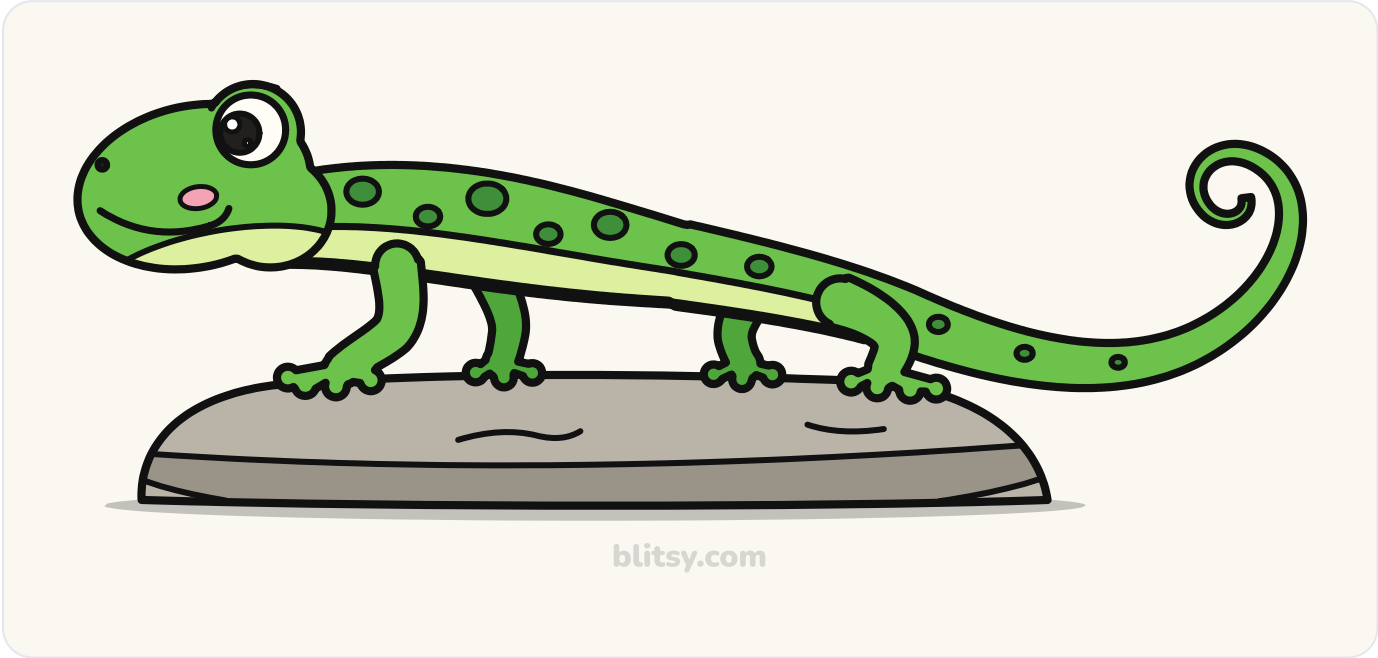
How to Draw a Lizard

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

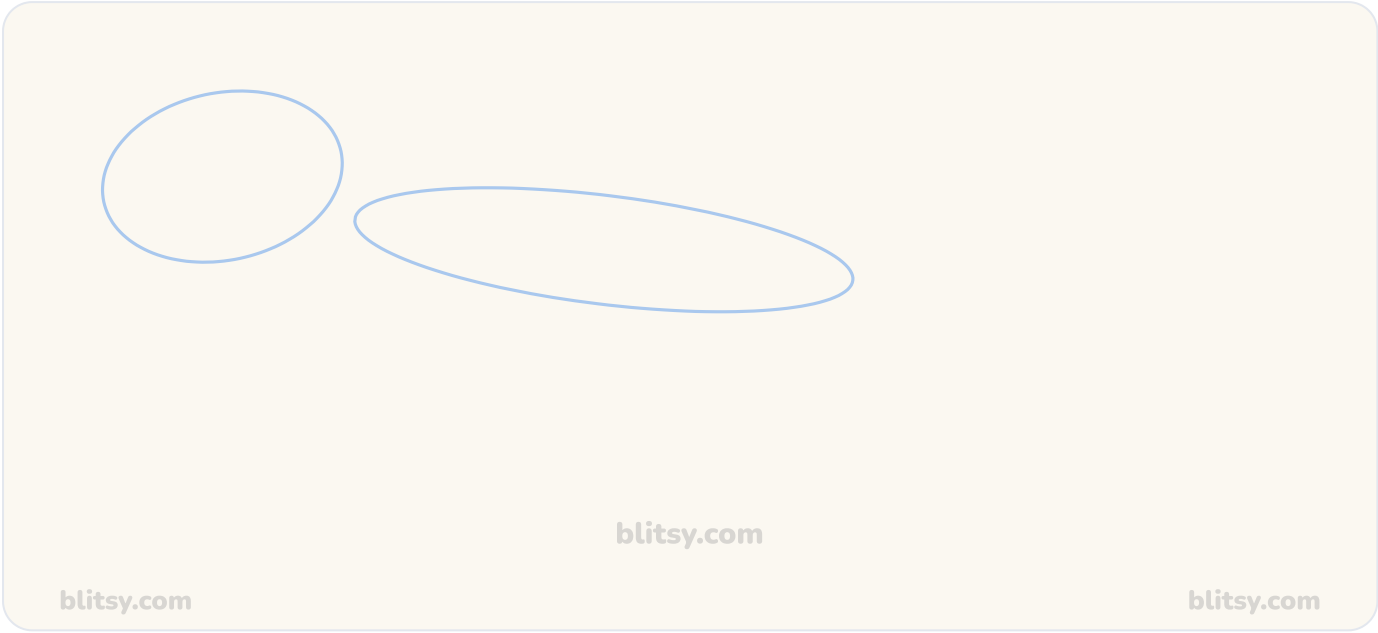
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Plain paper

