



Animation Therapy

# START ANIMATING NOW !



You are never too far from being able to animate, but depending on what material and equipment you have handy will determine what kind of animation you can get cracking with.

There are three key things to consider:

# 1. Animation

What are you going to animate with? Drawings, plasticine, photos, objects, text, clothes, food, cut-out pictures, digital paint or glossy motion graphics – you can pretty much animate ANYTHING and this very much depends on what interests you have, how skilled you are at image making and what you find visually interesting.

# 2. Capture

**How are you going to capture the images?** webcam, digital camera, draw straight into a computer, assemble a flip book, scan drawings into a computer – don't let a lack of technology stop you having a go.

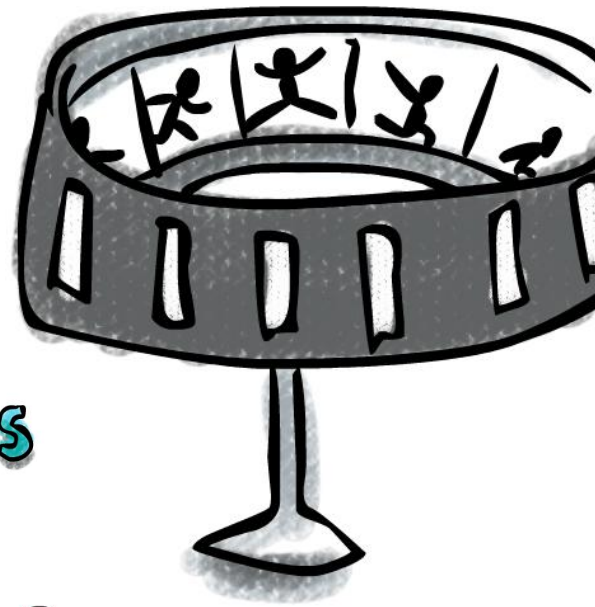
# 3. Playback

**How will you view the moving images?** – with a computer, on a film projector, flip book or zoetrope, recording on a mobile phone camera.





# flipbooks & zoetropes



The most low tech thing to do is to make a flip book. To get going all you need is paper, a stapler and a pen. You needn't even draw, you could use thumb prints, or cut your own stamps out of potatoes or rubbers. You could use a pre made notebook and just begin at the back of the book and draw your way through - flipping as you go to keep check of your progress.

Example - You could draw a man walking from left to right. Once he has done this over the course of several pages you can go back to the first drawing and draw his dog walking along side. And then you can go back through adding details until the scene is as full as you like. Adding a bird flying in the distance, clouds, bushes, a random snake wiggling past and so on..

You could then show your animation by flipping the book or you could get a bit clever and film the book being flipped on your mobile phone camera, so you could then share with a bigger audience on Youtube for example.



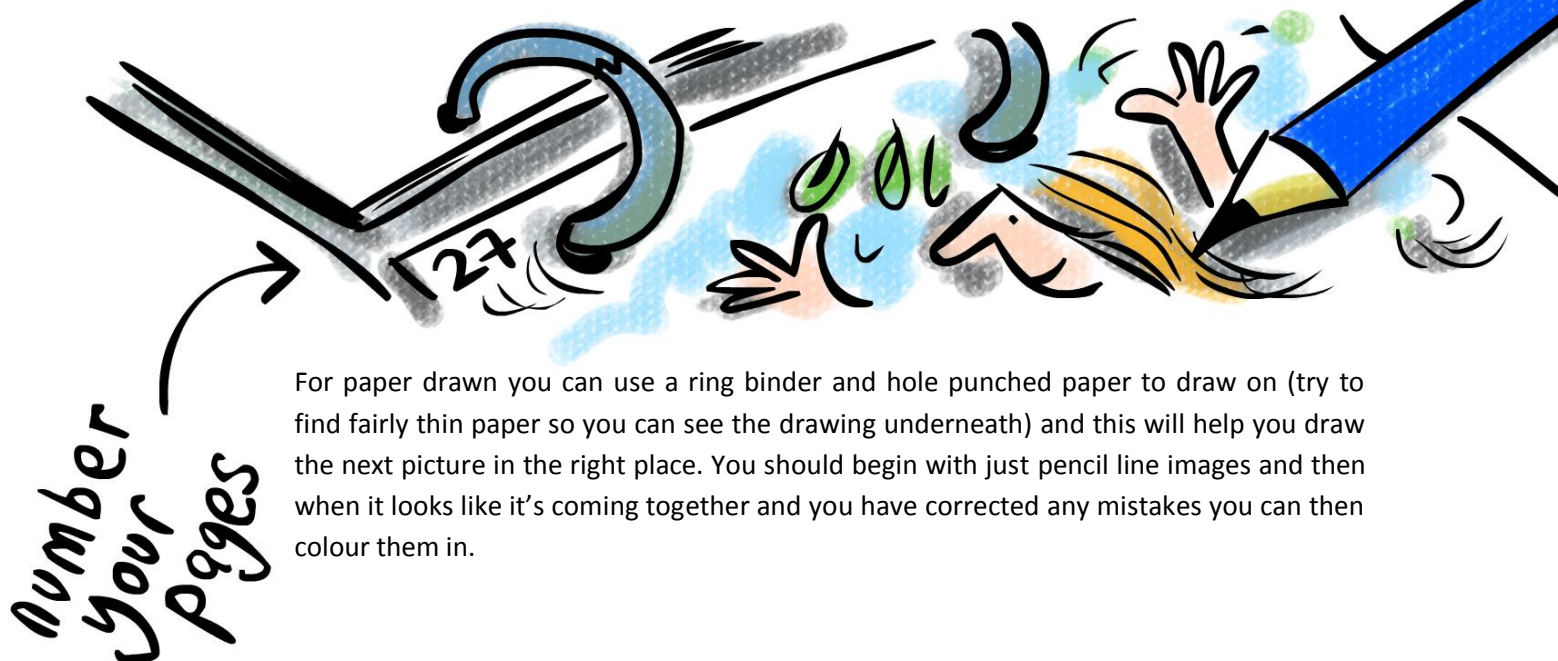
Another low tech way to animate is to make or buy a zoetrope is an optical toy which uses a series of images, drawn on a strip of paper placed inside a cylinder which can rotate. You can make your own zoetrope, or alternatively buy one from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) for less than £5.

