

♥ Kan's Chibi Tutorial ♥



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Proportions	3
3. Body shape & features	4
4. Head and face	7

1. Introduction

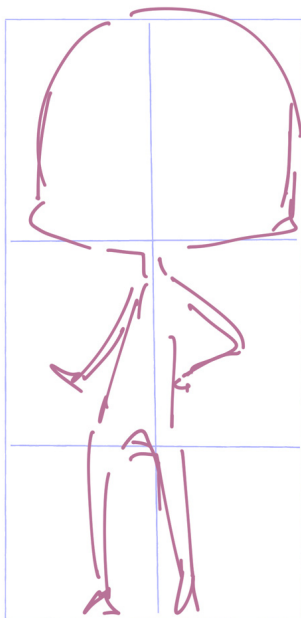
Please note that this is how I personally draw chibis, or SD (super deformed) characters, there is no right or wrong way or style to draw them. I learned to draw chibis by looking at art from artists I admired back when I started out and I found there are some specific features to this style that make it so unique and cute, that are used by most artists.

Everything in this tutorial is simply an explanation on how I do things and reflects my own opinions, there are no Do's and Don'ts, I encourage everyone to look at my examples with a critical eye and to explore different variations that fit your personal preferences to find your own voice!

Let's begin! ♥

2. Proportions

The main characteristics of a chibi-style character are certainly the big head, big eyes, and the small body and limbs. You can pretty much compare the proportions to those of a toddler! While there are many different ways to draw chibis, I believe the most common approach is the 1/3 rule, which means the body is broken up into 3 parts: 1/3 head, 1/3 torso, 1/3 legs.

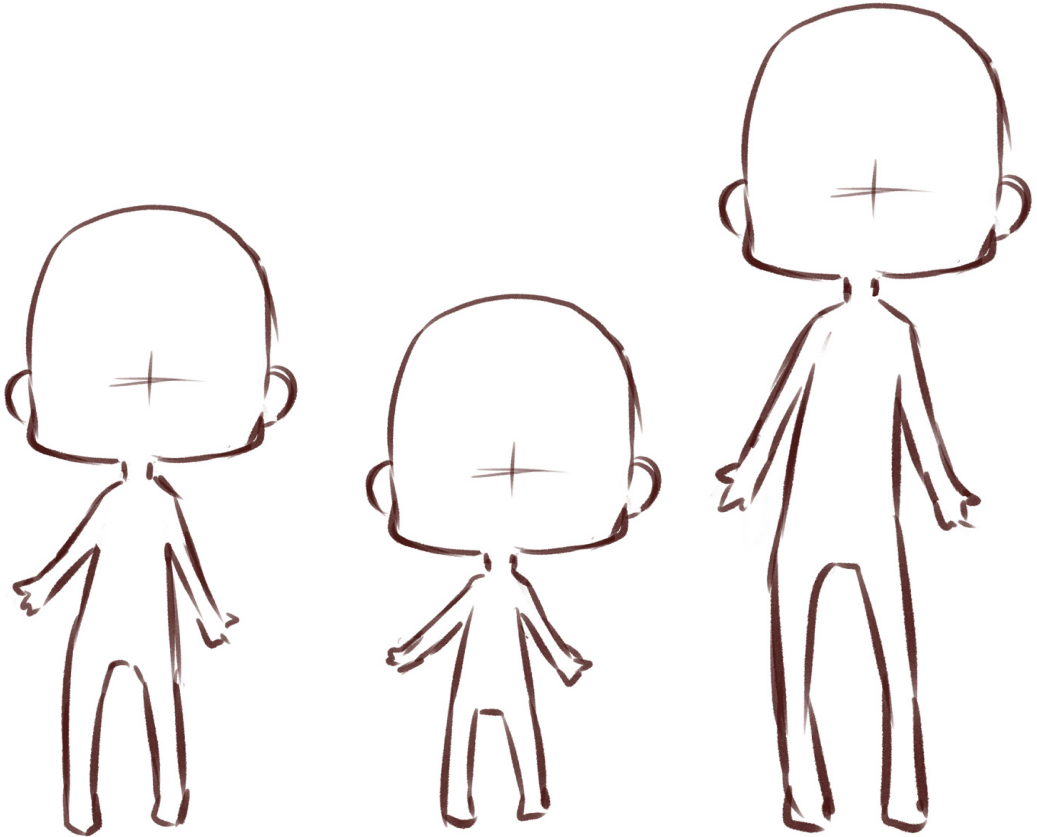


- 1/3 head
- 1/3 torso
- 1/3 legs
- arm length somewhere in the lower half
- head is usually the widest part

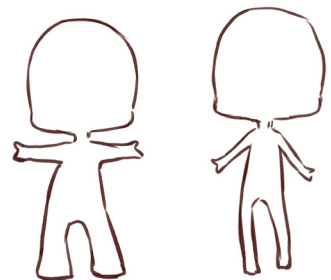
Of course, you can choose other proportions, too, but it is important to note that an even bigger head might look awkward and like it'd be impossible for the character to even stand upright, while a smaller head could result in

the loss of the desired CUTE factor. Depending on what you're going for, feel free to play around with different sizes to figure out what suits your style best!

