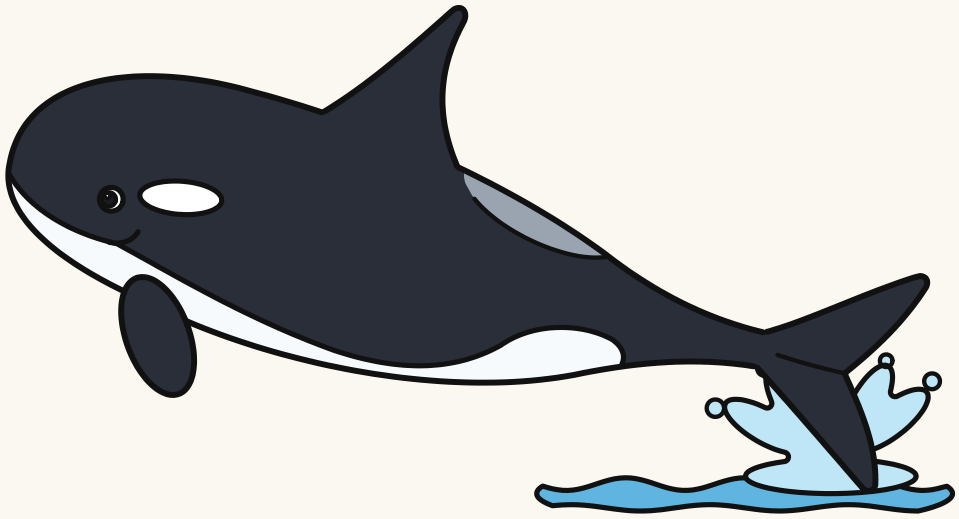
How to Draw an Orca

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Crayons or colored pencils
- White 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 →

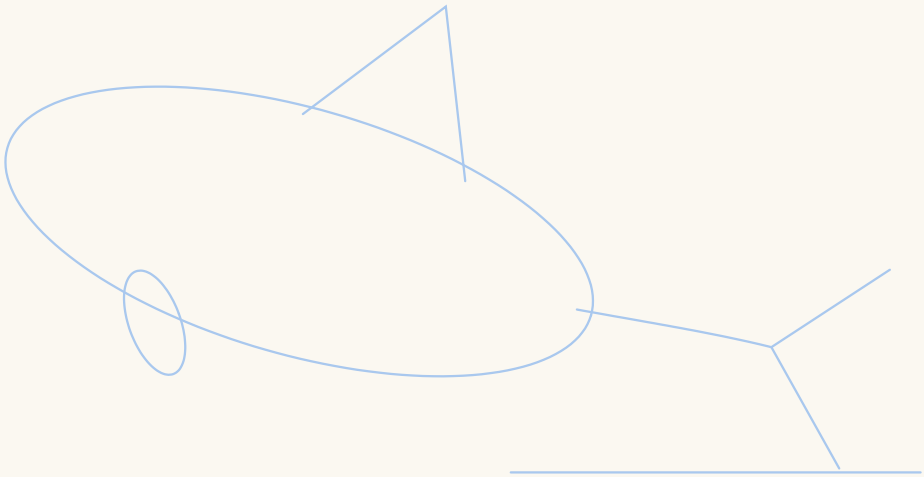
STEP 1 Sketch a tilted body oval



Draw a long oval across the left two thirds of the page, tipped so the left end sits higher than the right. That slant is what makes the orca look like it's jumping up out of the water. From the lower right end, add one gently curving line heading right. It marks the tail stalk.

💡 **Tip:** Make the oval fat, about two and a half times as long as it is tall. Orcas are chunky, not skinny like sharks.

