

# A Guide to Drawing with Stumps

Methods of Using Stumps  
with Graphite, Charcoal,  
Chalk and Pastels



*Vivid & Diversified*  
DennisLee Brown

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# Drawing Stumps

## The Drawing Stump

The Drawing Stump is a cylindrical drawing tool, usually made of soft paper that is tightly wound into a stick and sanded to a point at both ends. The stumps are mostly pale in color and turns to the color of the medium it is used for. Stumps come in various sizes: #1 thru #8, choose the correct numbered Stump according to space, subject, or object in the drawing. It is used by artists to smudge or blend marks made with charcoal, graphite, Conté crayon, pastels, chalk, or other dry drawing media. Skillfully using stumps, shading, gradations, and halftones can be produced. They are a great drawing tool, that can create countless effects, and smooth blending is its' most popular usage.



Figure 1: 8 Piece Set of Blending Stumps

Stumps have typically made of paper but can also make of felt or leather. They come sold in the art industry in a range of sizes suitable for manipulations of dry media covering large areas, for operations on a miniature scale, and those in-between. A variant that is not as tightly packed and has a hollow core is called tortillon.

Figure 3: 8 Piece Blending Stump Set The Drawing Tortillon

A variant of the Stump that is not as tightly coiled and has a hollow core is called Tortillon.

A **tortillon** (The French name for [/to:r'ti:jon/](#); or **blending stump**) is a cylindrical drawing tool, tapered at the end and usually made of rolled paper, used by artists to smudge or blend marks made the drawing process. Smearing is its' most popular usage, and they come in sizes #1, #2, & #3.

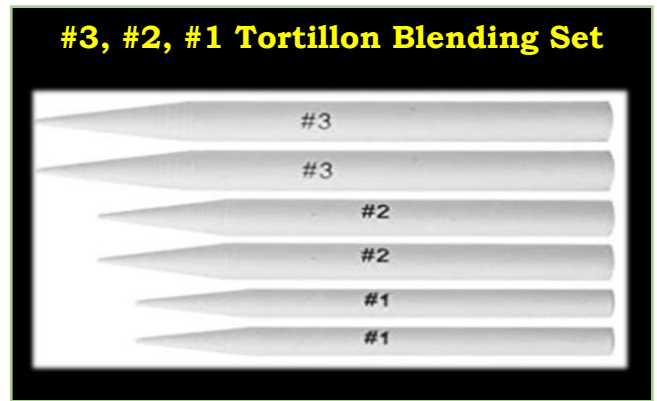


Figure 2: #3,#2, & #1 Tortillon Set



Figure 4: ARRANGEMENT ON A TOWEL 14" X 17" Graphite on Paper (C) DLB 3-2021 IMG\_E0818

Tortillons produce slightly different textures than stumps when blending, and they also are hollow, as opposed to stumps being solid. Because Tortillons' tips are smaller than Stumps, they produce a smaller mark, and thereby it takes more strokes to shade an area, object, or subject. Stumps' tips are much blunter than Tortillons, they produce a larger mark, and thereby it takes much fewer strokes to shade an area, object, or subject. Because the Tortillon has a pointier, tighter, smaller tip, they can blend even in a tighter space where a high level of precision

may be mandatory. Use an even amount of pressure on their delegate tips, as to much pressure will collapse it. A toothpick, paperclip, a short piece of thin wire can push the tip back out and make the tip more stable.

The Stump in the under-hand position, with the sharpened edge laying on the drawing surface, generates a boulder, a wide mark with each stroke.

## General Stump/Tortillion Usage:

Before you use a Stump in your artwork, there are a few things to consider

- **The Support:** I-be-it, drawing paper, drawing board, canvas, etc., the smoothness, grain, or teeth of the drawing support will have a profound effect on the result of a finished drawing.

- Smooth surfaces work best when using Stumps to apply graphite to blending
- Ruff or Teeth surfaces will affect the texture of the object as well as produce some striking highlights and special effects.

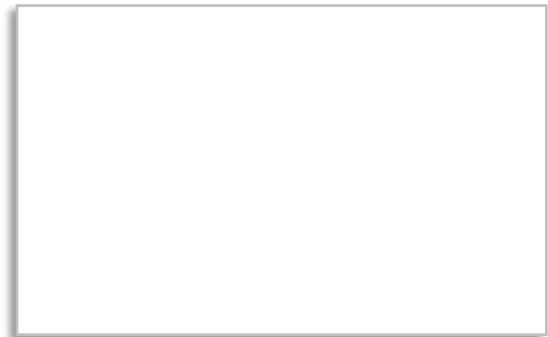
- **Very Smooth Drawing Papers**

- [400 Series Drawing Smooth](#)

- [500 Series Drawing Plate](#)

- [500 Series Bristol Plate](#)

- [500 Series Plate Illustration Boards](#)



*Figure 5: 500 Series Bristol Plate*



*Figure 6: Gradual Stump Blending*

**Practice:** Before applying Stumps & Tortillon drawing techniques to your artwork, get to know the tool and how to effectively handle it. Familiarize yourself with the types of marks it leaves behind after you have made different types of strokes. On a clean sheet of paper, draw a shape with the Tortillon or Stump.

- Shade in half of the object with graphite, charcoal, or pastels using “cross-hatching drawing techniques.
- Use the Stump to blend the graphite, charcoal, or pastels, by gently rubbing over the media until it is smooth without any visible line of demarcation.

Draw some tight scribbles in a small corner of a scrap piece of paper and work the graphite onto the paper stump. If needed, remove excess graphite by rubbing it in a clean area of the paper before using it on your drawing. Use light strokes to layer the graphite onto your portrait. When using the shading tool, hold the Stump/Tortillon in either the over-hand or under-hand position. Rub the side or tip of the stump to blend and smooth out your drawing’s outline. Using a blending stump is a great way to make a quick sketch or when the drawing is in its’ final stages look more refined, Use the Stump and/or the tortillon.

