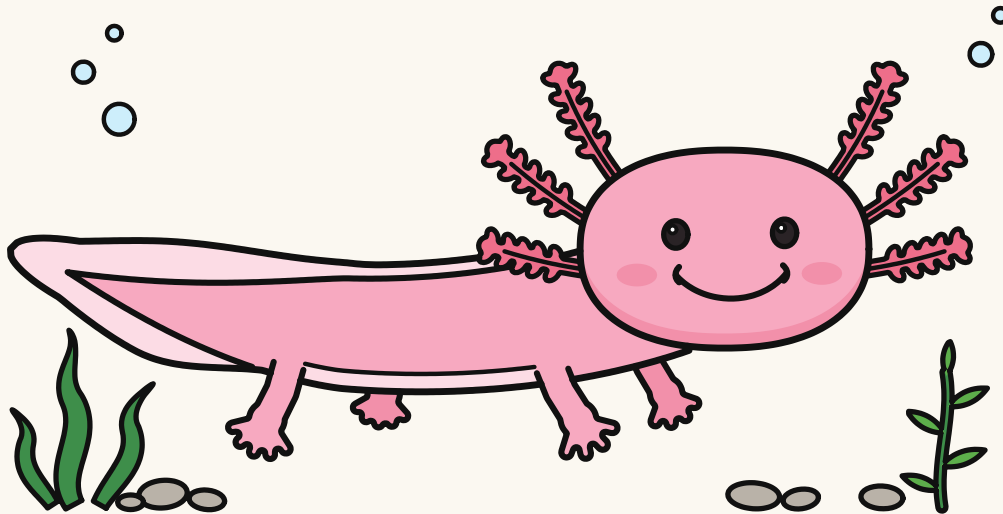


How to Draw an Axolotl

11 easy steps for beginners



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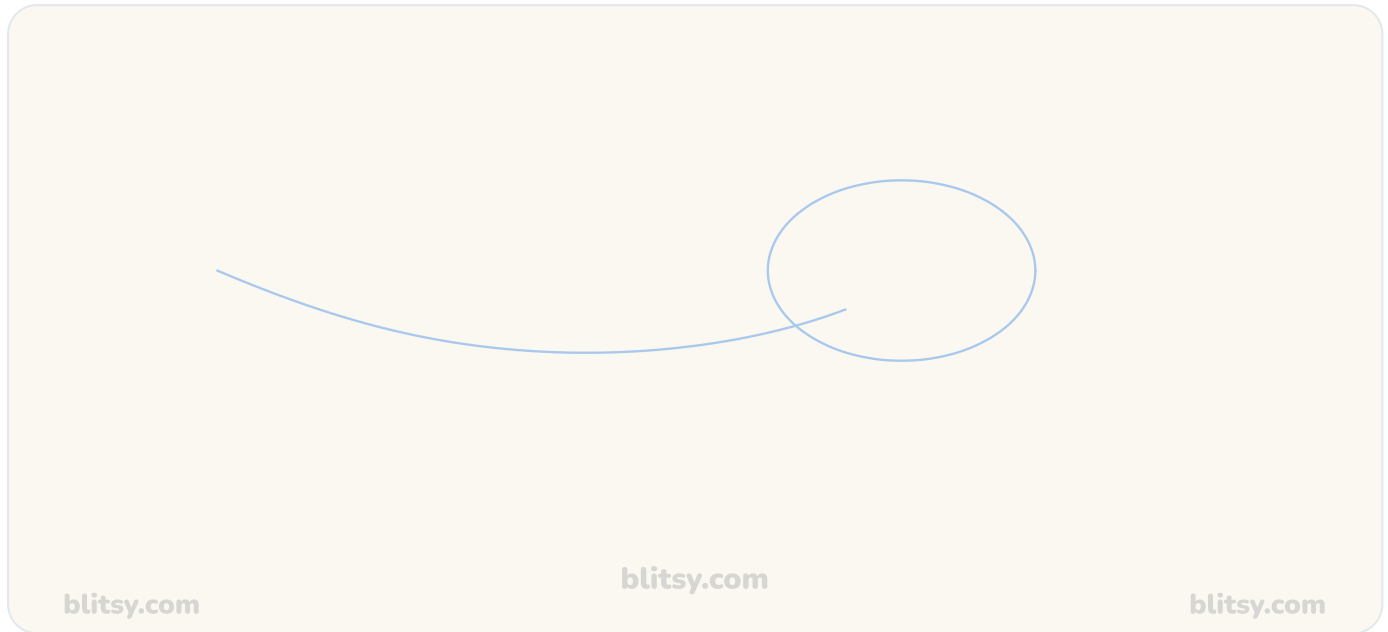
What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Pink and coral colored pencils
- Paper turned sideways