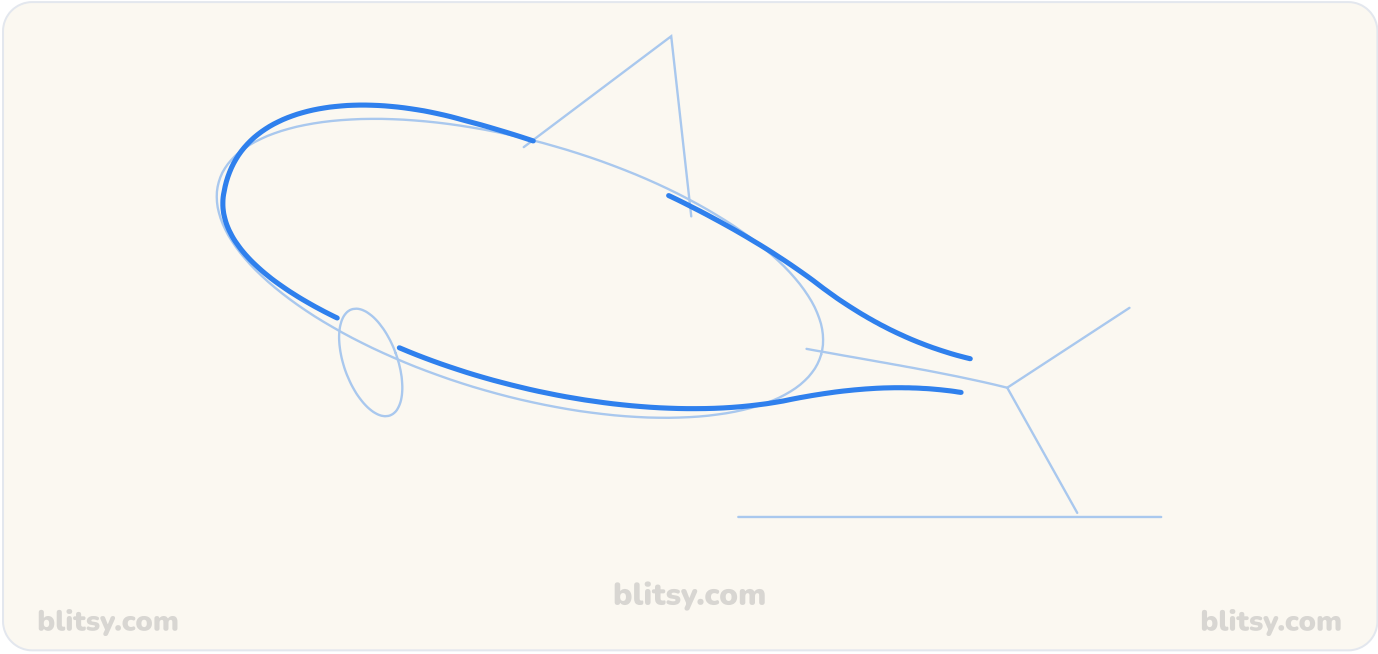
STEP 2 Add guides for the fin, flipper, tail and water



On top of the oval, a little right of center, draw a tall narrow triangle for the dorsal fin. It should be almost as tall as the oval is thick. Put a small tilted oval under the front of the body for the flipper. At the end of the tail line, draw a V that opens to the right, and finish with a flat line across the bottom right for the sea.

💡 **Tip:** Let the lower arm of the tail V touch the water line. That's where the splash will go later.