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 →

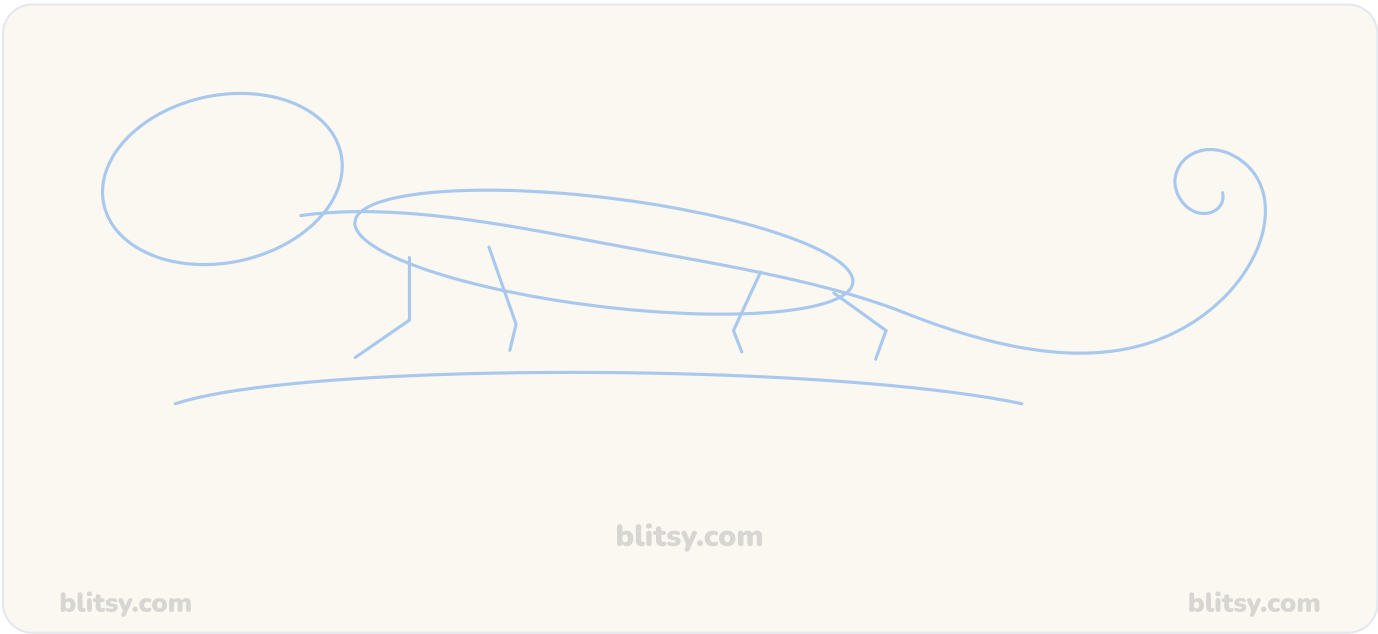
STEP 1 Sketch a head oval and a long body oval



Near the left side of the page, draw a fat oval for the head, tilted so the front points slightly up. Right next to it, sketch a long, thin oval for the body, about twice as long as the head. The two shapes should just touch. Keep everything very light, because these are only helpers. When I teach this, I always remind people that the ovals vanish later.

💡 **Tip:** Your body oval should be skinny. A plump oval turns the lizard into a frog or a salamander.