How to use this guide

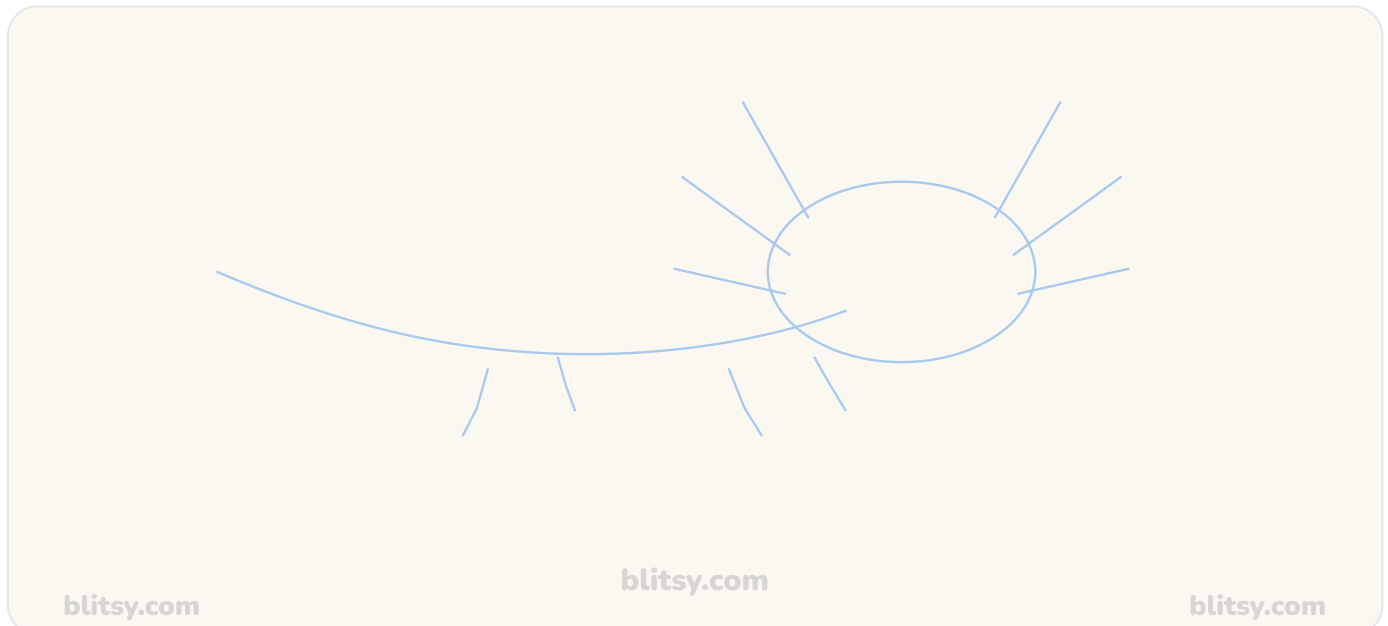
New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

[Read the full tutorial online →](#)