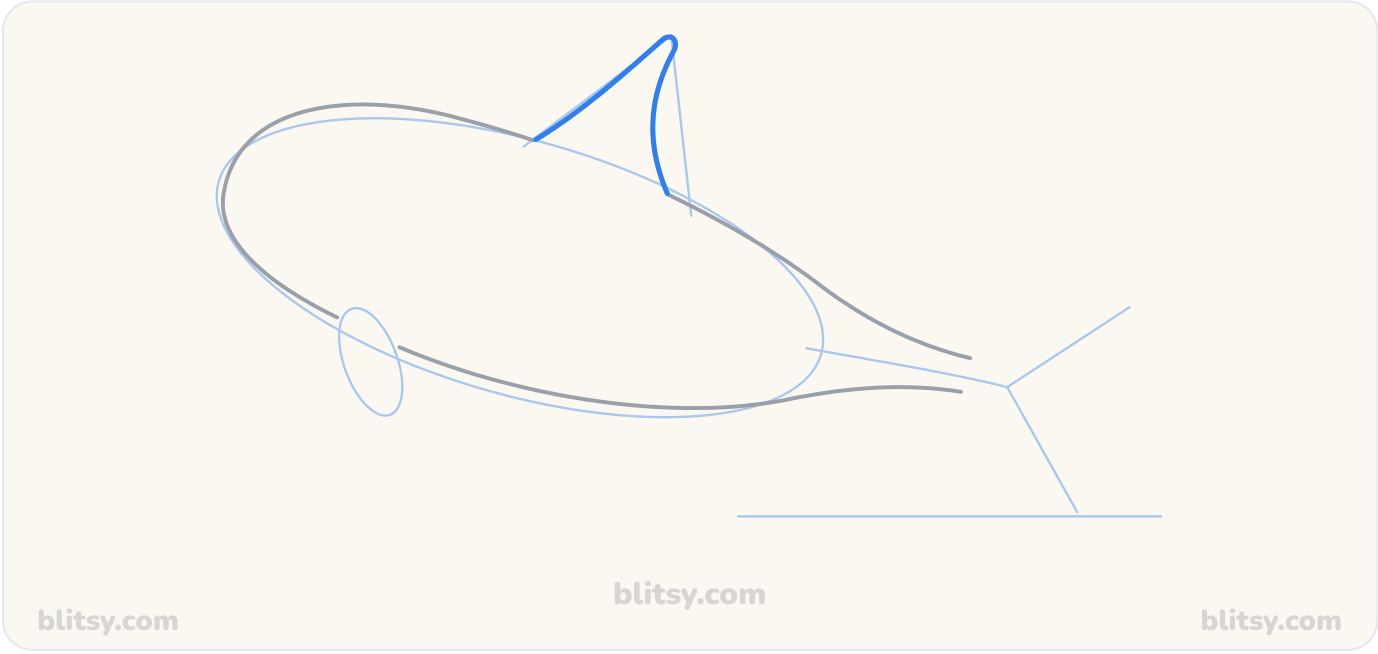
STEP 3 Draw the orca's body outline



Now go around the oval with a firmer line, but change its shape a little. Make the head round and blunt at the front, keep the back smooth, then narrow the body into the tail stalk as you follow the curved guide. Leave small gaps where the fin and the flipper attach, since those parts get their own lines next.

💡 **Tip:** Orcas have no pointy nose. If your front end looks sharp, round it off before you move on.