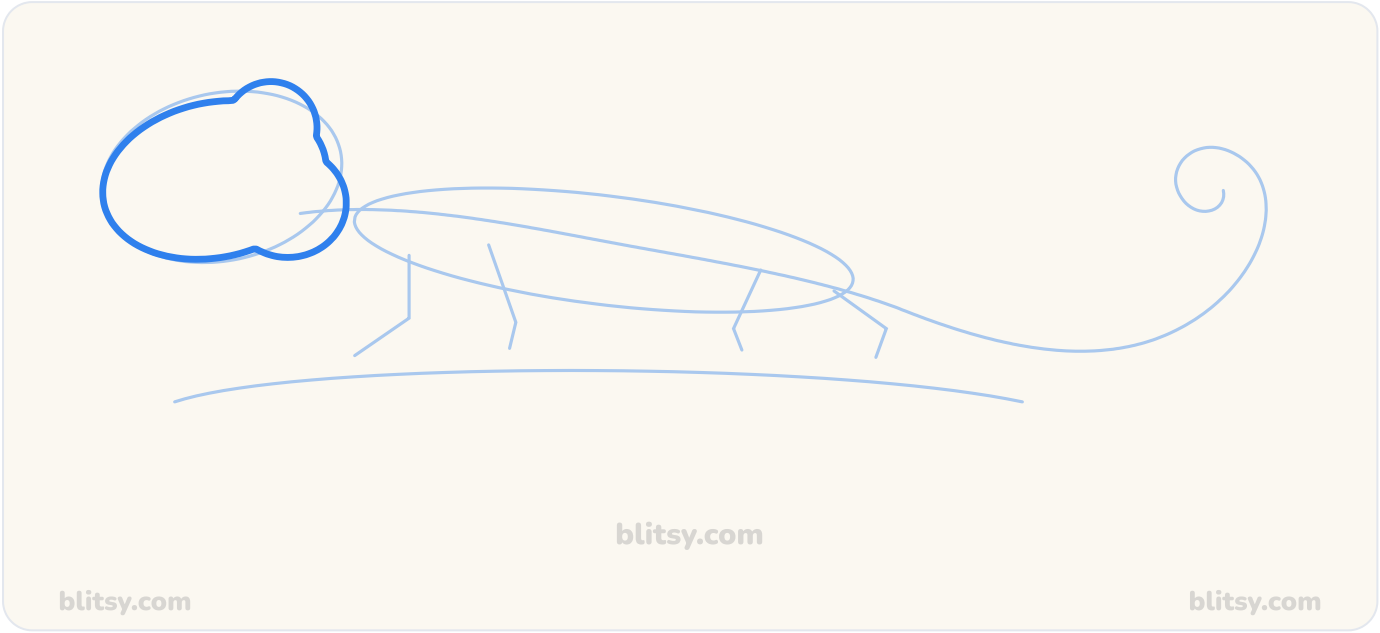
STEP 2 Add the S-curve, a rock line and leg lines



Draw one flowing line from the back of the head through the middle of the body oval, then let it dip down and swing back up into a little spiral on the right. That wave is the whole spine and tail. Under the body, add a long, gently curved line for the top of the rock, plus four short bent lines where the legs will stand.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the S-curve in one smooth sweep from your elbow, not your fingers. It wobbles less.

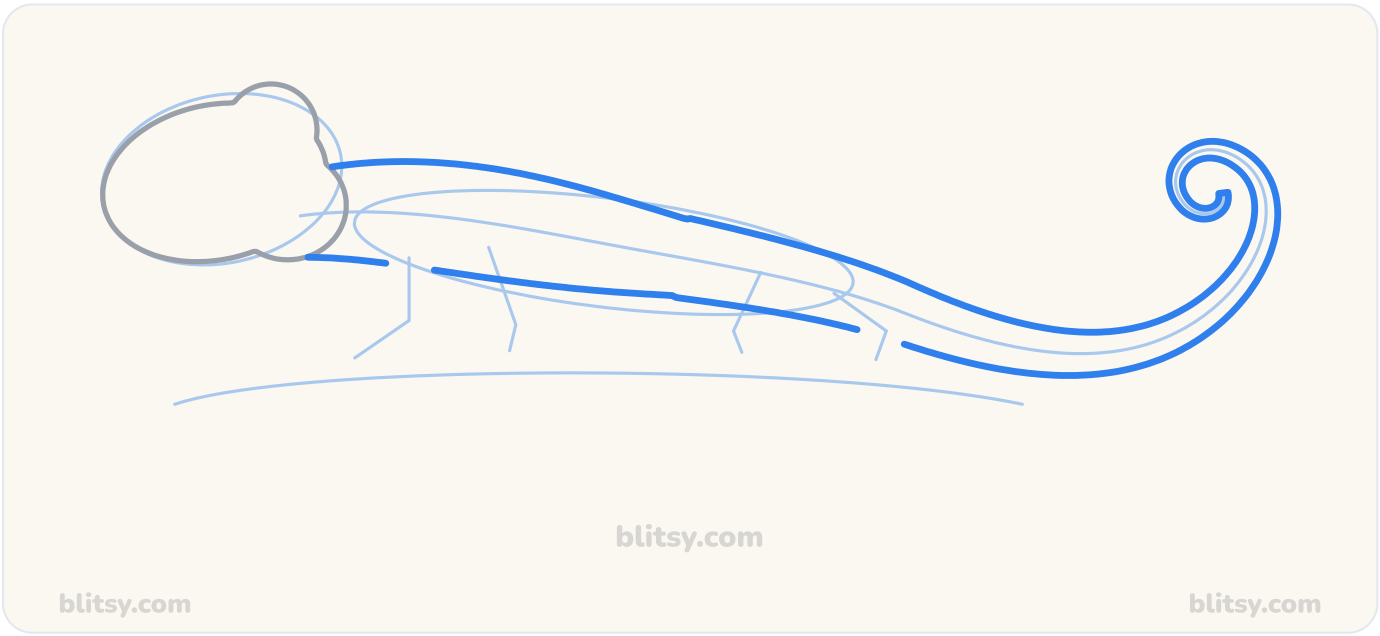
STEP 3 Draw the round head with an eye bump