STEP 1 Sketch a head oval and a body curve

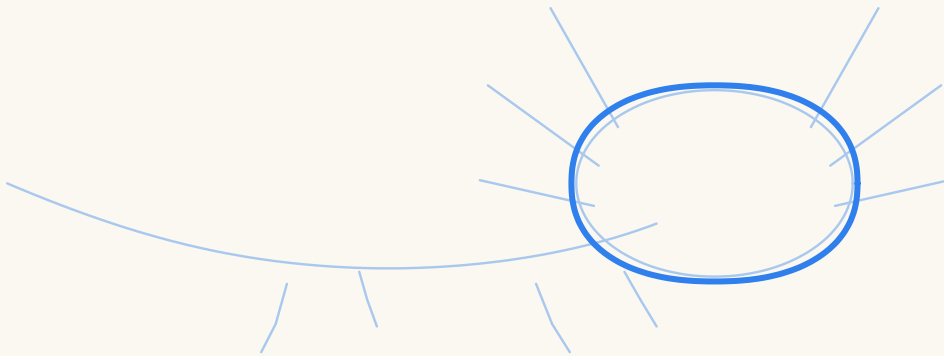
Draw a wide oval on the right side of your paper, about a quarter of the page wide. Then pull a long, gently sagging curve out of its lower left side, all the way toward the left edge, rising a little at the end. That curve is the spine. Axolotls are long animals, so I make this line roughly three times as long as the oval is wide.

 **Tip:** Hold the pencil far back from the tip so your guide lines stay faint.

STEP 2 Add gill lines and leg lines

Now place three short straight lines on each side of the head oval, fanning outward like the spokes of a half wheel. The top pair points up and out, the bottom pair almost sideways. Under the spine, draw four short lines for legs: two near the head and two about halfway along. I bend each leg line once, like a little elbow.

 **Tip:** Keep the gill lines on both sides at the same angles so the face looks balanced.

STEP 3 Draw a wide flat head

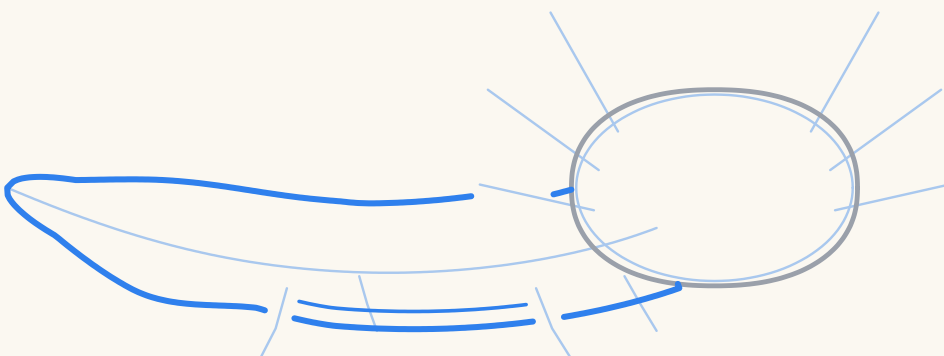
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Trace around the oval with a firm line, but square it off slightly so the top and bottom look flatter and the sides fuller. Real axolotls have broad, flat heads, and that flattened shape is what keeps your drawing from looking like a generic cartoon blob. Let the outline sit just outside the guide.

Tip: Draw the head in four quarter curves instead of one big loop.