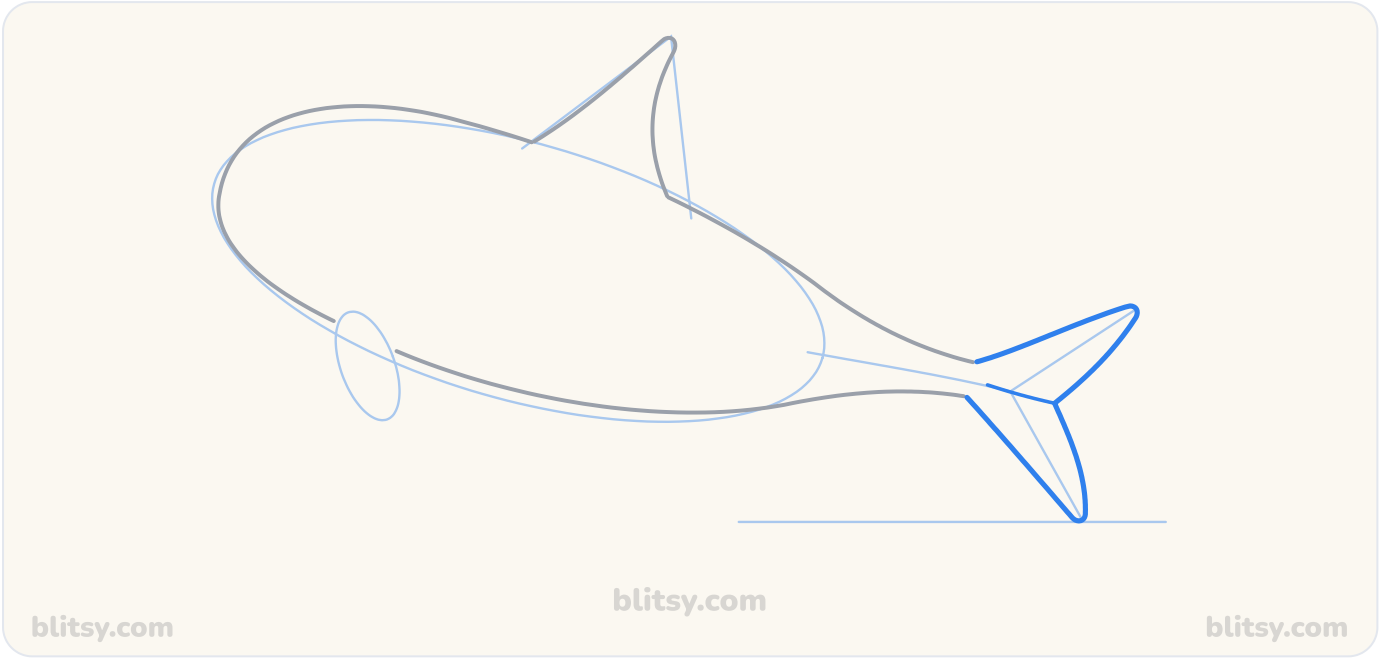
STEP 4 Draw the tall dorsal fin



Follow the triangle guide, but bend it. The front edge rises in a long gentle curve, the tip gets a small round top, and the back edge swoops inward before it meets the body. That inward curve is what makes a fin look like it's slicing through the water.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the fin tall. A short fin is the quickest way to make your orca look like a dolphin.

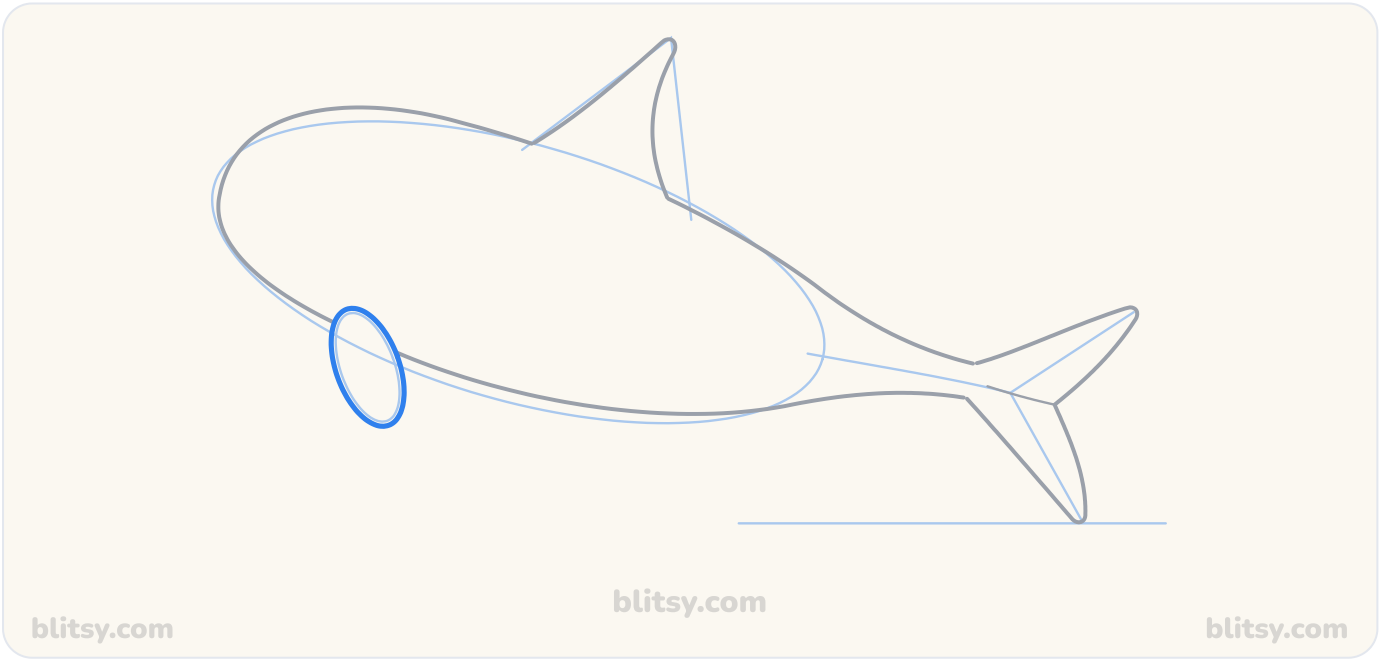
STEP 5 Add two horizontal tail flukes



Orca flukes lie flat, like a pair of wings, so from the side you see one lobe pointing up and back and one pointing down and back. Draw both along the V guide with slightly curved edges and rounded tips. Add one short line from the notch toward the body to split the two lobes.

💡 **Tip:** The lower lobe is the one closer to you, so you can make it a tiny bit bigger.

