

FIGURE DRAWING SUPPLIES Kevin Gorges

We will work with a variety of models, and a wide variety of lengths of poses.

I draw with a multitude of materials. If you already have a routine, I will be interested to see how you work. Below are some suggestions. I suggest buying a variety of single sheets of paper, different surfaces and colors.

However, sometimes the most appropriate drawing paper only comes in pads.

Basic charcoal materials:

- Soft, or medium vine charcoal: I use this to start most charcoal drawings because it is easy to erase with a chamois. After I block in a reasonable line drawing, I usually switch to a more indelible medium such as the Nitram charcoal, or Conte brand compressed charcoal.
- Nitram brand charcoal: hard, medium, and soft. This brand of charcoal is superior to every other brand I have tried. Its big advantage is that it can be sharpened to a long tapered point with emery cloth (medium is best) and thus can be used with the same precision one expects from a pencil. It also seems to bind better to the paper than ordinary vine or willow charcoal does. I use it as I would use a pencil by primarily cross-hatching. I rarely if ever smudge this type of charcoal.
- Vinyl eraser.
- Kneaded rubber eraser. Kneaded rubber is the only eraser that can be molded to the shape you need. It “lifts” graphite or charcoal off the paper and leaves the paper in a less ravaged state than an abrading eraser would. Use it like “silly putty”.
- Chamois. This lifts charcoal almost entirely from your paper in large swaths without hurting the paper. It can also be used to tone paper by saturating it with materials such as sanded compressed charcoal, vine charcoal, NUPASTEL, or anything else you care to try.
- Board to mount paper on, and masking tape or clips. I usually put several pieces of paper underneath the paper I’m working on to create a softer surface.
- Medium grade emery cloth to sharpen charcoal. Use this to sharpen your NITRAM charcoal; and to sand compressed charcoal or NUPASTEL for use in toning paper or other special effects.
- Blending stumps of different sizes. These are used to “push” the charcoal

or pastel into the paper, and smooth-out the application. Once the tip has medium on it, it can also be used as a primary drawing tool.

- Single sheets of CANSON or STRATHMORE charcoal paper, white or pale color. Charcoal paper has a texture that permits more charcoal to bind to the paper. If a more texture is wanted, try pastel papers. You can even spray your paper with workable fixative to create a rougher surface.
- STRATHMORE 400 series drawing paper, medium surface. This is a good multi-purpose paper.
- STRATHMORE 500 series drawing paper, regular surface; or 2-ply Bristol vellum surface. Smoother than typical charcoal or pastel paper, this takes “toning” better than any other paper I have tried. It holds a fair amount of charcoal, compressed charcoal, or NUPASTEL. These materials can often be erased down to the white of the paper.
- Canson mi-teintes pastel paper, 18”x24” or larger, white or pale color. This is a heavier paper than charcoal paper, and both holds more pigment and stands up to a abuse.

- Single piece of glassine to protect drawing during transport.

Figure Drawing Supplies

Pencil materials:

- I like STONEHENGE printing paper of various colors. It is a strong paper with a beautiful smooth surface. I do not use this for any other purpose. I do not like the way charcoal works with it; maybe it can be altered for this purpose by spraying it with workable fixative before starting.
- I use FABER CASTELL pencils: HB, F, H, H2, and H3
- I shave the wood down with an exacto knife or razor blade, and sharpen the exposed lead in a rotary pointer.
- Some people prefer a lead holder, and separate leads.
- Kneaded rubber eraser.

Colored pencil materials:

- I like to use a variety of BEROL PRISMACOLOR colored pencils, usually warm colors like red or reddish purple on white or off-white STRATHMORE charcoal paper.

Pastel and Compressed Charcoal technique materials:

- NUPASTEL warm earthy reds and purples, or...

- CONTE compressed charcoal, 2B, and 4B: Either the compressed charcoal or the NUPASTEL can be sanded on the emery cloth to produce a small pile of powder which can be picked up by a chamois and smeared onto the Strathmore 500 drawing paper. This tones the paper and allows one to draw with erasers down to the white of the paper, and to add more charcoal or pastel where you want it darker.
- STRATHMORE 500 series drawing paper, regular surface; or 2-ply Bristol regular surface.
- Pentel