

Practice Makes Perfect

Do you exercise by practicing for a sport or other physical activity? Soccer players spend hours on dribbling drills, dancers leap and spin over and over, and baseball players hit ball after ball until they get their swing just right.

Did you know that artists practice, too? Not many people are born knowing how to draw and paint or arrange artwork on the page. Instead, artists spend lots of time observing, sketching and studying to develop their studies.



George Bellows (1882-1925), *Business Men's Class*, April 1913, monoprint with crayon, ink, graphite and collage on board, 15 13/16 x 25 1/8 inches, Boston Public Library.

Check out this drawing by American artist George Bellows (1882-1925). It's called *Business Men's Class*. What's going on in this picture?

What do you think Mr. Bellows was trying to say about the people in the class? How does his drawing get that idea across?

Can you find...

- The teacher?
- A man picking up a barbell?
- A man wearing glasses?

Whether you think of yourself as a poor artist or as a master of the marker and crayon, you can improve your skills with practice. Challenge yourself by trying these drawing and observation exercises for two weeks. Spend at least as much time doing them as you spend on soccer or karate (for example, 30 minutes a day), and see if your artwork improves!

Exercise 1: Look at a person or object and draw its outline without looking at your paper. Then try to not lift your pencil from the paper while drawing.

Exercise 2: Try drawing something in motion, such as a car, your pet or a person walking or running.

Exercise 3: Copy your favorite comic strip from the newspaper.

Exercise 4: Study an everyday object, like a shoe, for two minutes. Then turn away from it and try to remember every detail about it, either in writing or by drawing it.