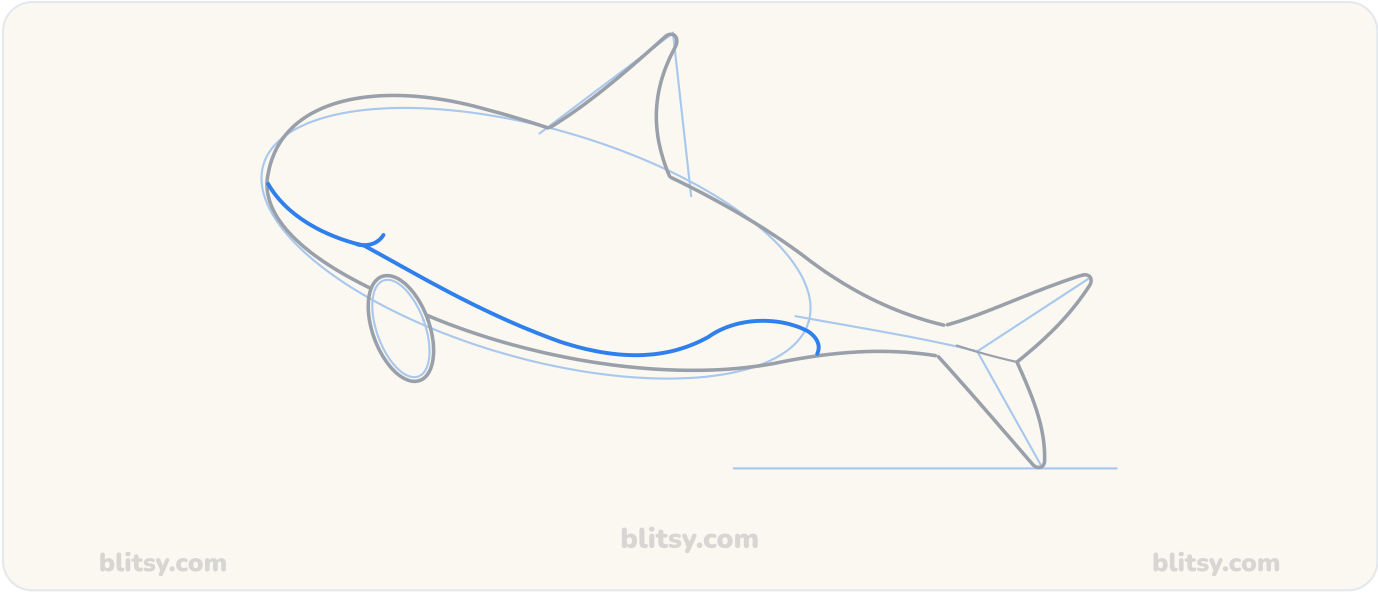
STEP 6 Draw the paddle flipper



Trace the small oval under the chest to make a wide, rounded flipper that points down and back. An orca's flipper looks like a paddle or a big round leaf, much rounder than the narrow pointed flippers on many other whales.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the flipper fully, right over the belly line. It sits in front of the body.