## Softness Technique

Draw a circle using a rough piece of charcoal or graphite and take a few minutes to shade half of it using cross-hatching strokes. From the horizon cross-hatch the wall darker shade on the right, while the left is somewhat lighter in value. Draw in the cast shadow of the sphere. Duplicate the drawing with as much accuracy as possible. [See Page 7 of 13](#)

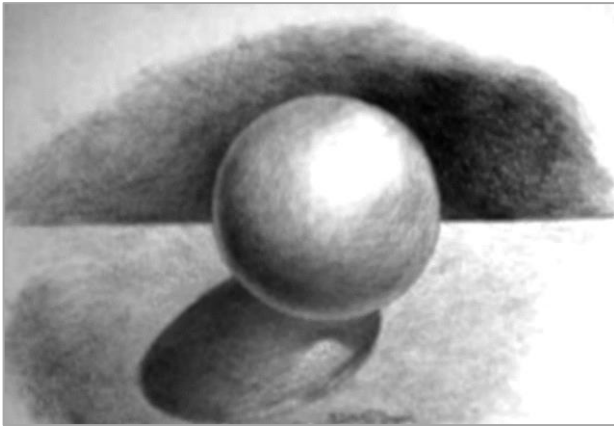


Figure 8: *Softness Technique Illustration - 1 - "SOFT" Strokes*

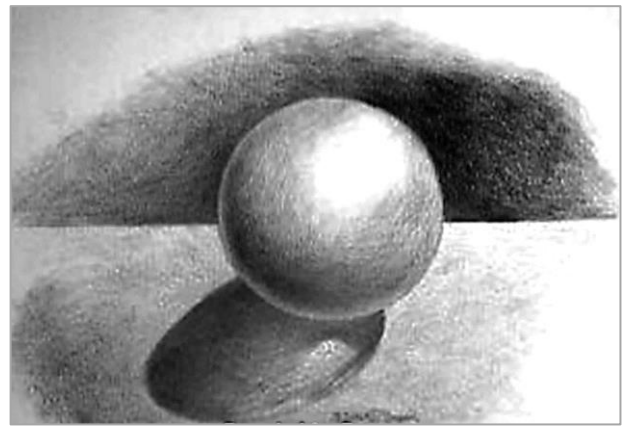


Figure 8: *Softened Techniques illustrated -2- "Ruff" Strokes.*

Rubbing the blending stick across it. Start by blending areas of light value with the side or tip of the stump before working into darker values. Blending the material will make your sketching lines disappear so the drawing looks softer.

- For example, try drawing a ball and sketch it as though the light is hitting it from one side, so the opposite side is darker. Then use the stump to blend the values so the ball looks smooth and even.

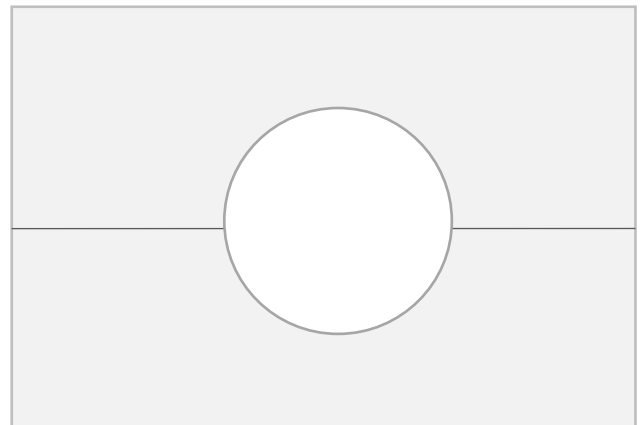


Figure 9: *Softness Technique Illustration - Exercise 1*

## Using Stumps with Graphite or Charcoal

Cross-hatching and area (space), or an object, with graphite or charcoal, creates shade in any given portion of a drawing. Blending the cross-hatched sections of a drawing allows for greater depth, tonal values, and graduate blending. Small jars of graphite (*for highlights & light sections of a drawing, use "5H" or higher graphite, and for darker shaded parts use "9B" or higher graphite. Charcoal mixed with the "9B" graphite increases blackness, use it to show cast shadows and "dark space"*).



Stumps may be used in combination with any dry drawing media and it will add special effects to the artwork:

- **Smudging** – *blurring, smearing, smudging, etc.,*
- **Shading** – *masking, filling-in, shading, tints & tones*
- **Blending** – *mixing, combining, merging*
- **Values** – *grayscale between black & white or dark & light*
  - **Light Value** – *tints & highlights*
  - **Dark Value** – *tones, shade & shadow*

## Stump & Tortillon Techniques

When drawing or shading “white” items, (*such as a white towel, or bowl*) take a dirty Stump or Tortillon, clean off any excess graphite, charcoal or other medium. Use the Stump/Tortillon to sketch the outline, with the Stump/Tortillon in the underhand position (the Stump/Tortillon laying on its’ side pull the medium inwards to shade the object. Add layers of the appropriate media to increase tint, tone, & shades.

Rub or dip the Stump and/or Tortillon in charcoal to produce a dark shade (*this technique works great for making cast-shadows*) for lighter shaded tones use an “H” level graphite, the higher the “H” graphite is, the lighter the tint (*this method is appropriate for high-lights*).

### Textures

All surfaces have some form of quality (*very rough to silky smooth, woody, grainy, (gritty, sandy, coarse, etc.,) as well as metallic, glassy, and so on*)! Many surfaces possess finishes like high gloss, gloss, semi-gloss, and matt, which when representing the finished surfaces in artwork acquires different drawing techniques and tools.

The **Troillion’s** design is a wonderful drawing tool for such effects.

- Dap the point continuously in an area to indicate a very rough or sandy, dirty surface
- Turn the Troillion on its’ side to create and indicate a “hatching” pattern and pull or push the tool in a different direction to imply “cross-hatching”.

### Layering

Building up the media by adding layers of it over the top to create different effects, such as contrast to the work of art. Hatching and cross-hatching are the techniques used to achieve build-up effects especially in a dark shaded area of the drawing and cast shadows.

When there is an overload of the medium on the Stump/Tortillon, rub off the excess on a sheet of paper.