STEP 4 Outline the long body and tail

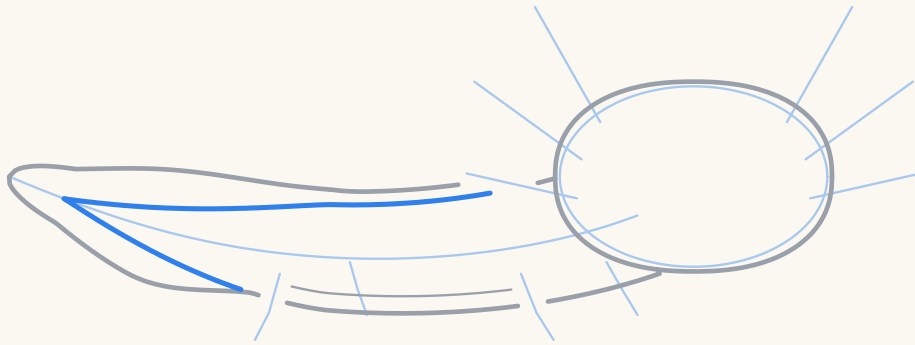
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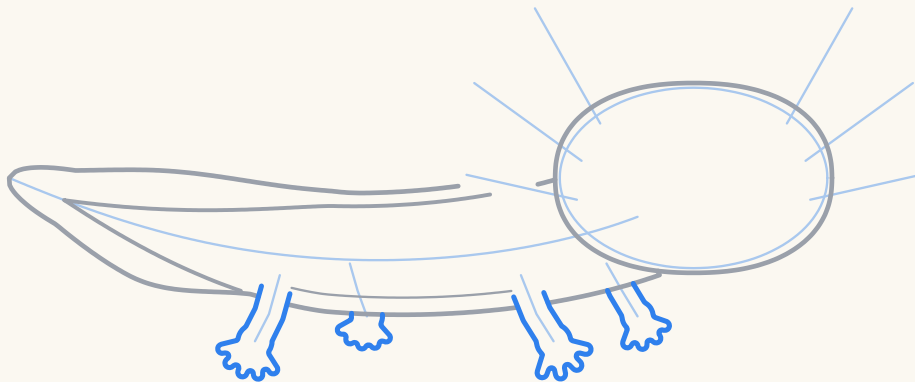
Follow the spine with two lines, one above and one below, starting thick behind the head and slowly getting thinner. Near the end, swing both lines outward into a long rounded paddle, then join them at the tip. I leave small gaps where the legs and the lowest gill will cross, which saves erasing later. Add one thin line inside the body between the legs to mark the pale belly.

Tip: Check the tail paddle: it should be taller than the body is thick.

STEP 5 Mark the fin ridge and tail paddle

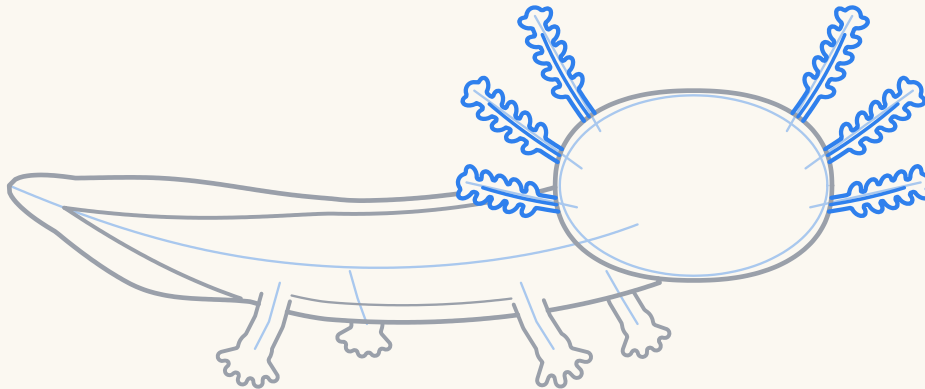
Most of the tail is fin, not muscle. Draw a line just under the top edge, starting behind the head and running along the back, then curving down to a point inside the paddle. Add a matching line along the lower part of the tail. The thin strip above these lines is the soft fin that axolotls use to push through water.