Trace around the head oval with a firmer line, rounding the snout at the front. On top, toward the back, add a round bump that pokes up above the head line. That's where the big eye sits. I make the bump fairly large on purpose, since cartoon lizards get most of their charm from that eye.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the snout blunt and round. A pointy snout starts to look like a crocodile.

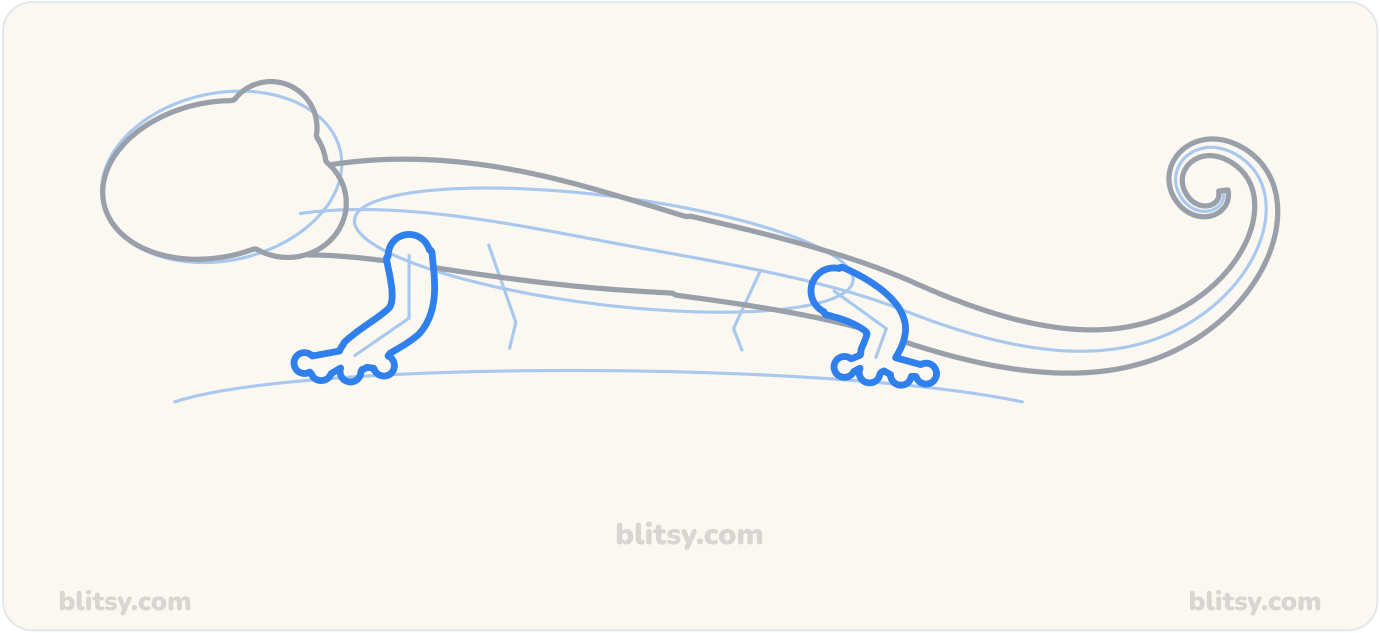
STEP 4 Outline the slim body and the curly tail



Draw a line along the top of the S-curve and another along the bottom, starting at the neck. Keep them close at the neck, widest in the middle of the body, then let them slowly come together along the tail until they meet at the tip of the spiral. Leave small gaps on the belly side where the two near legs will join.

💡 **Tip:** If the tail looks like a sausage, it isn't tapering enough. Squeeze the two lines a bit closer every few centimeters.

