Adobe
Brush
Letter

Find our fonts on Adobe Fonts!

What you'll learn...

- tools & materials
- how to work with the brush
- a basic alphabet
- flourishes
- digital rendering with Adobe products

Resources

LauraWorthingtonDesign.com/news/article/max2020

Tools & Materials

Yasutomo
墨汁
SUMI INK
(BLACK)
for Drawing, Painting
and Calligraphy Brush Work
6 OZ.
Conforms to
ASTM D 4236
KY6
MADE IN JAPAN
So. San Francisco, CA 94080
www.yasutomo.com
MICRON 05
ARCHIVAL INK
FABER-CASTELL
Sharpie
Pen.
TURNER
DESIGN
GOUACHE
CYAN BLUE

Brushes	Pentel Color Brush & Sign Pen, Felt Brushes, Round Watercolor Brushes sizes 2-5
Paper	Cotton Comp, Vellum, Bristol, Watercolor
Ink	Sumi Ink, Ink Sticks, Watercolor, Gouache

The act of lettering
is physical –
the result is visual

Posture

Keep both feet on the ground

Sit close to the table

Table surface at an angle or surface at waist level

Forearm resting on the table, but elbows off

Stay in the same position – move the paper, not your body

Body Mechanics

Fingers are for gripping the brush and creating small, subtle details

Brush lettering incorporates movement of the wrist, forearm and elbow and shoulder

Break your handwriting habits - keep your fingers mostly still and use your wrist, forearm and shoulder to form letters

If your letters look shaky, relax your grip and focus on using your arm

Brush Handling

Tripod grip is ideal

Hold the brush on its side for heavy strokes, upright for light strokes

Pulling strokes are easier to control than pushing strokes

Use a light touch and letter SLOWLY!

Ductus

The **number, sequence** and **direction** of strokes needed to create letterform

Ductus informs contrast: downstrokes are heavy, upstrokes are light

Tips for Left Handed Letterers

Paper at a steep angle (Inclined baseline)

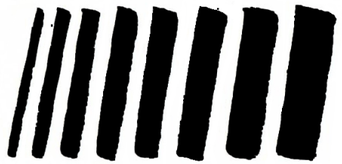
Hovering

Using a bridge or mahl stick

Reverse the ductus

Draw letters or words from right to left

Basic Brush Strokes



Straight strokes focus on maintaining a consistent width throughout the stroke. Try pulling strokes (top to bottom), pushing strokes (bottom to top) and horizontal strokes from both directions. Also, try varying the lengths of the strokes to get accustomed to both wrist and full arm movements.

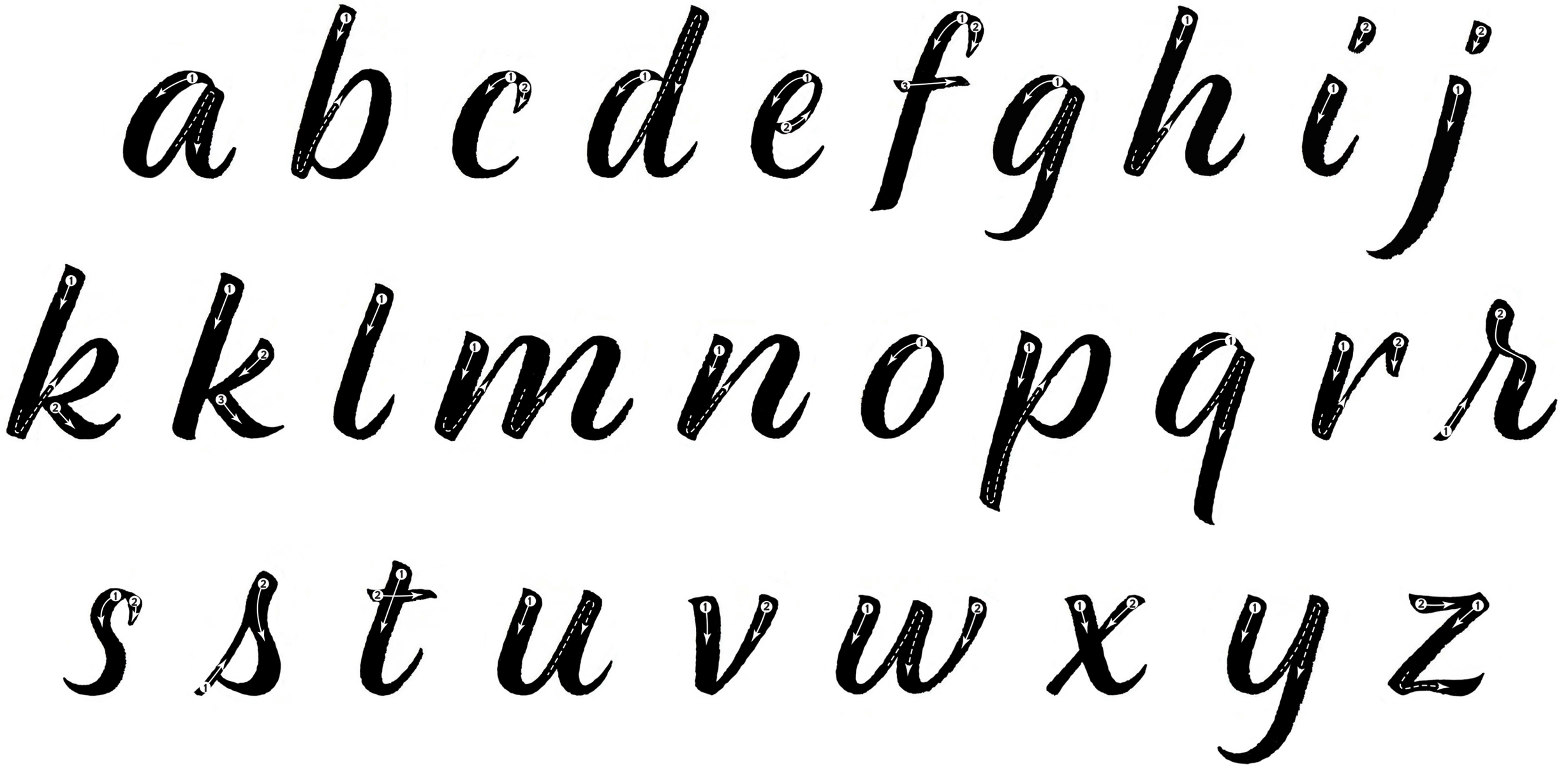
Tapered pressure/release strokes Begin with putting pressure on the brush for a heavy stroke, then slowly lift the brush to end with a light taper. Try pulling strokes, pushing strokes and horizontal strokes from both directions. Also, try varying the lengths of the strokes to get accustomed to both wrist and full arm movements.