The pictures will appear to move when viewed through slots in the spinning cylinder. This is a great way to master 'the cycle' as the same few frames of animation will play over and over as the drum is spun. You can try drawing a ball bouncing, a rabbit hopping, a horse galloping, a cup rotating.. or abstract shapes transforming into ...erm other abstract shapes.

## Handmade Techniques



2D or 3D animation techniques are closer to what a professional would use and can be recreated in a basic way at home. Here we show you how to do a drawn on paper technique and a 3D plasticine technique – both of which you will need a computer to help you assemble the final piece.



For paper drawn you can use a ring binder and hole punched paper to draw on (try to find fairly thin paper so you can see the drawing underneath) and this will help you draw the next picture in the right place. You should begin with just pencil line images and then when it looks like it's coming together and you have corrected any mistakes you can then colour them in.



The next step is to scan the images or take photos of each one, being careful to make sure the camera is the same distance away each time from the page so it won't look too jumpy. If you have a tripod this can make life easier or a scanner even easier!

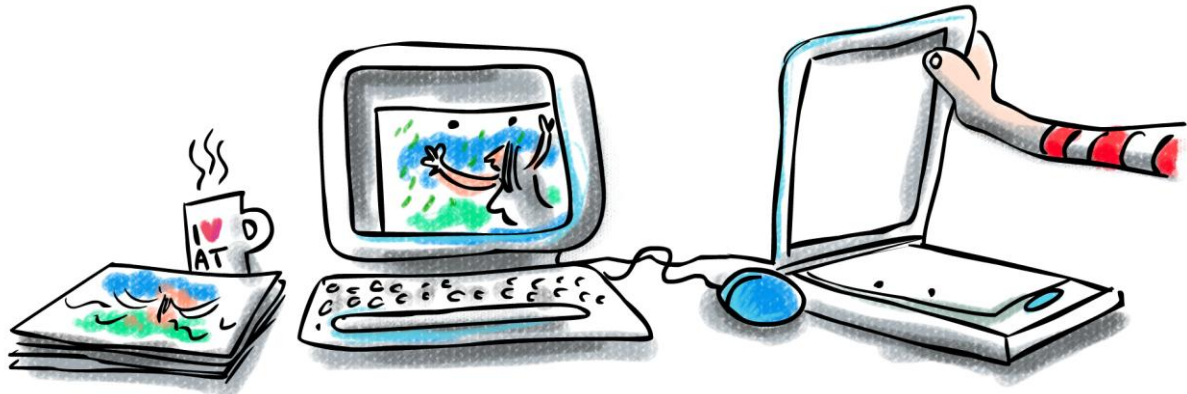


For stop motion sets and models you can create whatever background you require out of card and art materials, try using printouts of buildings or landscape to look more realistic. The characters can be built out of plasticine, remembering to keep the model bottom heavy, as they will have to stand up by themselves. Making a wire skeleton for the model might help it stay together.



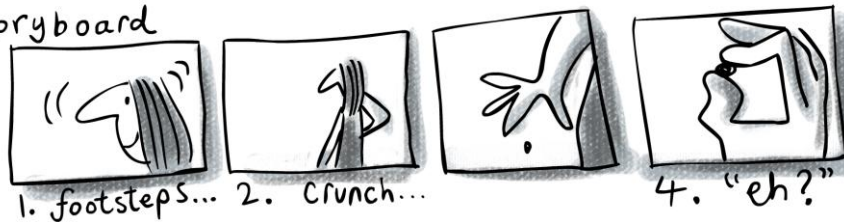


Once you have animated your character within the set you have built, or photographed your series of animation drawings – you will then need to assemble the images into a sequence so you can see the whole thing playing.