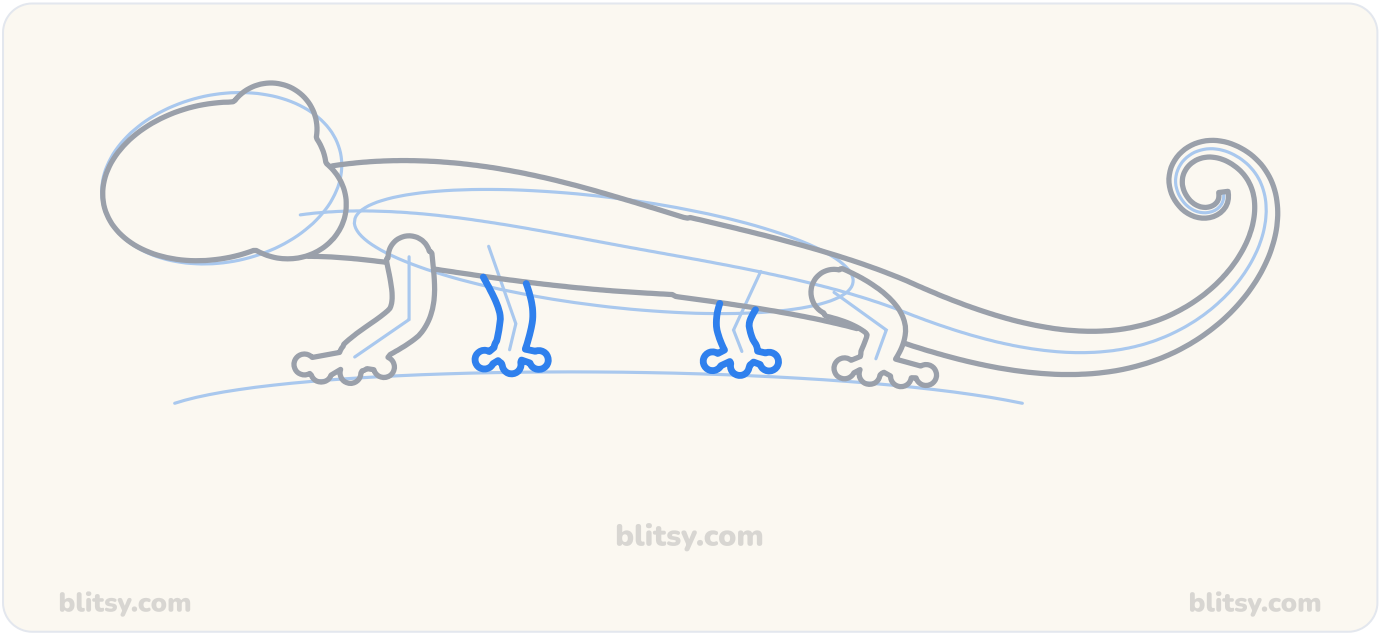
STEP 5 Draw the two near legs with toe pads



These legs are closest to you, so they overlap the body. The front leg comes down from the shoulder and bends at the elbow, and the back leg starts with a round thigh at the hip. At the bottom of each, fan out four short toes and give every toe a little round pad, like tiny balloons on sticks.

💡 **Tip:** I make the round toe pads a little bigger than feels natural, because they are what makes a gecko look like a gecko.

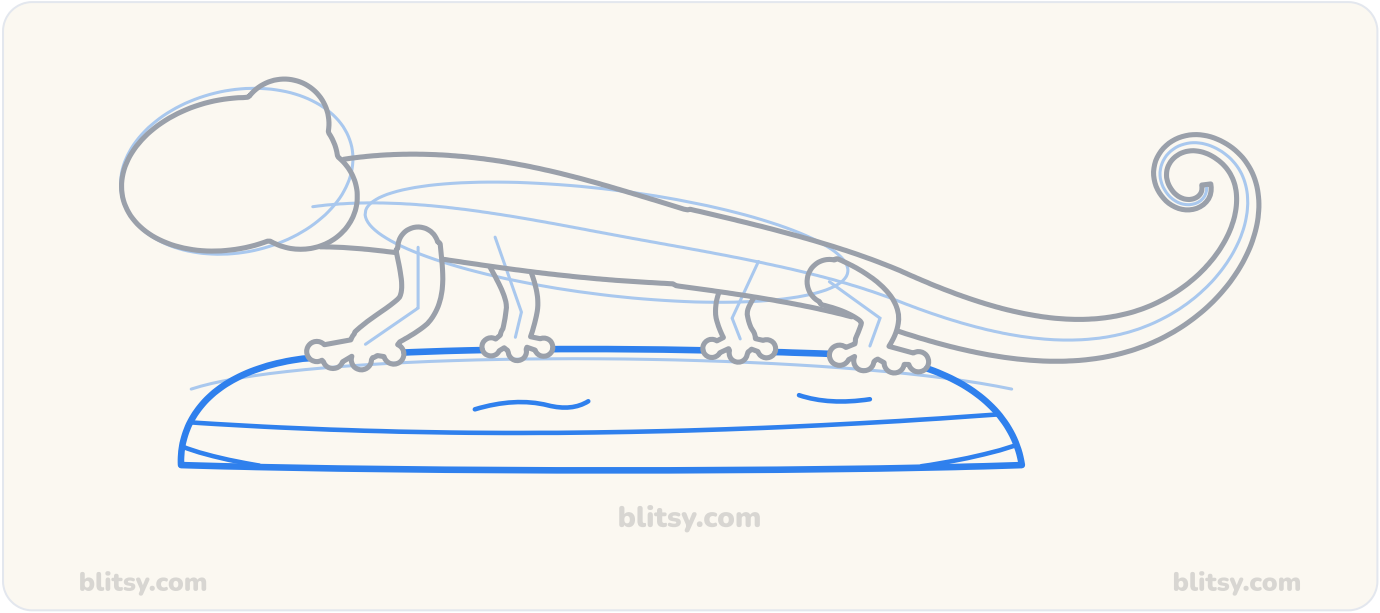
STEP 6 Add the two far legs behind the body