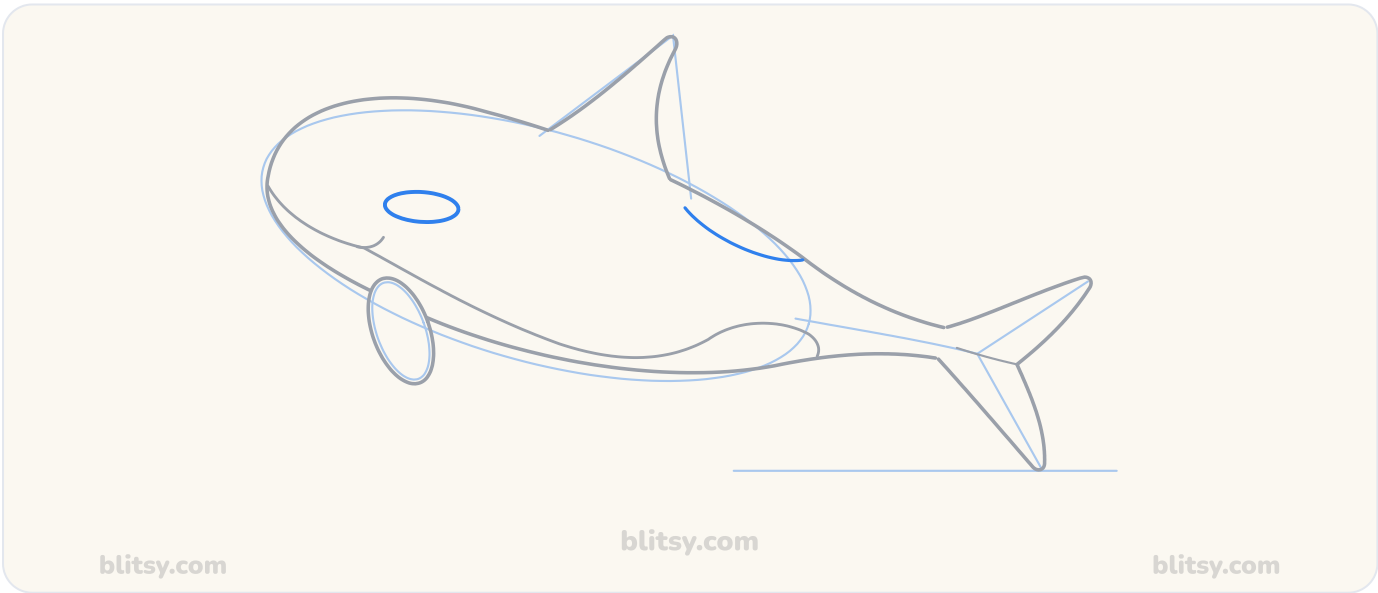
STEP 7 Draw the smile and the white belly line



Start right at the front of the head and draw a curve sweeping down and back. This line is both the mouth and the top edge of the white chin. Keep it running along the lower body, then near the tail let it rise into a rounded bump before it drops back to the belly. That bump is the white flank patch. Finish with a tiny upturned curl where the mouth ends, which gives the orca its smile.

💡 **Tip:** The flank bump points toward the tail. Copy its direction from the picture before you commit.

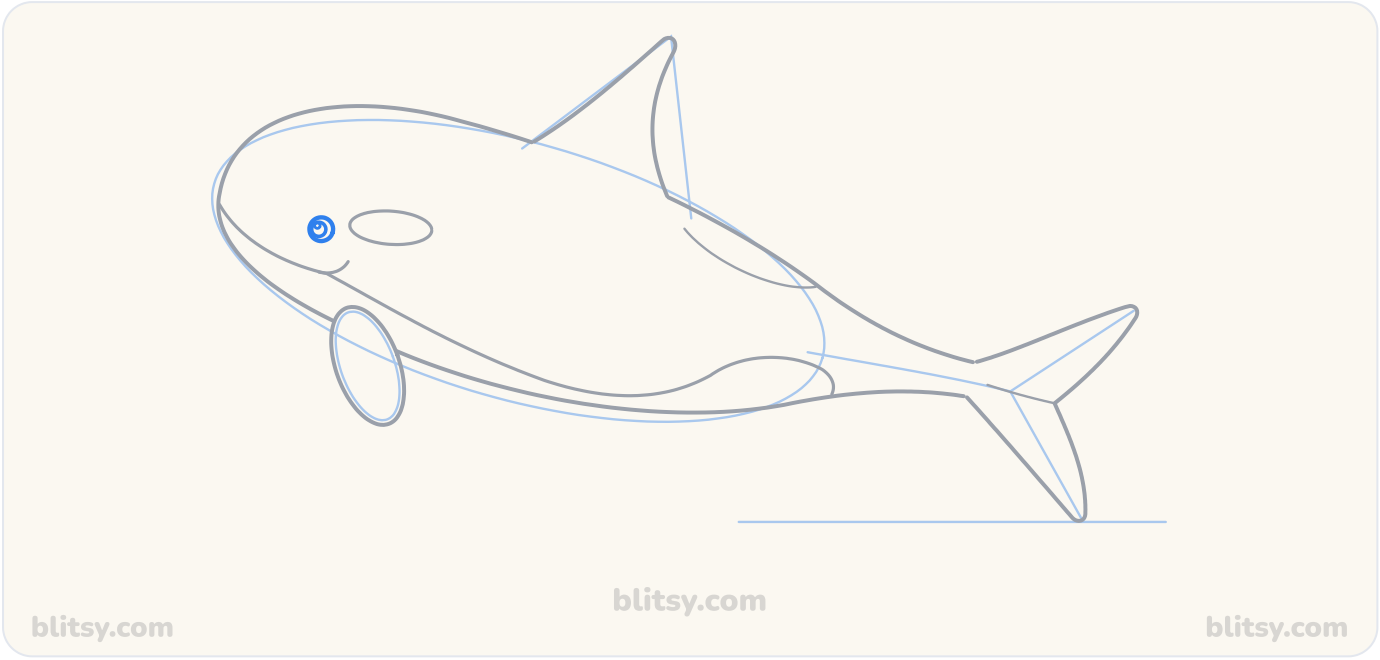
STEP 8 Add the eye patch and the gray saddle