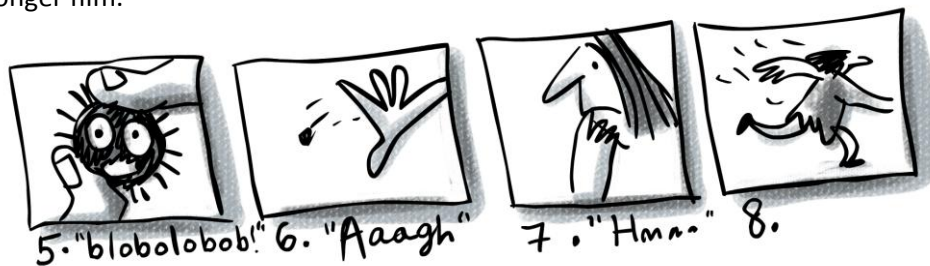


There are two programs available depending on which kind of computer you have. Imovie is a free program for Mac users and Windows Movie Maker is the free one for PCs. Both programmes allow you to assemble a series of images so you can make short clips of animation. You should be able to export the finished film as a self contained movie file (AVI or Quicktime) that can be viewed on any computer.

### Storyboard




Once you have mastered the short clip, you can begin sticking more short clips together to begin creating a longer film.



You will have to then begin to think about story and content. How are you going to keep your friends interested in watching your animation once the novelty of just seeing something move wears off?

# Computers



If you have a computer, there are lots of animation programs you can download for free and they will give you a taste of various animation techniques that generate images directly into the computer. However, they will mostly take a while to master and use more of your time to learn a technique rather than let you express your ideas – so bear this in mind if you only have an afternoon to make a whole short film.

[www.snapfiles.com/get/stickfigure.html](http://www.snapfiles.com/get/stickfigure.html)

Here you can animate a little stick figure very easily. You position the joints to the pose you want to start with and then when you move on to the next frame you will see a shadow of the frame before to help you work out where to move the next pose to.

[www.aniboom.com](http://www.aniboom.com)

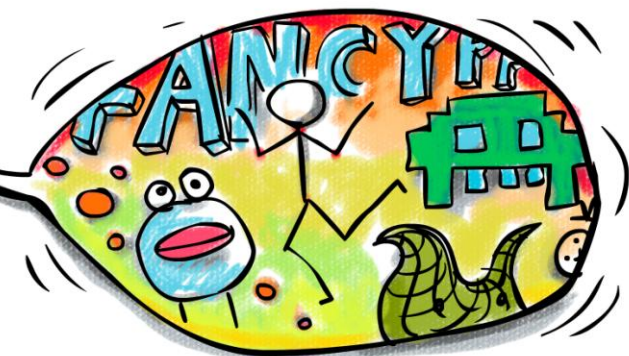
Aniboom has a program called shapeshifter which allows you to construct images out of geometric shapes which you can then manipulate to create movement. If you like clean bold colourful shapes this might be the one for you.

[www.clayanimator.com](http://www.clayanimator.com)

Clayanimator is simple animation program that you can use with your webcam or another camera. It allows you to film frame by frame whatever you put in front of the camera. Whilst this program is set up for plasticine stop frame animation you could use it for anything you care to put in front of the camera and could even use it to film your paper drawn animation.

[www.anim8or.com](http://www.anim8or.com)

This program gives you a chance to learn 3D computer graphics similar to what is used by the big feature film studios. This will probably take a while to learn so don't expect too much too soon!



# Animation Advice



8 – 12 pictures a second is ok. Feel free to put in holds, so the audience will have time to think about what they might have just seen. Short is sweet, think how much information we absorb in a tv advert, which is usually 30 seconds long.

Make it up as you go along. Many great award winning films have been made from people who evolved their own special technique by playing around. There is no right and wrong. It's Ok to make mistakes, each image is up on the screen for such a short flash of time, no one will see it! Try mixing a few techniques together

Music can be laid over the top of your animation as an easy way to make the film seem complete. If you wanted to get more into using sound, you could try making a few different tracks that fade in and out where they are needed. Be careful if you use commercial music if you want to put your film on the internet, you won't own the copyright and be free to exhibit your film. It's often best to find a musical friend to help or make your own music somehow!

A professional film will often have at least one voice track, a music track, a sound fx track and an atmosphere track.

Voice Over can be a good way to tell your story.

Create your own film club or mini film festival and share your films with each other. You can of course upload them to Youtube and show the whole world what you have created!