Between the near legs, draw two thinner legs that seem to come from behind the belly. Their tops disappear behind the body line, which is exactly what makes them look farther away. Give each one three toes with pads. Later they get a slightly darker green, and that helps the depth too.

💡 **Tip:** Stop each far leg at the belly line. Drawing it over the body flattens the whole lizard.

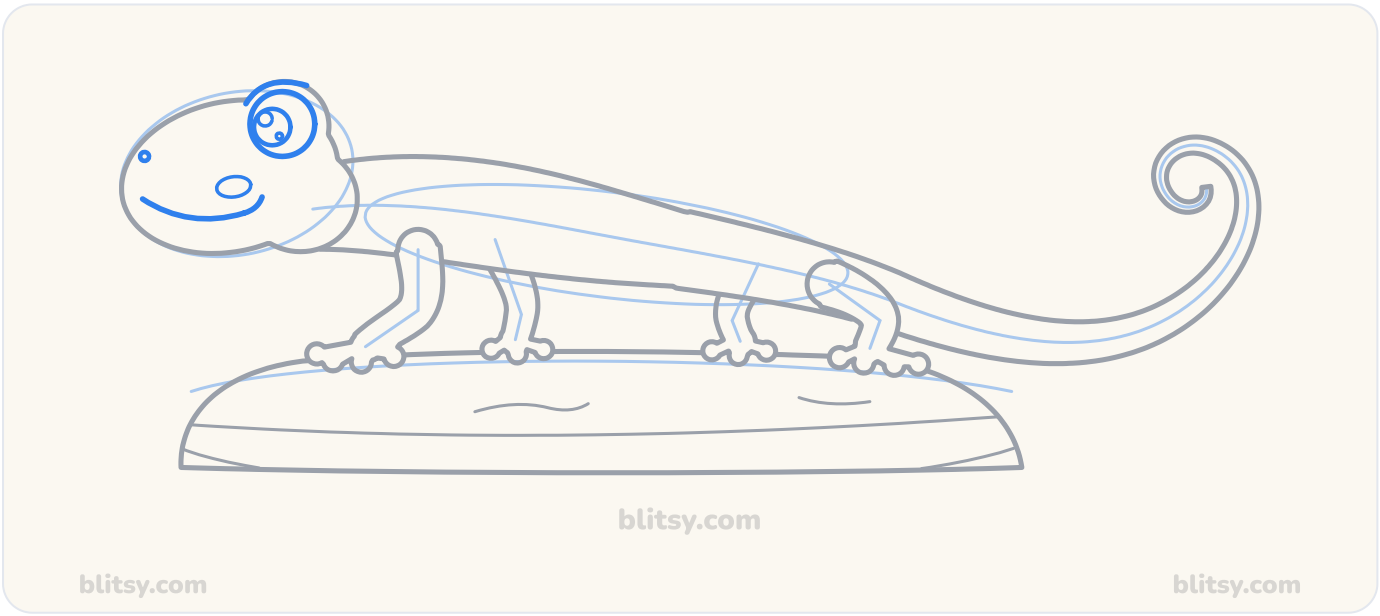
STEP 7 Draw a flat rock underneath



Follow the rock guide with a firm line that runs under every foot, then curve it down at both ends and close the bottom with a flat line. Add a second line near the bottom for the shaded side, plus two short wavy cracks on top. Your lizard now has somewhere warm to sunbathe.

💡 **Tip:** Make the rock wider than the lizard's body. A small rock makes him look like he's about to fall off.