## General Methods of Use

- Draw with a graphite or charcoal blending Stump instead of a pencil or charcoal.
- Use the Stump and/or Tortillon to fade out the edges.
- Use different blending stumps according to where and what effects are needed in the project.
- Rub the side or tip of the stump to blend and smooth out the contour lines in a drawing.
- Dab the tip of the blending stump to make detailed smears and effects on the surface of objects in drawings.
- Build greater tonal values by layering the graphite or charcoal with a stump to shade your image.
- Rub the stump over charcoal, then apply it to “space” to make a completely dark space.
- Wipe the blending stump on a [sandpaper block](#) to remove excess graphite.
- Rub the Stump/Tortillon on a clean sheet of [sandpaper block](#) to test how the tonal value of the graphite/charcoal before applying it to the artwork.



Figure 10: Kneaded Rubber Eraser

## Maintaining Stumps & Tortillons

Good maintenance of these drawing tools ensures unwanted marks and strokes in the artwork.

- When the Stumps & Tortillons gets too dirty to use, rub the blending stump against sandpaper to clean and sharpen it.
- Restructure the unraveling tips of Stumps & Tortillons with a nail clipper.
- To create longer points, sharpen the tip of the stump with a craft knife, then sand it smooth on a piece of fine-grain sandpaper.
- Cleaning of tortillons and stumps usually involves removing the used outer layer of paper by scraping or rubbing the drawing tool on an abrasive surface, such as [sandpaper block](#), file, carpet, pink rubber erasers, or an emery board. Emery boards or fine grain sandpaper are ideal for shaping, sharpening, and cleaning Stumps & Tortillon. The coarseness of the Emery Board or Sandpaper determines the cleanliness and sharpness of these smearing tools. Whittling off the tips of Stumps, if they become too dull or mashed in gives new life to them.

## Stump Sharping & Shaping

A well-kept stump no doubt enriches your drawings, especially when blending of any kind. An essential part of drawing is a clean, sharpened shaped, stump. When sanding stumps to shape it, use a medium to fine grain sandpaper, and knock off any excess stump sanding.

### Stump Shaping



Blending Stumps – Standard Factory General stump for sketching & blending



Stump with one end sanded down to an angle for “short” blending.



Stump with one end sanded down to a blunt point for softly blurred blending.



Stump with one end sanded down to a sharp point for large area blending.

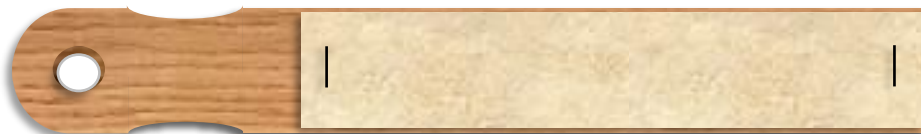


Stump with one end sanded down to an angle point for tight spots.



Stump with one end sanded down to a chiseled point for squared blending & lettering

### Sandpaper Block



Sanding block for cleaning, sharpening, and shaping drawing stumps

## The Kneaded Eraser

The Knead Eraser AKA “the Putty Eraser” is an important artistic tool for individuals who desire to draw to perfection. The eraser is nothing like the ordinary rubber or vinyl eraser, which are not intended for serious artwork. Knead Erasers’ are much softer and more pliable, it can be shaped in any form or shape the artist desire, be its stretched, molded, or compressed. Because of its’ flexible, the Kneaded Eraser can be shaped to fit any just-about any unwanted mark on the drawing.

Like many other drawing tools, the Kneaded Eraser is a staple of any artist’s toolbox. The eraser is the closest companion to the drawing stump. It can be used to remove numerous kinds of dry drawing materials, including charcoal, graphite, chalk, and pastel. For the reason that it is pliable, the eraser can be shaped and used to create special effects in your drawing. It can be used for deleting unwanted media, it picks up graphite without smearing or leaving behind erasers droppings.

When working with tones and tints the eraser is great for

- creating special highlighting,
- creating texture,
- removal of dry media
- create patterns

### Techniques of Using the Knead Eraser

- “Dabbing” (*tapping, touching, Patting, etc.,*) is the most common use to erase material
- Dab the eraser on the page rather than dragging it across. Dabbing the eraser lifts any unwanted drawing media.
- Sculpt the eraser into a point or a chisel (*any shape needed*) to erase small and/or large areas. Stretch, fold, bend, knead, flatten, roll, or do whatever is needed to make the eraser into other shapes to suit the area you are erasing, such as a thin straight edge.
- Wipe the eraser across a page to remove smudges – Clean up the art where smudges reside; carefully swipe the eraser gently across any smudges to eliminate them.
- Use the eraser as a drawing tool for rendering or creating highlights.
  - **Rendering:** Rendering (an interpretation – a depiction) the process of laying down darker tones to start, then using an eraser to soften the tones to create an image. Kneaded erasers are also great for lightening small areas to make highlights,
  - **Highlighting:** Establish light effects and glows in your artwork by working the Knead Erase so that it will render lighter tints in art

### Care of the Knead Eraser

Taking care of the kneed is not at all a hard task, (*but Note: once the eraser is used to subtract any amount of drawing media, it began to collect it and store it within itself.*) *fold the soiled section into itself, and knead the eraser, pulling it apart until a clean section appears.* Store in an airtight container or plastic wrap. If it is hardened, run under warm water, and knead until pliable again.

## Stump Skills Exercises

Complete each of the following exercises below. These exercises are developed to boost your drawing skill by using Stump drawing techniques for blending and shading areas of the artwork. Like anything else, it's necessary to practice often, considering how to control the drawing tools being used. The parts of the shapes "grayed", in the areas where the exercise requires [completion.] It is recommended that you follow the instructions to obtain the skills level the exercises intend for you to achieve.