3. Body shape & features



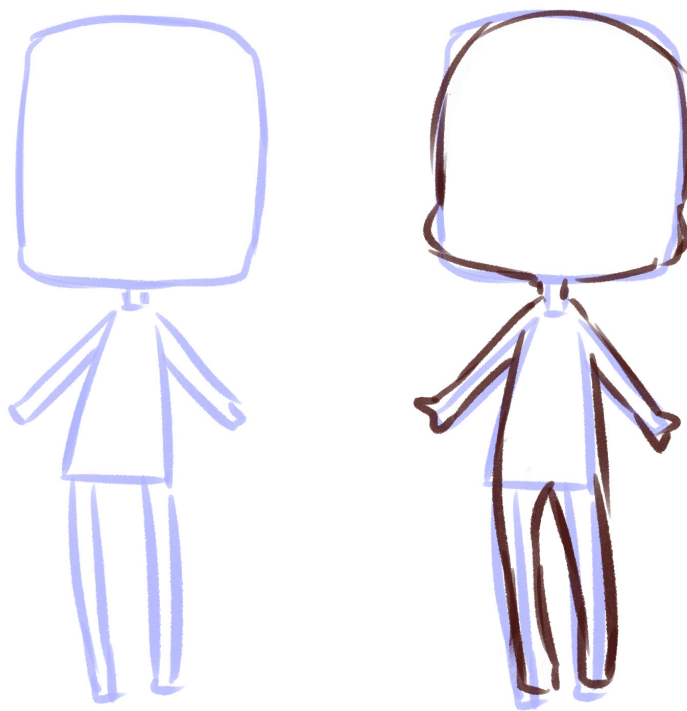
For body shapes I believe there is two common ones: The super thin spagetthi limbs or a more chubby style. One might argue the latter is best to achieve ultimate cuteness, but I personally prefer the little stick figure type, because I feel like it leaves me with more opportunities for dynamic poses and free movement of the extremities. I also like my heads to stand out the most and be the widest part of the character, chubbier toddler bodies distract from that a little, which can also be a good thing if that's what you want! I suppose it could make for a more balanced look.



The easiest way to break down a chibi character is in a few geometrical shapes: a rectangle with rounded corners, a trapezoid for the torso and long rectangles for arms and legs. That's pretty much all you need.

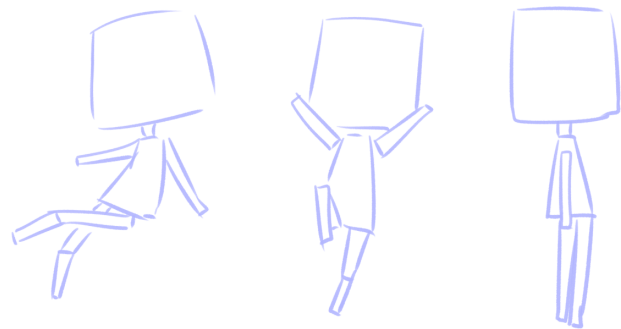
A lot of features will be very simplified, like feet and hands, noses etc, so in my opinion chibis are a great way to doodle around without having to pay too much attention to proper anatomy. You can very comfortably rearrange those geometrical shapes into new poses and then flesh out the character from there. I recommend jotting down a few general shapes and poses to get used to it and soon you won't even need the geometrical base anymore and can just eyeball it.

Please note that the 1/3 rule doesn't need to be followed precisely, it's just a rough guideline!



- little defined or no real shoulders
- simplified feet or lack thereof
- little hands, perhaps not all fingers visible
- in case of boob: preferably little to no boob
- limbs are made of jelly
- everything is kind of round and soft

Some examples:



4. Head and face

4.1. Head

As mentioned above I like to make the head the size of 1/3 of the entire character, but you can absolutely change things up to your liking! However, it's important to not lose sight of the full picture and choose sizes that still look kind of realistic, in a sense of "does this character look like they could run around without dragging their head behind because it's too heavy?"

I think a good base shape for the head is a very loosely drawn rectangle with rounded corners. I don't like to think of any body shapes as circles or ovals, because if shapes are too round they tend to lose some of their organic feel. It's always good to have some edges and flat planes in your art, so that things don't look too smooth or rubber-like, but instead more lively and dynamic, if that makes sense.