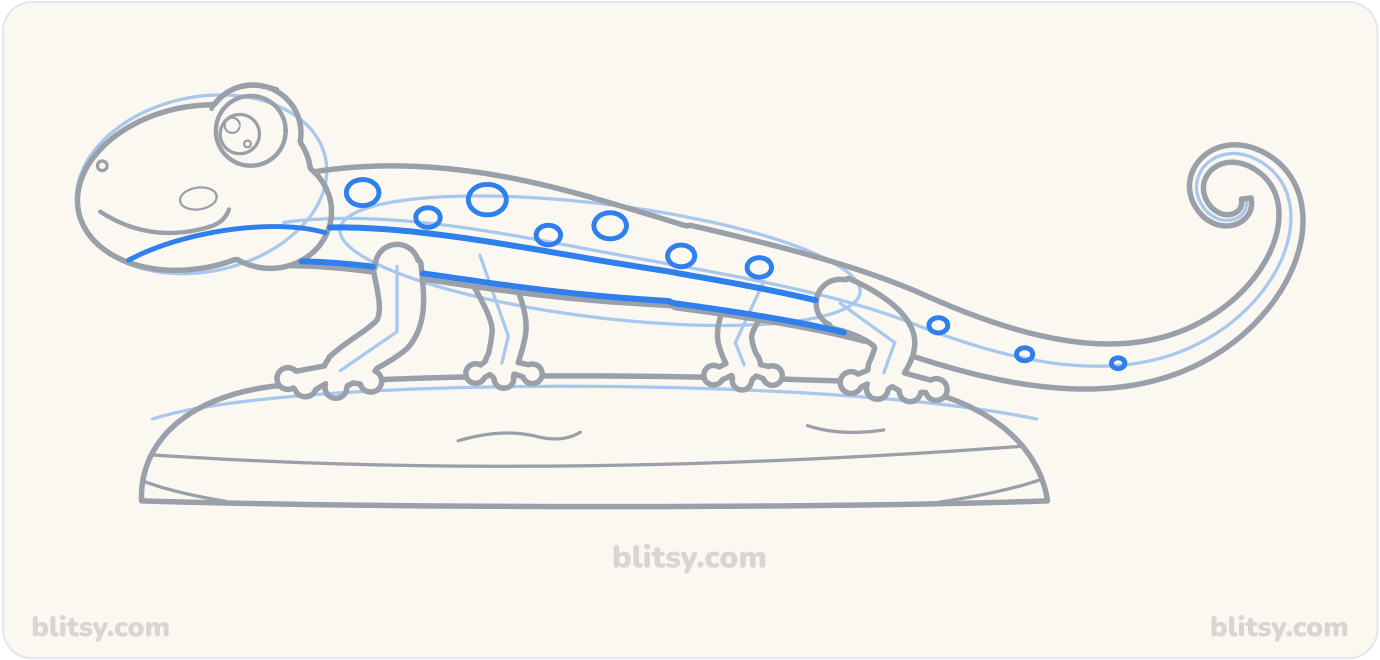
STEP 8 Add the big eye, nostril and smile



Inside the eye bump, draw a circle for the eye and a smaller dark pupil leaning toward the snout, so he looks where he's walking. Leave two shine dots white. Add a curved eyelid line above, a dot for the nostril, and a long smile along the side of the head with a little upturn at the end. A small oval cheek above the smile end adds a friendly blush.

💡 **Tip:** I point the pupil the way the lizard is facing. Pupils in the middle of the eye make him look startled.

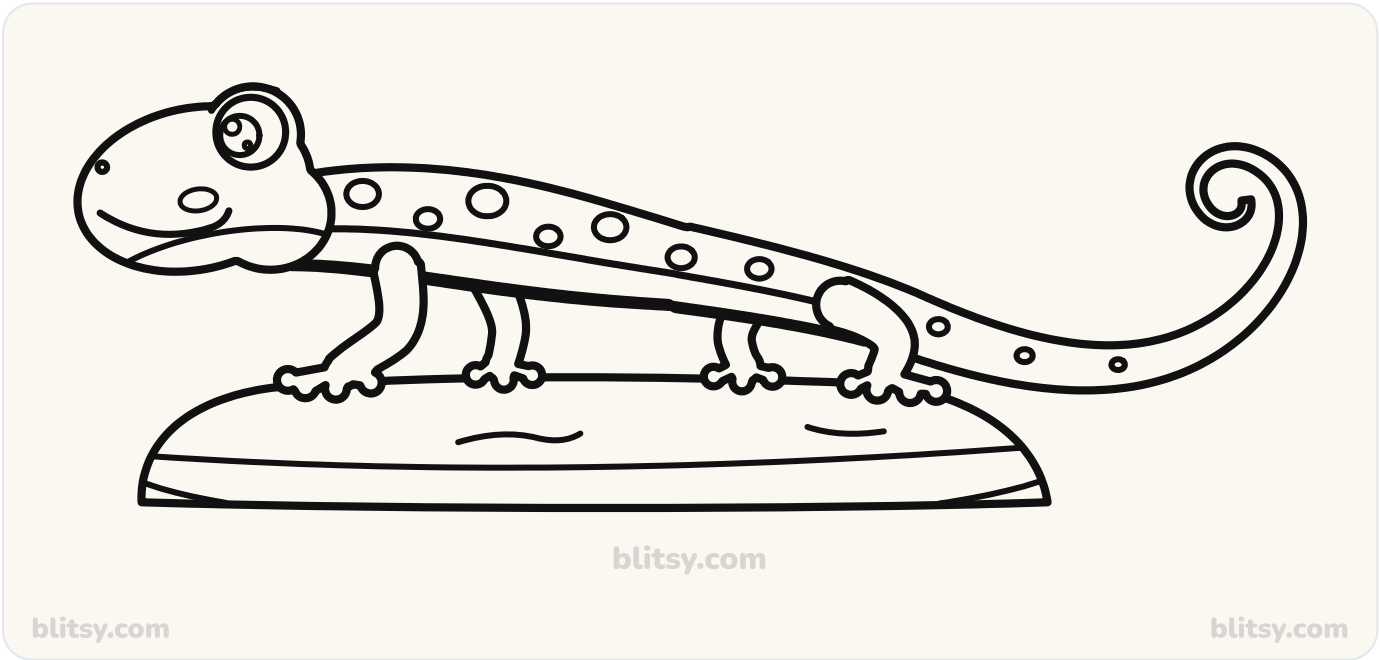
STEP 9 Draw the belly line and the back spots