### ***Exercise Instructions:***

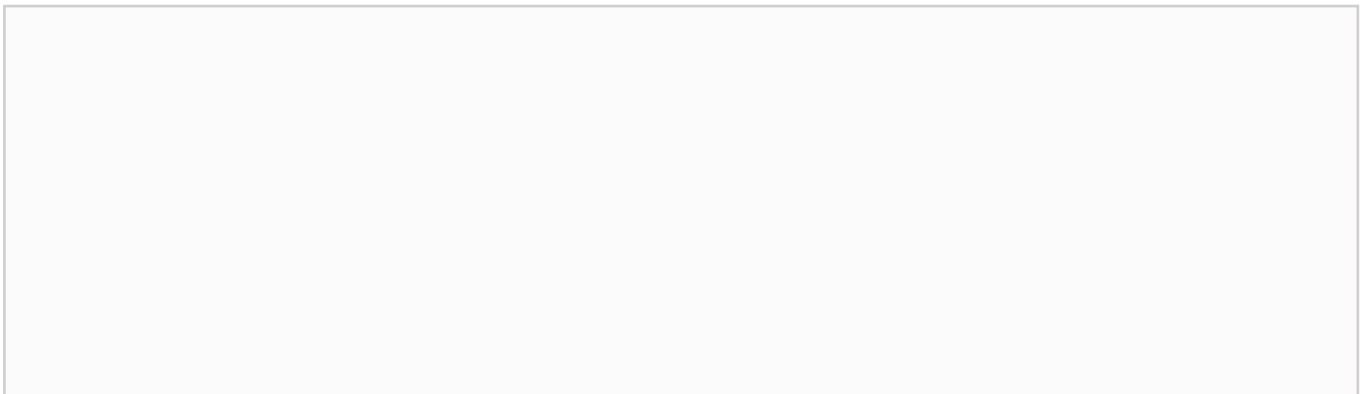
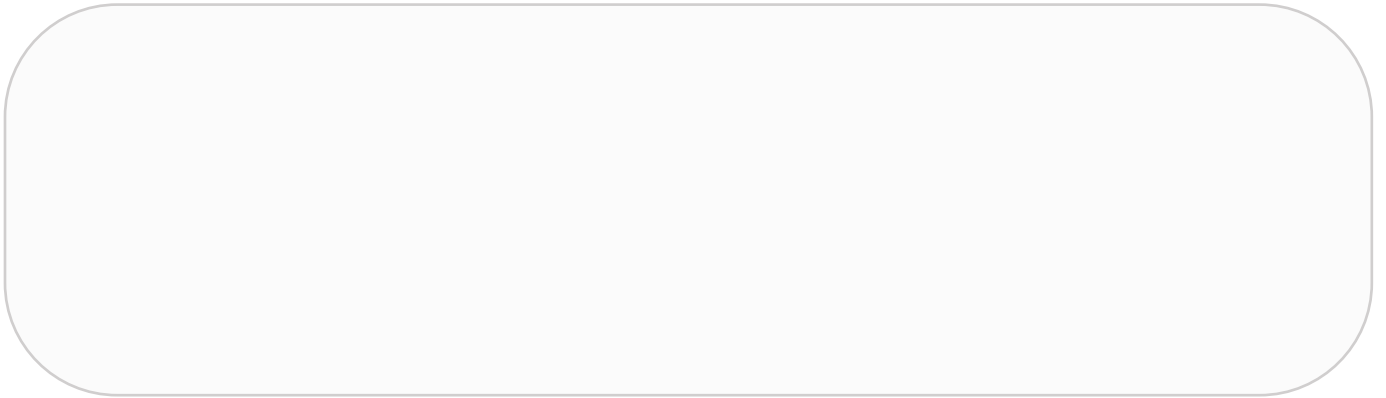
*Choose the appropriate "B" (for shade) or "H" (for highlights) graphite to shade in the shapes in the exercises below.*

**Note:** *Important to do all "Hatching & Cross-Hatching" with graphite, then build up the shaded area(s) with a blending Stump and/or Tortillon.*

## Exercise 1

1. Using “**5B**” Pencil or graphite stick, shade in the shapes below using the “Hatching” drawing technique.
2. When all the shapes have been shaded, now “Cross-hatch” the shapes.

Shade in the shapes below



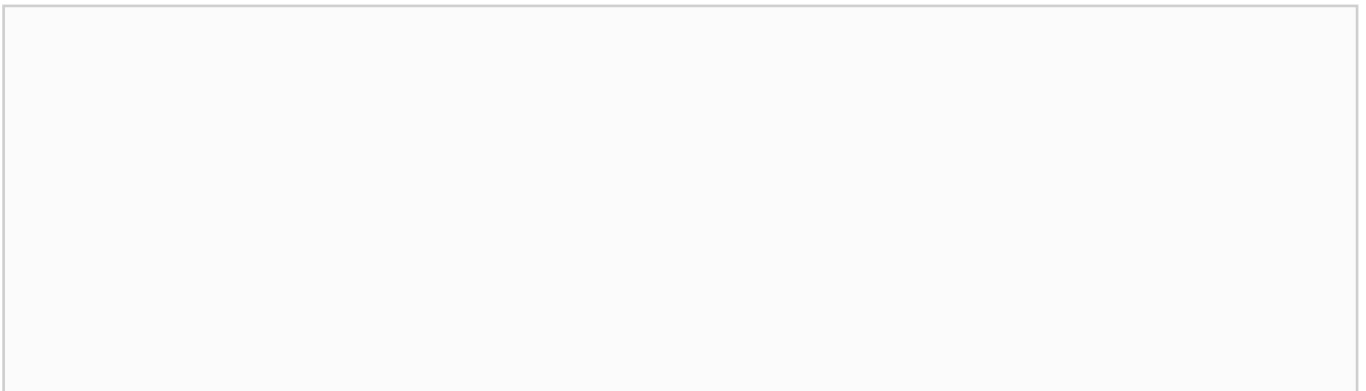
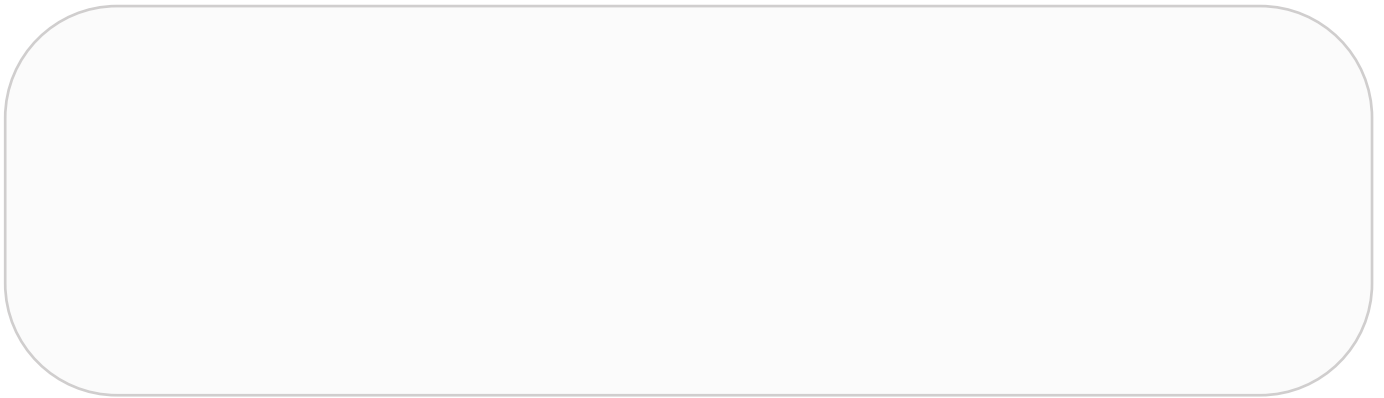
## Exercise 2

