How to Draw a Ninja

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

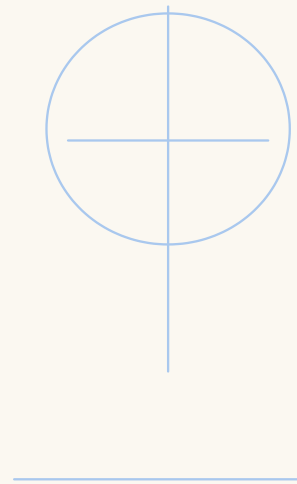
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

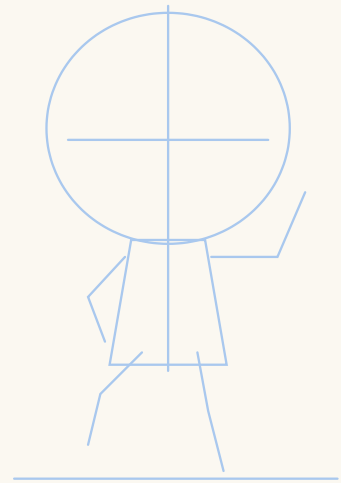
STEP 1 Draw a big head circle and the guide lines



When I teach this, I start with a ground line near the bottom of the page and a light line straight up the middle. Near the top, draw a big circle for the head, then a short line across it just below the center. That cross line is where the eyes will sit. Chibi characters have huge heads, so this circle should take up almost half the height of the whole drawing.

💡 **Tip:** Press lightly. Every line in this step gets erased later, so it doesn't have to be neat.

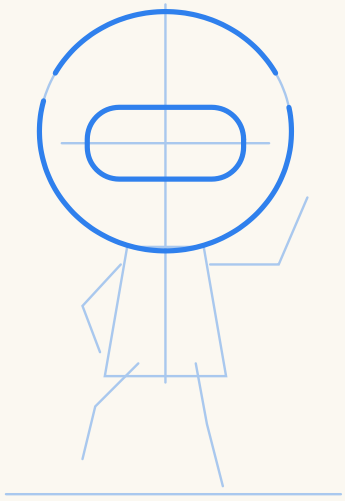
STEP 2 Sketch the pose with simple stick lines



Under the circle, draw a small box that's a little wider at the bottom. That's the body. For the raised arm, go out to the right from the shoulder and then up beside the head. The other arm bends down near the hip. One leg steps out to the left with a bent knee, and the other one goes straight down to the ground line.

💡 **Tip:** Look at your stick figure before going on. If it already looks like it's sneaking, the rest will follow.

STEP 3 Turn the circle into a round hood and add the eye opening



Trace around the head circle with a smooth line. This is the hood, and it also works as the mask, so there's no separate face shape to worry about. Across the eye line, draw a long rounded rectangle, like a capsule lying on its side. Leave a bit of space above it for the headband.

💡 **Tip:** I make the eye opening about two thirds as wide as the hood. Much narrower and the eyes get squeezed.

STEP 4 Add the headband, the knot and the flowing tails



Draw two gently curved lines across the top of the hood, a little above the eye opening. On the right side, put a small circle for the knot. Two ribbon tails come out of it and wave off to the right, one higher and one lower, a bit thinner at the ends.

💡 **Tip:** Give the tails a slight wave. Straight tails look stiff, while a wave makes it feel like he's moving.

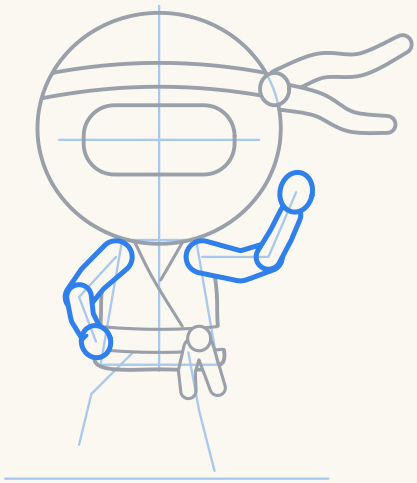
STEP 5 Draw the ninja top and the belt sash



Follow the body box with soft lines, rounding the shoulders where they meet the hood. A diagonal line from the left side of the neck down toward the right hip shows the wrap-front top, with a short second line under it. Then draw a wide belt sash across the waist, a little knot on the right, and two short ends hanging down.

💡 **Tip:** Curve the sash a tiny bit downward in the middle so the body looks round instead of flat.