Run a line just above the bottom edge of the body, from the neck to where the tail begins, to mark off the pale belly. Add a short curve under the head for the throat too. Then scatter oval spots along the back, bigger near the shoulders and smaller as you move down the tail.

💡 **Tip:** Shrinking the spots toward the tail tip is a simple trick that makes the tail look longer.

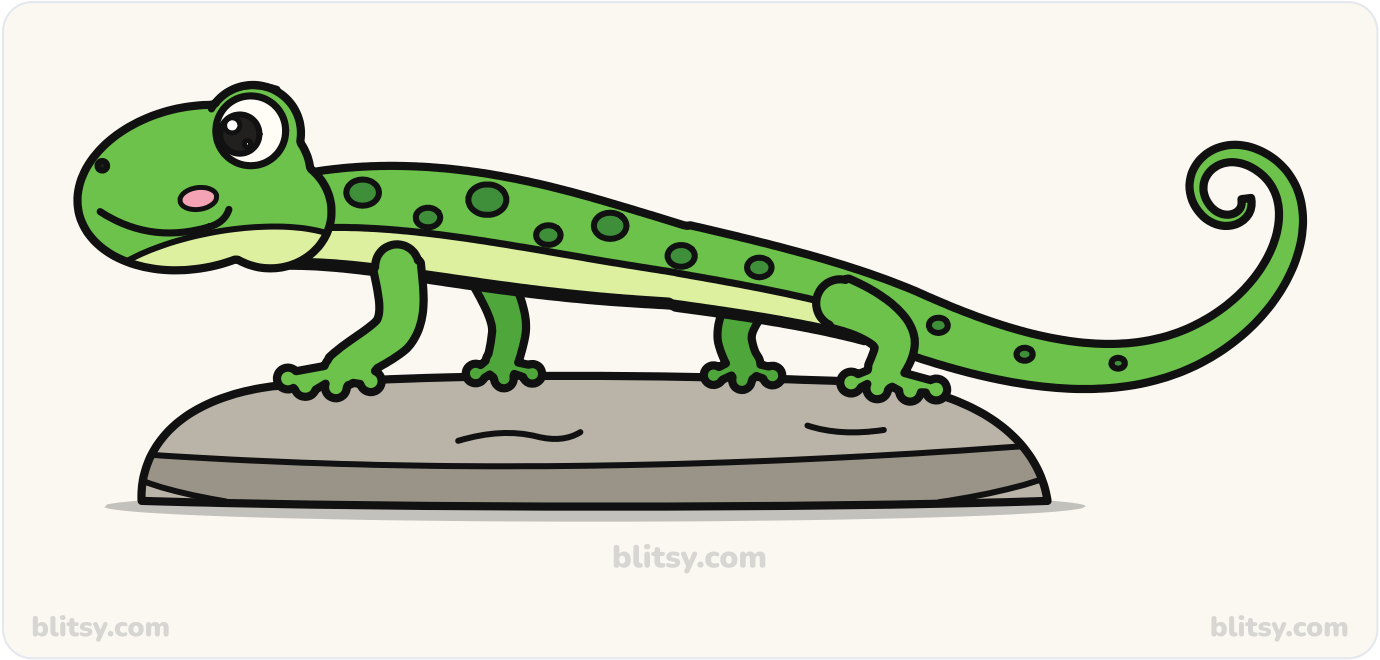
STEP 10 Ink the keeper lines and erase the guides



Go over every line you want to keep with your marker or fineliner. Take your time around the toe pads, since they're small and close together. I let the ink dry for a minute, then erase all the pencil guides, including the ovals, the S-curve and the leg lines.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the spiral at the tail tip by turning the paper slowly instead of twisting your wrist.

STEP 11 Color your lizard



Color the head, body, tail and near legs bright green. The far legs get a slightly deeper green, the spots a dark green, and the belly and throat a pale yellow. Make the rock gray with a darker band along the bottom, then add pink to the cheek and black to the pupil and nostril.

💡 **Tip:** Color the big green areas first with light, even strokes. Spots go on top afterward, so they stay crisp.