1. Using a "5B" pencil or graphite stick, and a "4H" pencil or graphite stick, with the "Cross-hatch" drawing technique shade the shapes.
2. When all the shapes have been shaded, with a Stump smoothly blend each shape.

Shade in the shapes below gradually transitioning from dark tones to highlights

Dark >

< light



### Exercise 3

1. Using a "5B" pencil or graphite stick, and a "4H" pencil or graphite stick, shade in the shapes below using the "Cross-hatch" drawing technique.
2. When all the shapes have been shaded, with a Stump smoothly blend each shape.

Shade in the shapes below gradually transitioning from dark tones to highlights

shade side >

< highlight side



shade side >

< highlight side





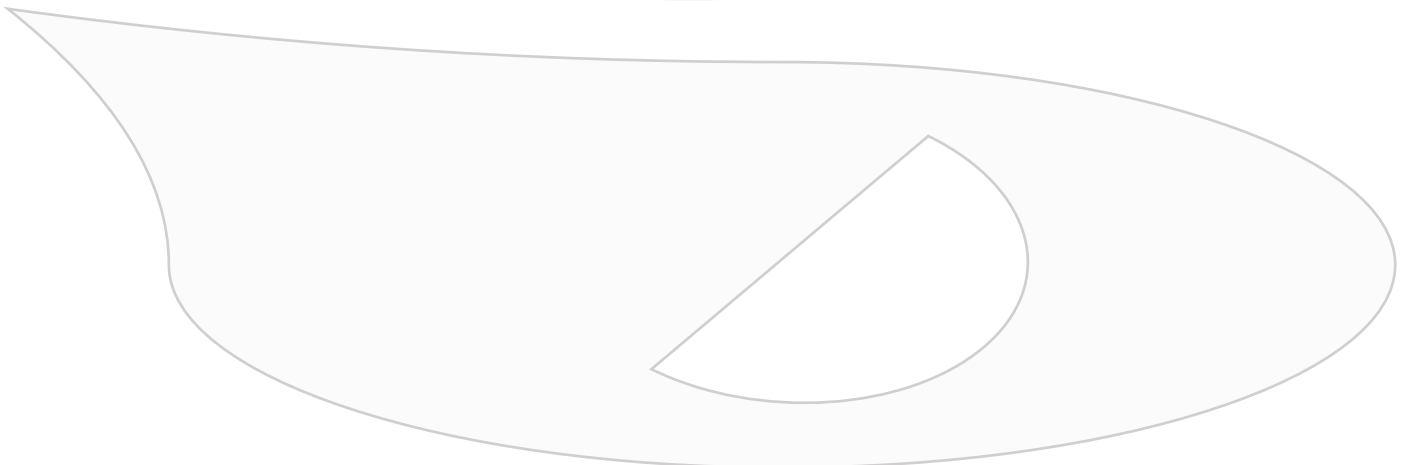
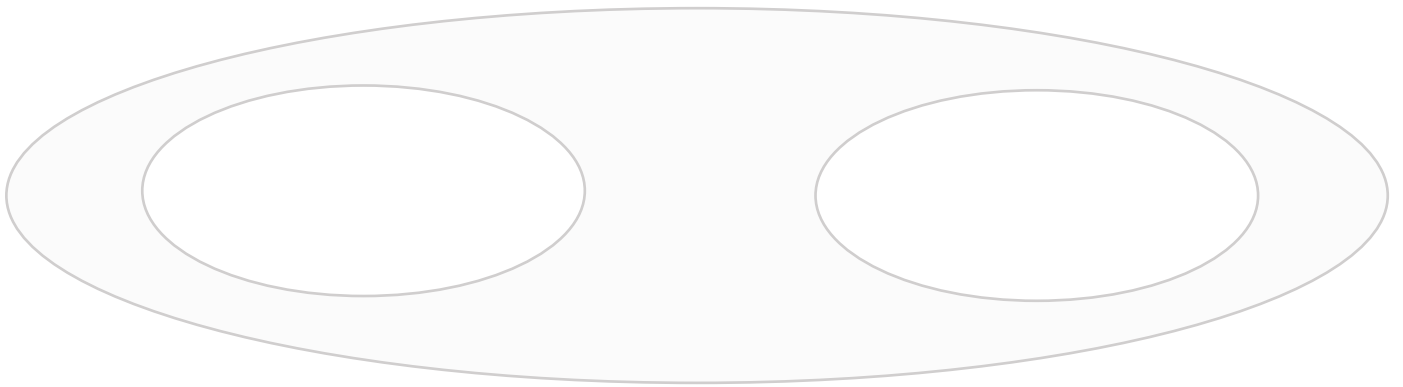
## Exercise 4

1. Using a "7B" pencil or graphite stick, and a "5H" pencil or graphite stick, with the "Cross-hatch" drawing technique shade the shapes.
2. When all the shapes have been shaded, with a Stump to smoothly blend each shape.

