



Part 1- Materials & Basic Techniques

SUPPLY LIST

Paper



Here are 3 Strathmore papers that work great with charcoal and can be used for this workshop:

- [Strathmore 300 Series Bristol Vellum paper](#). This is a very affordable paper that is high quality and has a surface suitable for charcoal. This paper is 100lb in weight, which makes it a good, thick paper for your drawings. One thing that I really like about this paper is its white tone, as other papers can have more of a cream tone. All of these reasons are why I have chosen this paper to use for this workshop.
- [Strathmore 400 Series Heavyweight Drawing paper](#). This is also a very thick paper, with a weight of 100lb. It has a medium surface, making it suitable for charcoal and the paper has a cream tone.
- [Strathmore 500 Series Charcoal paper](#). This paper is specifically designed for use with charcoals. It has a laid finish, so your drawings will have a more textured look to them. This paper is thinner with a paper weight of 64lb.

Charcoal Set



I am using many drawing supplies from the [Lyra Rembrandt Charcoal set](#) in this workshop. From this set I am using:

- **Charcoal Pencils 2B & H.** I recommend using a H/HB charcoal pencil for lighter values and details (as it has a harder lead) and a 2B/ 4B pencil for darker values.
- **Charcoal Block.** I am using the larger charcoal block from this set. Charcoal blocks are great for shading in a large area quickly, so they are a must have for me.



TIP: When using charcoal blocks place a finger on the top of the block, as well as holding the sides to help give more control and even shading.

- Kneaded Eraser
- Sharpener
- Blending Stump- These are great for blending charcoal. You can buy a pack of these online for a very cheap price and they come in a large variety of sizes.

Other Drawing Supplies:



For blending I will also be using tissue and a round paintbrush. Soft tissues from tissue boxes, with no patterns, work best for blending charcoal. Also, I will be using the **Daler Rowney Aquafine size 4 round** paintbrush. You don't need to use this exact paintbrush, any small round paintbrush will work.



To add highlights to my charcoal drawings I will be using a **mono stick eraser**. A stick eraser is a very handy tool to have to pull up bright highlights and add texture/ detail to your work.

Basic Techniques:

In part 1 of this workshop I go through the basic techniques that we will be using to create our charcoal drawings. I start off simple by going through some tips on how to hold your pencils and shade evenly with them.

Shading



To get a smooth even layer of shading I recommend holding your charcoal pencils further back and use the side of the pencil to shade with, rather than the tip. Throughout the workshop I will be using circular motions when shading and also the hatching method.

Blending

I also take you through how to blend out your charcoal shading with a paintbrush. This technique allows you to smooth out the grainy look of the charcoal and fill in all of the white bits of the paper that the charcoal didn't get to. The key to this technique is working lightly with the brush. Do not try to force a lot of pressure onto the brush, it doesn't need it. Also work the brush in circular motions to get a smooth look.



Also for blending charcoal I use tissue, blending in circular motions, to soften it out even more. To get more control when blending I wrap the tissue around my finger. The tissue can get dirty quickly, so I make sure to keep changing to a clean side of the tissue.



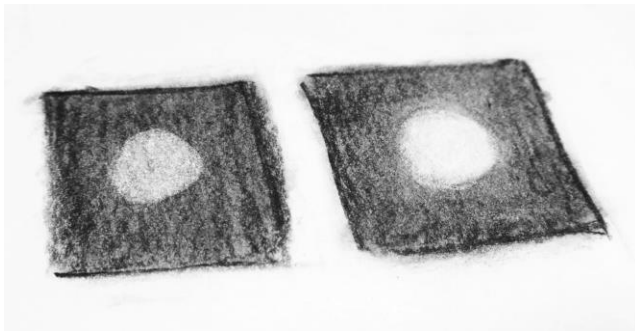
Another way I will be blending out the charcoal is using a **blending stump**.

To avoid getting uneven blending with your blending stump make sure you do not go in a back and forth motion. If you do this then you will get start and stop marks which will appear darker than the rest of your blending. Instead, blend using circle motions or sweep the blending stump from one side to another, lifting the blending stump at the end of the stroke, rather than going back and forth.



Adding Highlights

Adding highlights to your charcoal drawings is really important, as it adds more contrast to your drawing and makes it pop. Adding highlights with my Tombow mono eraser is usually the last step in my drawing process. The more pressure you apply to your eraser the brighter your highlights will look. If you want subtle highlights I recommend using a kneaded eraser instead, as it is easier to control the amount of charcoal you want to lift up.



It is important to **preserve the highlights** in your drawing. You do this by not directly shading any charcoal on your highlighted areas, as it is harder to erase. On the left swatch I shaded the charcoal everywhere, which made it harder to achieve a bright highlight with the eraser. On the right side I was able to achieve a much brighter highlight, as I didn't shade charcoal where the bright circle was going to be.