Draw a flat oval above and just behind where the eye will go, tipped up slightly toward the back. This is the white eye patch, and it's the part people notice first on a real orca. Then, behind the dorsal fin, draw a soft curved line under the back. The space between that line and the back becomes the gray saddle patch.

💡 **Tip:** Many beginners put the eye inside the white patch. Keep them apart, because the real eye sits in the black part in front of it.

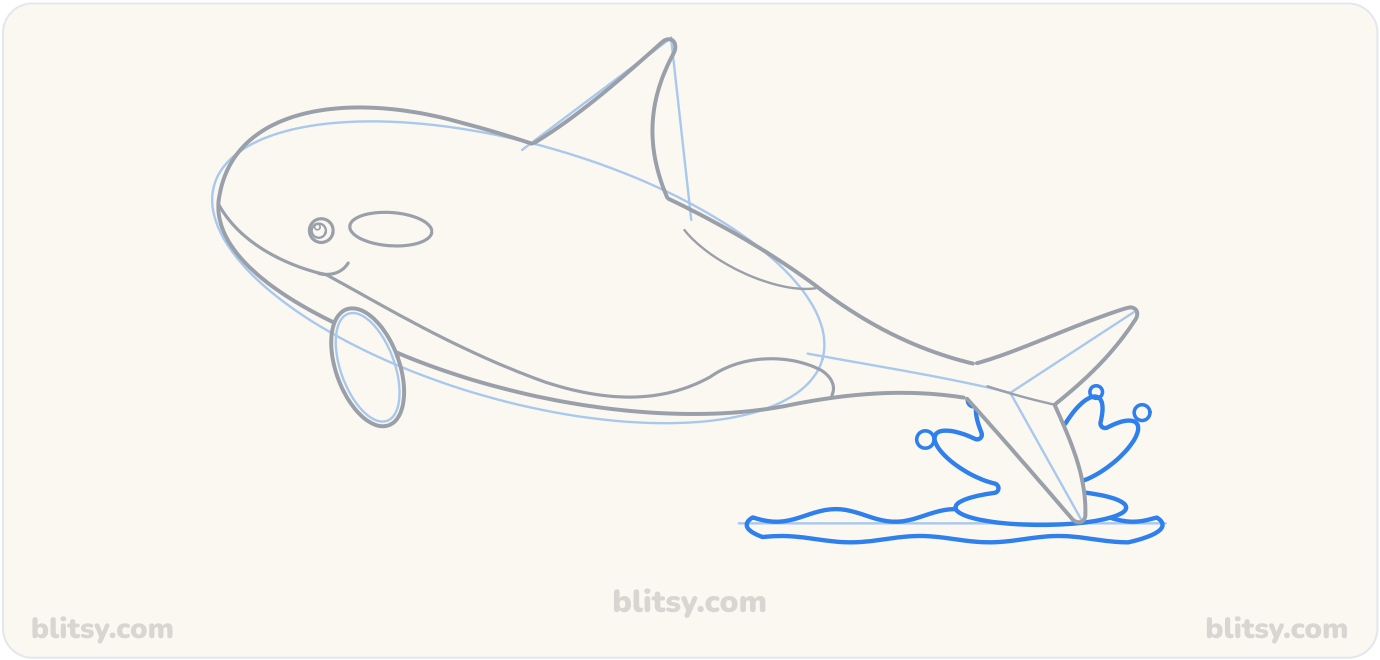
STEP 9 Draw a friendly eye



Put a small circle a little above the end of the smile, in front of the eye patch. Inside, draw a smaller circle for the pupil and a tiny dot for the shine. I give the eye a white ring here, because a plain black eye on a black body disappears once you color it.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the eye small. A big eye turns the orca into a baby seal very quickly.