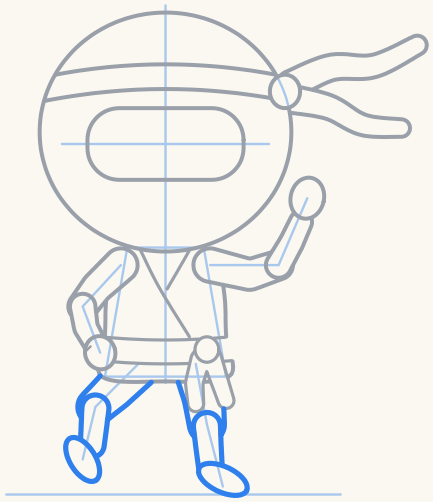
STEP 6 Add soft arms and mitten hands



Around each stick arm, draw two lines so the arm has real width, like a soft tube. The sleeve covers the upper arm and a narrower wrapped forearm sits below the elbow. Finish each arm with an oval mitten hand and a small curved line for the thumb. The right hand is raised next to the hood, palm out.

💡 **Tip:** Make the arms about as wide as the eyes are tall. Thin stick arms look strange next to that big head.

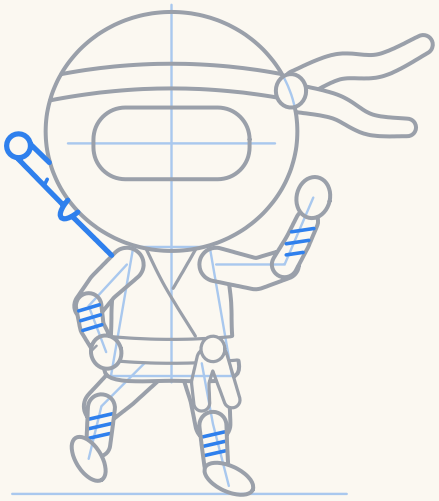
STEP 7 Draw tiptoe legs and soft shoes



Ninja pants are baggy, so draw the thighs wide and rounded. Below each knee, the shin narrows into the leg wraps. The right foot touches the ground only with its toe, tilted down, while the left foot hangs in the air under the lifted knee. I keep both shoes small and round, with no laces or heels.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a small gap between the lifted shoe and the ground line. That gap is what makes the step look sneaky.

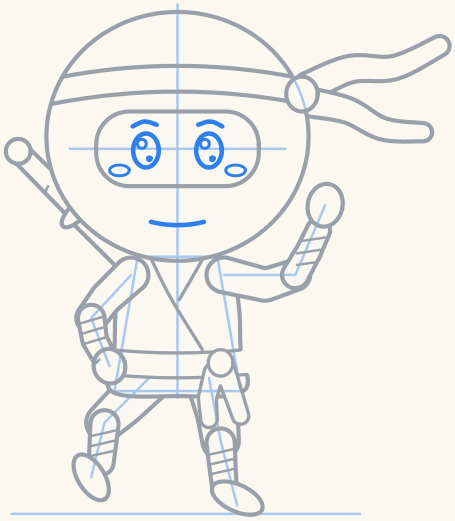
STEP 8 Draw the wraps and the sword handle



Add three short slanted lines across each forearm and each shin. They turn plain tubes into cloth wraps. Behind the left shoulder, draw a short diagonal handle with a round cap on top and a small oval guard where it meets the hood. The sword stays in its case on his back, so only the handle shows.

💡 **Tip:** Slant all the wrap lines the same way on each limb. Mixed angles look like scribbles.

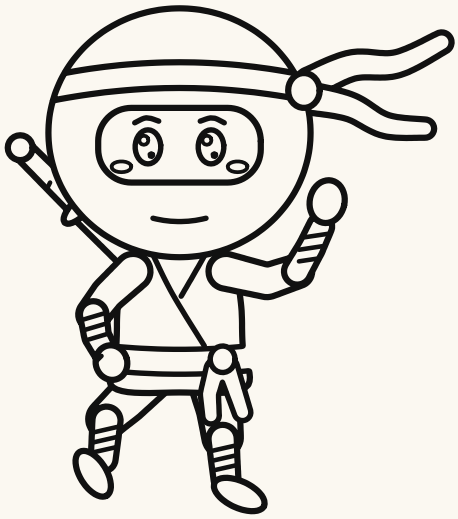
STEP 9 Give him friendly eyes and rosy cheeks



Inside the eye opening, draw two tall ovals with a big shine dot and a tiny one in each. Add short curved brows just above them. Small ovals in the lower corners become pink cheeks, and one short curve on the mask hints at a smile underneath.

💡 **Tip:** Big round eyes keep a ninja cute. Narrow, slanted eyes quickly make him look grumpy.

STEP 10 Ink the keeper lines and erase the guides



Go over every line you want to keep with a black marker. Slow, steady strokes look cleaner than quick ones. Once the ink is dry, erase all the light pencil guides, including the circle and the stick figure.

💡 **Tip:** Wait a full minute before erasing. Marker that's still wet smears straight across the page.

STEP 11 Color your ninja



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I color the hood and shoes dark blue first, then use a lighter blue for the top, the sleeves and the pants, so the head stands out. The headband is red, the sash and sword guard orange, the wraps cream, the face and hands peach, and the handle brown. A touch of pink goes on the cheeks.

💡 **Tip:** Press a little harder on one side of the hood and the pants. That darker edge makes the shapes look round.