**base shape of the face
is basically a badly drawn
rectangle with rounded corners**

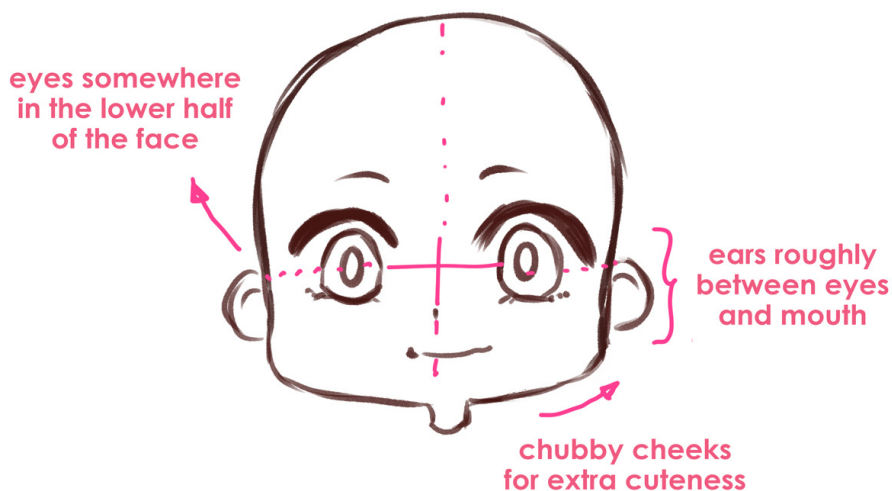
Related to the head is, naturally, the face. For me it's important to find a way to exaggerate my character's facial features while also keeping them recognisable and not making them look ridiculous. A good way to do that is to still stick to two of the general rules of proportion when it comes to faces.

These would be:

- the distance between the eyes is usually big enough that it could fit another, third eye
- ears are situated between the eyes and the bottom end of the nose

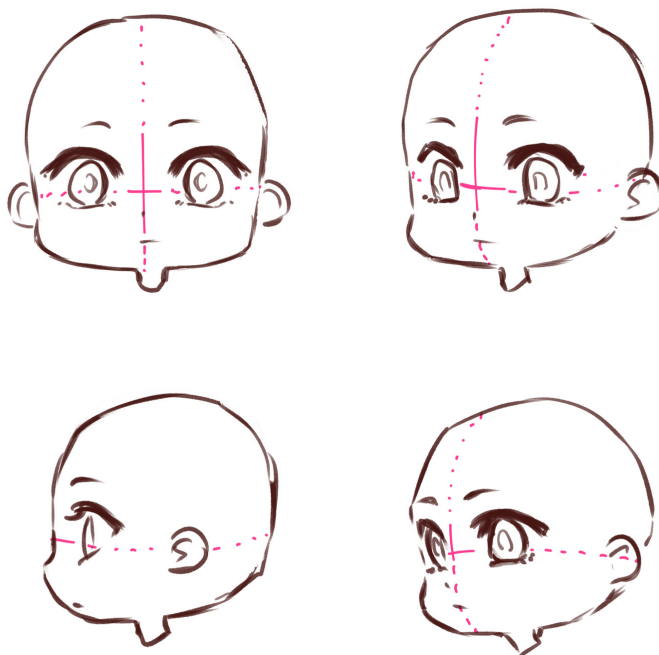
Proportions that will usually be changed to achieve the chibi-style:

- eyes are placed somewhere in the (lower) half of the face, to make the character look more child-like
- the nose and mouth are usually heavily simplified (sometimes the nose might just straight up disappear completely) and much smaller in relation to the eyes



Getting rid of or stylising the nose also makes things easier for the 3/4 or side profile view! (At least for me, I still struggle with the nose sometimes so I celebrate every opportunity where I don't have to draw one.)

Some more head/face examples from different perspectives:



4.2. Faces

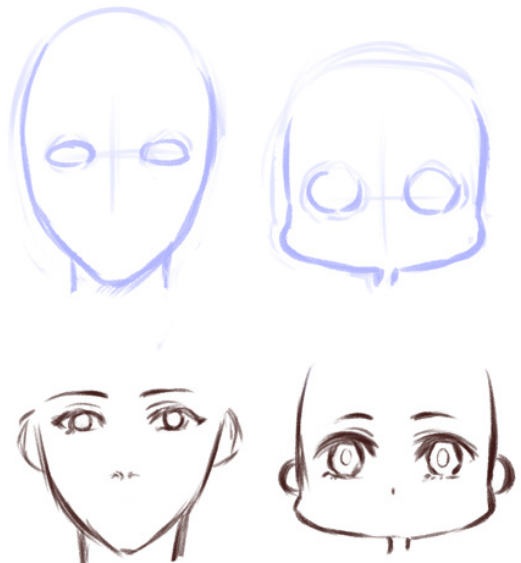
The beautiful thing about chibis is, that you can get emotions across with only a few strokes. If you can't get those big, round cheeb eyes right some-times, get rid of them and try a more simplified approach!



make your life even easier by drawing simple, yet cute emoji faces!

A helpful list of Japanese emojis that you could turn into chibis can be found here: <http://japaneseemoticons.me/>

There are no rules for what the eyes should look like, so here's how I personally draw them. Without going into too much unnecessary detail, I'd say compared to regular faces, the chibi eyes look nicest when they're 2-3 times bigger. Instead of being oval shaped they are much more round and the pupils are bigger as well. The general shape is still similar to the eye shape of the respective characters.



Some examples for facial expressions:



You can do a lot just by adjusting the eyebrows, there's 3 basic variations that'll get you really far:



And, last but not least: When you add hair to your character, make sure to not put it right on top of their skull, but leave some space inbetween, because hair is fluffy!

Then add some clothes, and you're done :D



I hope this was useful to you in any way, if you have questions or feedback, please do let me know! I want to improve these tutorials in the future, so every kind of criticism is welcome!

Thank you for reading this! :))