Shade in the shapes below gradually transitioning from dark tones to highlights

shade side >

< highlight side



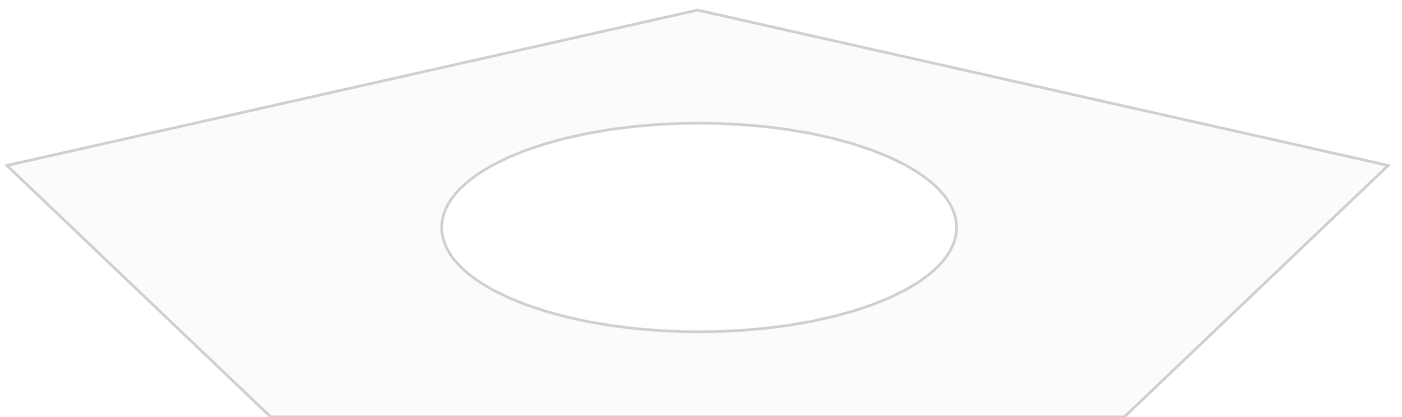
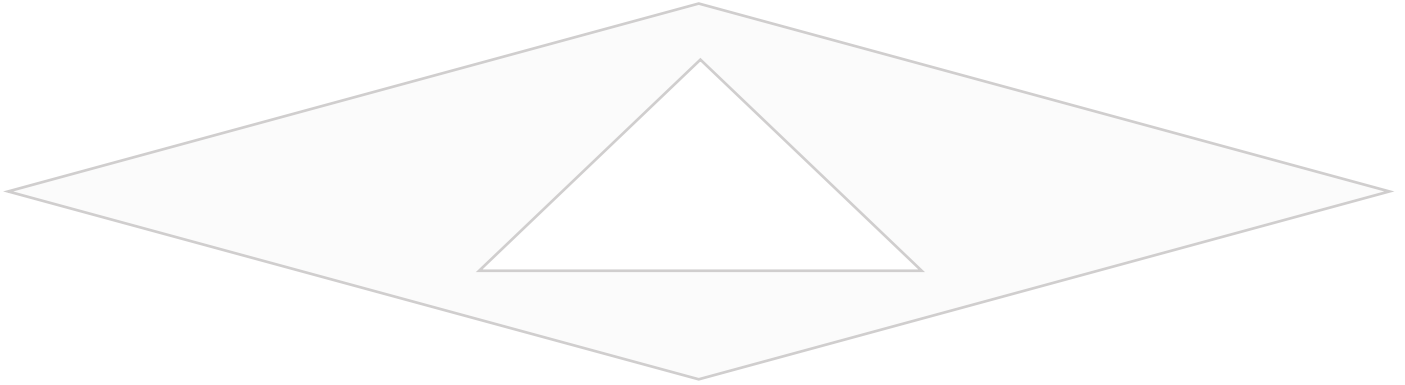
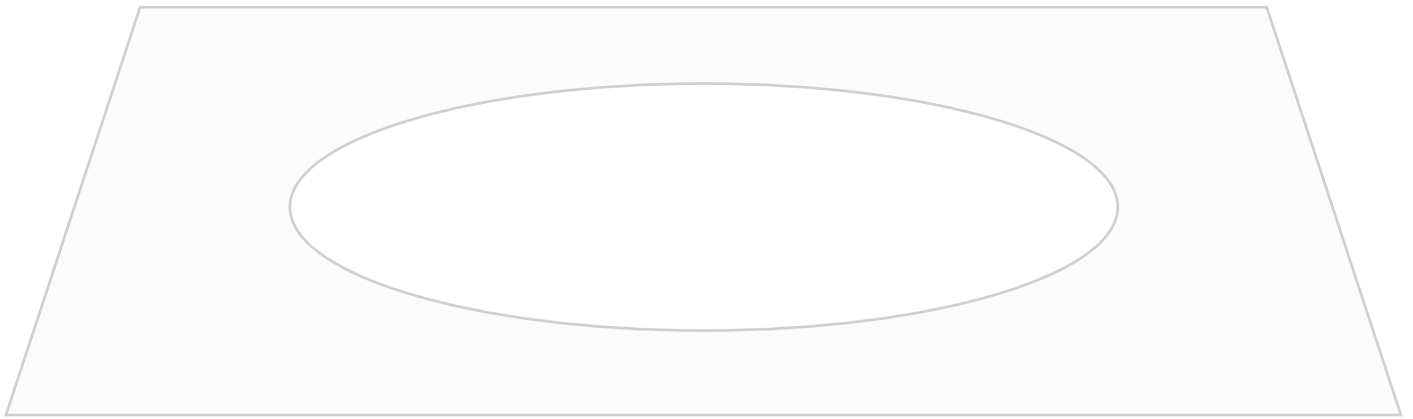
## Exercise 5

1. Using a **"9B"** pencil or graphite stick, and a **"7H"** pencil or graphite stick, with the "Cross-hatch" drawing technique shade the shapes.
2. When all the shapes have been shaded, with a Stump to smoothly blend each shape.