 **Tip:** Stay close to the edge near the head and let the gap grow toward the tail.

STEP 6 Shape four little legs with fingers

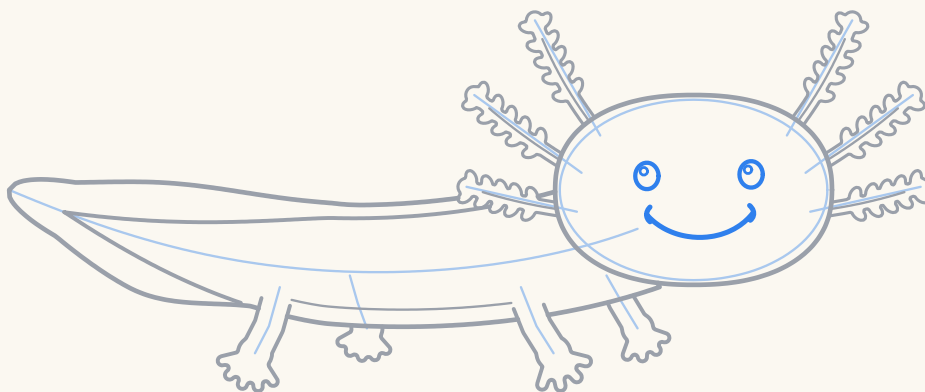
Around each leg guide, draw a short, slim leg with a rounded foot. Give the front feet four tiny fingers and the back feet five toes, the same count a real axolotl has. The two legs on the far side only peek out from under the body, so draw just their lower halves. Keep every finger short and rounded, almost like little beans.

 **Tip:** Spread the fingers like a small fan, never in a straight row.

STEP 7 Draw three feathery gills on each side

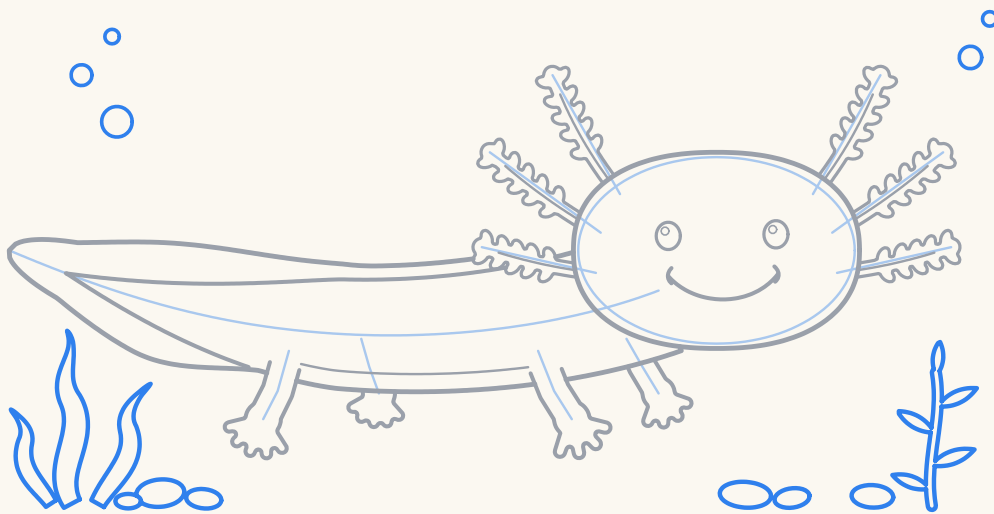
This step is the one that makes it an axolotl. Turn each gill guide into a thin stalk, then add small wavy bumps along both sides of it, like a feather or a fern leaf. Finish with a single line down the middle of the stalk. In real life these frills are how the animal breathes underwater, so they stay big and fluffy.

 **Tip:** Draw the bumps in a rhythm: out, in, out, in, without lifting your pencil.

STEP 8 Give it dot eyes and a big smile

Set two small round eyes on the upper half of the face, far apart, with a tiny shine circle inside each. Then draw a wide U-shaped smile between and slightly below them, with short hooks at both ends. Axolotls have small eyes and a very wide mouth, and I find that keeping the eyes tiny is exactly what makes the grin look so sweet.

