away when they walk. I keep the outer toes slightly smaller and a bit lower, just like on the dog print. A gap around each toe keeps them from looking glued together.

💡 **Tip:** A bottle cap traced lightly makes four matching cat toes in seconds.

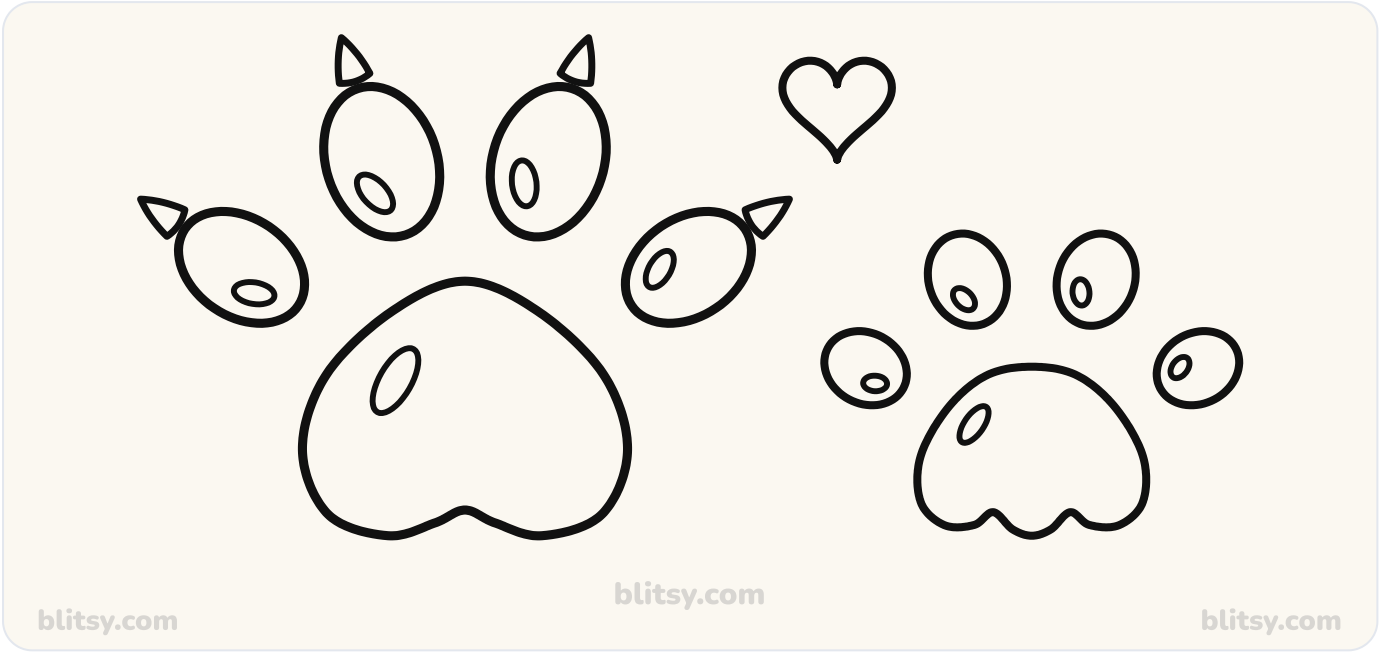
STEP 8 Add the shines and a little heart



Draw a small oval near the upper left of each pad and toe. These are shine spots, and they make the pads look soft and squishy instead of flat. Put every shine on the same side so the light seems to come from one place. Then draw a small heart in the empty space between the two prints. It's optional, but it fills that gap nicely.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the shines tiny. Big ones start to look like eyes staring back at you.

STEP 9 Ink the lines and erase the guides



Go over every keeper line with your black marker: the pads, toes, claws, shines and heart. Skip the two ovals, the arcs and the little marks. Let the ink dry for a minute before you erase, then rub out all the guide lines. Your prints should now look crisp and clean.

💡 **Tip:** Use a thinner pen for the shine spots so the outlines stay the boldest lines.

STEP 10 Color the paw prints



Fill the dog pads and toes with a warm brown and the claws with dark gray. The cat pads get pink, and the heart goes red. Color the shine spots with a lighter brown on the dog print and a pale pink on the cat print, or just leave them white. Pressing gently and coloring in one direction gives smooth pads with no scratchy marks.

💡 **Tip:** Color the shine spots first so the darker pad color can't sneak into them.