Shade in the shapes below gradually transitioning from dark tones to highlights

shade side >

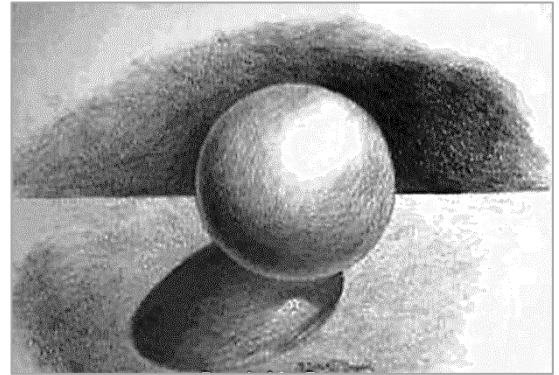
< highlight side



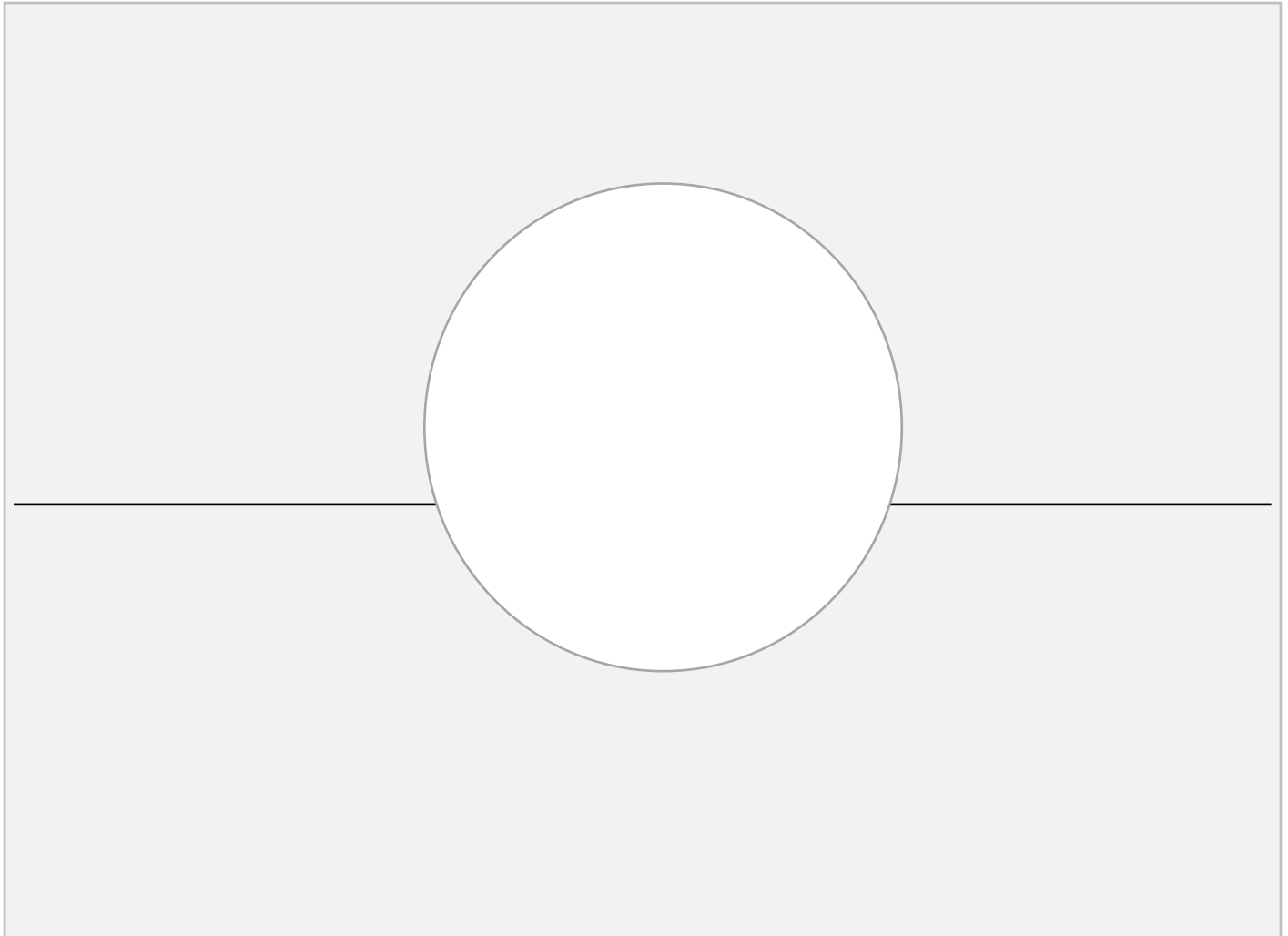
## Exercise 6

Use Stumps and Tortillon only. Draw the sphere in the diagram below, using cross-hatching strokes, shadow the sphere, cross-hatch the background wall and the plain which the sphere is sitting. Draw in the reflected light and the cast shadow.

1. Using a "**4B thru 9B**" pencil or graphite stick, and a "**4H & 7H**" pencil or graphite stick, with the "Cross-hatch" drawing technique shade the shapes.
2. When all the shapes have been shaded, with a Stump to smoothly blend each shape.