 **Tip:** Space the eyes about as far apart as the smile is wide.

STEP 9 Build a small aquarium scene

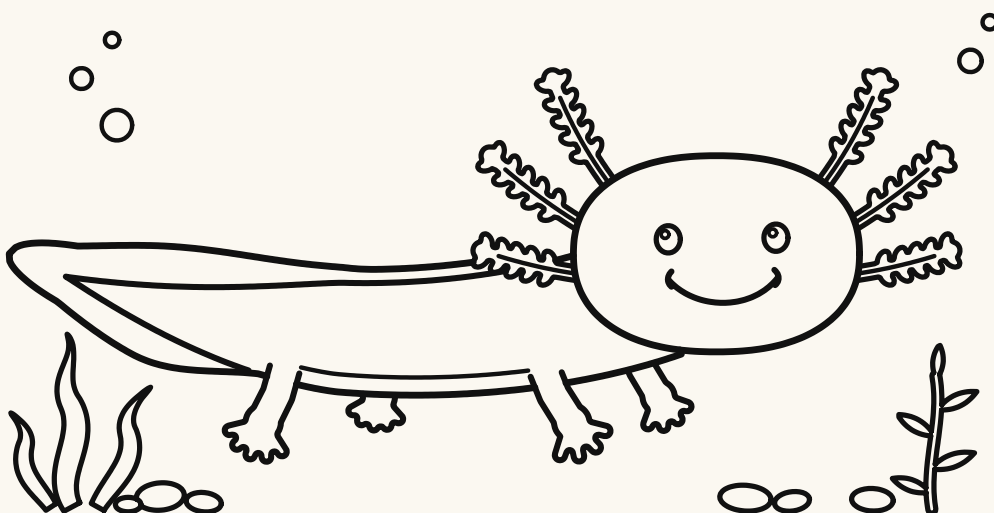
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Your axolotl needs a home. Draw a few round bubbles in the upper corners, big ones at the bottom of each group. On the left, sketch three wavy plant blades growing from the bottom; on the right, a thin stem with pointed leaves. Scatter some flat oval pebbles along the bottom of the page, keeping them clear of the feet.

 **Tip:** Overlap two pebbles here and there so they look piled, not lined up.

STEP 10 Ink the lines and erase the guides

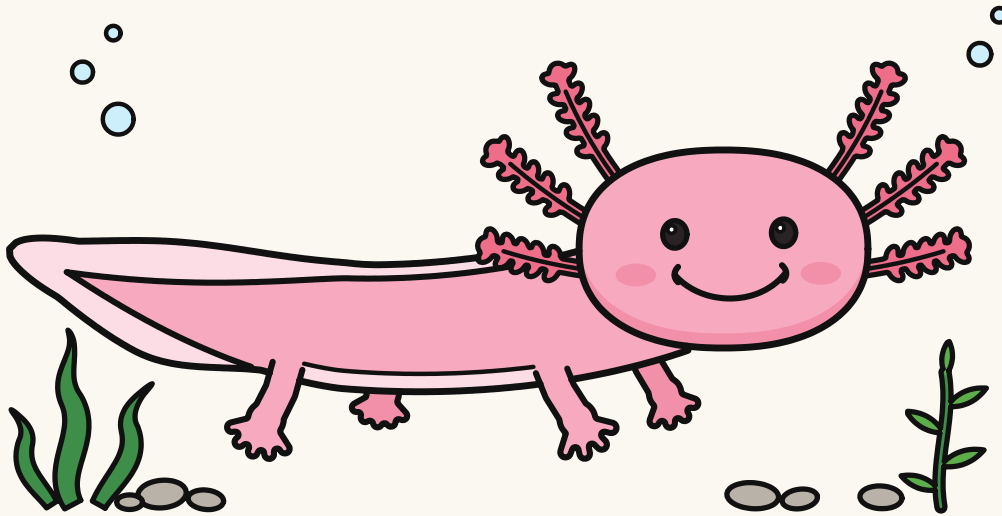
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Go over every keeper line with your black pen, from the head all the way to the last pebble. I take the gill frills slowly, since they have the most turns. Once the ink is completely dry, erase the oval, the spine curve and all the short guide lines. You should be left with a clean outline.

 **Tip:** Wait a full minute before erasing so the ink can't smear across the page.

STEP 11 Color your axolotl

Fill the head and body with pink, plus the two near legs. Color the belly strip and the fin pale pink, so the tail looks soft and see-through. The gills get a deeper coral, and the cheeks plus the far legs a rose pink that's a step darker than the body. Leave the eye shines white, then finish with green plants, gray pebbles and light blue bubbles.

Tip: Press harder along the bottom of the head for a gentle shadow.