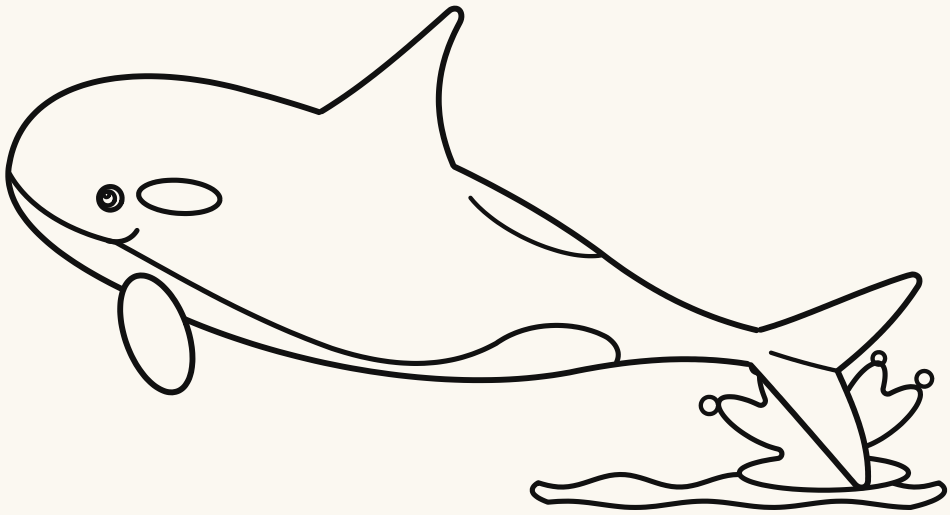
STEP 10 Draw the water splash



Along the water guide, draw a wavy strip with rounded ends. Where the tail meets the water, add a splash: a flat puddle shape with four or five rounded jets springing up around the tail. Finish with a few round drops flying out to the sides.

💡 **Tip:** Stop the splash lines where they reach the tail. The tail sits in front of the water.

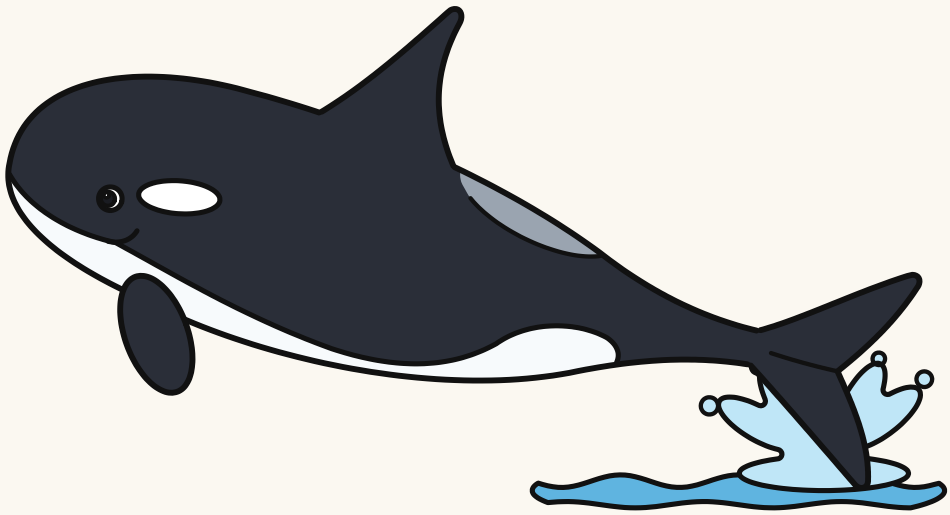
STEP 11 Ink the orca and erase the guides



Go over every keeper line with your black marker. I usually ink the body outline first, then the fin and tail, and save the eye and smile for when my hand is steady. Skip the oval, the triangle and the V. When the ink is dry, erase every pencil line underneath.

💡 **Tip:** Wait a full minute before erasing. Marker that looks dry can still smear on smooth paper.

STEP 12 Color your orca



Color the body, fin, flipper and tail black. Leave the chin, belly, flank patch and eye patch white, or give them the lightest touch of gray. The saddle behind the fin is medium gray. Make the sea blue, and use a lighter blue for the splash and the drops. The white ring around the eye stays white too.

💡 **Tip:** Color the black parts slowly along the white edges first, then fill the middle. It keeps the patches crisp.