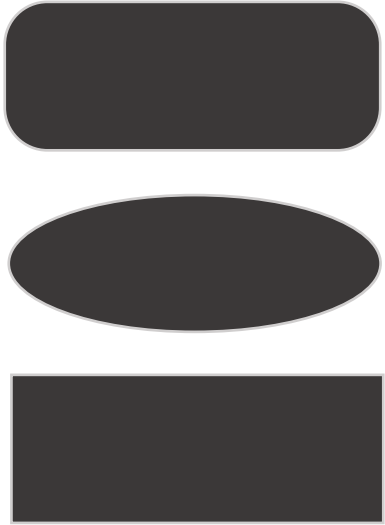
*Figure 11: Exercise 2 - Draw the Sphere*



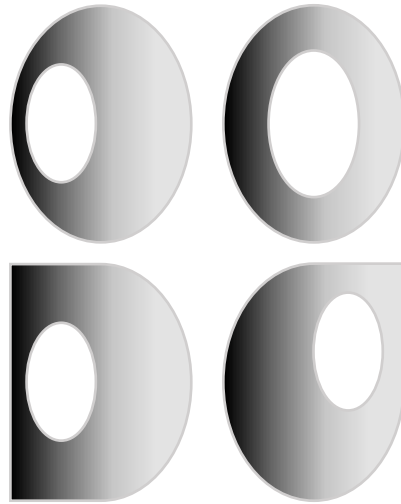
# Exercise Illustrations Examples

Completion of the Exercises should have a similar resemblance.

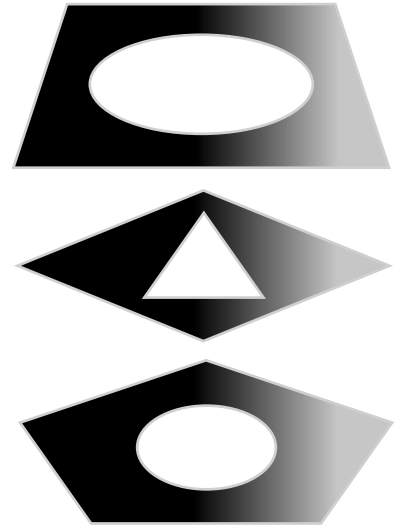
## Exercise 1



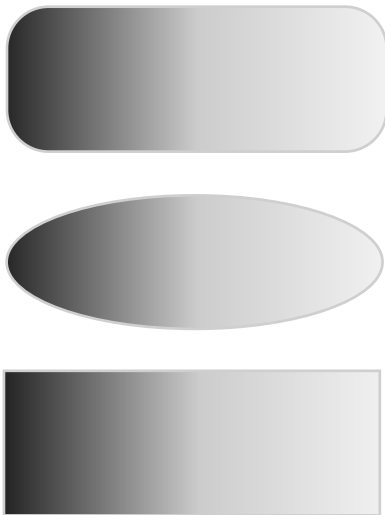
## Exercise 3



## Exercise 5



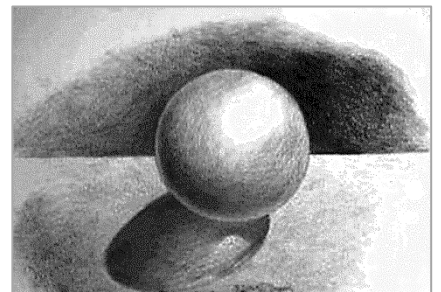
## Exercise 2



## Exercise 4



## Exercise 6



# Art Illustrations

## Arrangement On A Towel



*Artwork Illustration 1: ARRANGEMENT ON A TOWEL 14"X17" Graphite on Paper (C) DLB 3-2021 IMG\_E0818*

# Light On A Sphere

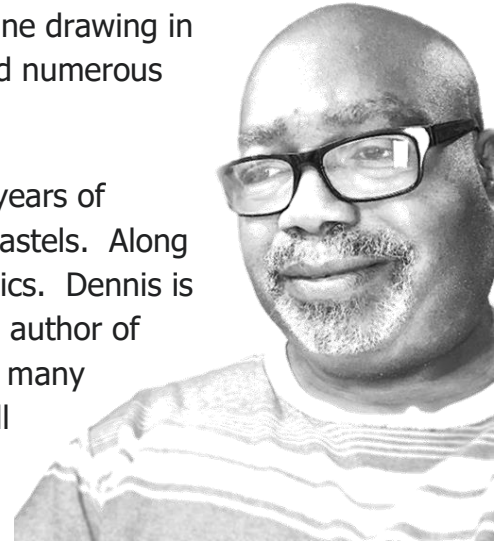


*Artwork Illustration 2: Light on A Sphere*

## About the artist

Dennis Lee Brown is an artist of exceptional talent in the art of fine drawing in graphite, charcoal, and pastels, along with that he has completed numerous paintings in oils and acrylics.

Dennis Lee Brown is an artist of exceptional talent with over 55 years of experience in the art of fine drawing in graphite, charcoal, and pastels. Along with that, he has completed numerous paintings in oils and acrylics. Dennis is the author of various art instruction materials and books and the author of "Drawing Techniques", "Graduate Blending Part 1 & Part 2", and many others. He has provided art instruction in private school and well as an art tutor in his community.



Dennis Lee Brown Vivid & Diversified Artist

**Mr. Brown is the architect and administrator of several websites including:**

- **Art Tutoring Website** <https://artistdennisleebro.wixsite.com/arttutoring>
- **Pinterest Art Gallery** [https://www.pinterest.com/artistdennisleebrown/\\_created/](https://www.pinterest.com/artistdennisleebrown/_created/)
  - **Life-Like Portraits** <https://www.pinterest.com/artistdennisleebrown/portrait-drawings-by-dennis-lee-brown/>
- **YouTube Video Bio** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwHyKAM\\_hk8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwHyKAM_hk8)
- **YouTube Art Channel**  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLD49p6jVFKbDzNIkyywyJA/videos>
- **Drawing Techniques Video** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZLqw8ZCpK4>

Additional Websites:

- **Linda's Headbands & Accessories** <https://www.lindasheadbands.com/>
- **Growing Plants** <https://dennisleebrowncrea.wixsite.com/dennisplantgarden>
- **Ministry Website** <https://thepropheticwordsa.wixsite.com/thepropheticword>

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ARRANGEMENT ON A TOWEL 11X16 (*Cropped*)  
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Dennis Lee Brown
- **Photography:**  
**Dennis Lee Brown**

[Beginning](#)