Pressure & Release Start with a heavy stroke, then gently lift the brush to make the stroke lighter and tapered. Try starting with a light stroke, and try this as horizontal strokes.

Transitional stroke Start with a light upstroke, then slowly pull the brush around into a heavy down stroke. Pay close attention to the transition from light to heavy and vice versa.

Freeform strokes Have fun! Experiment with strokes of different shapes, sizes, lengths and tapers.

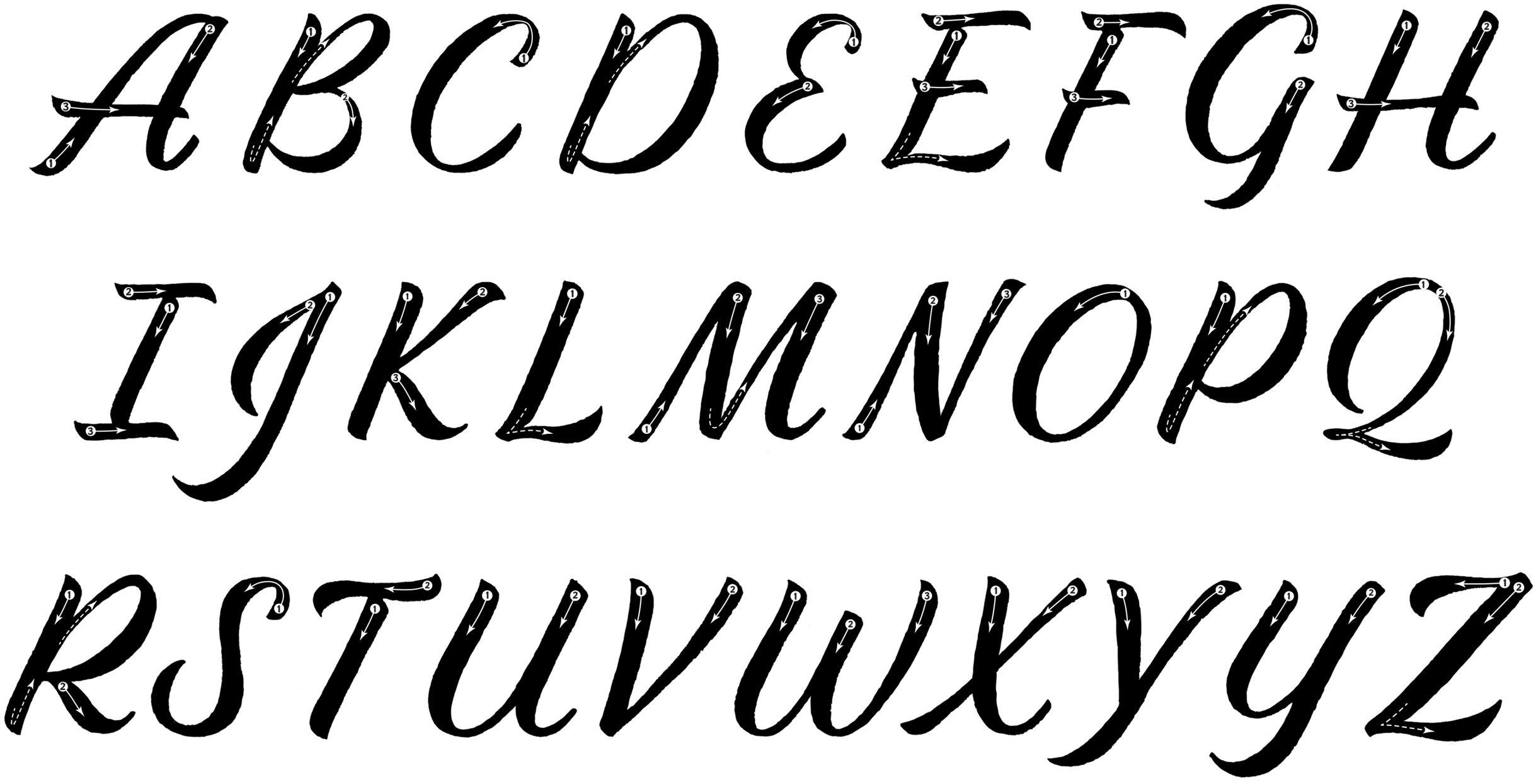
Lowercase Alphabet

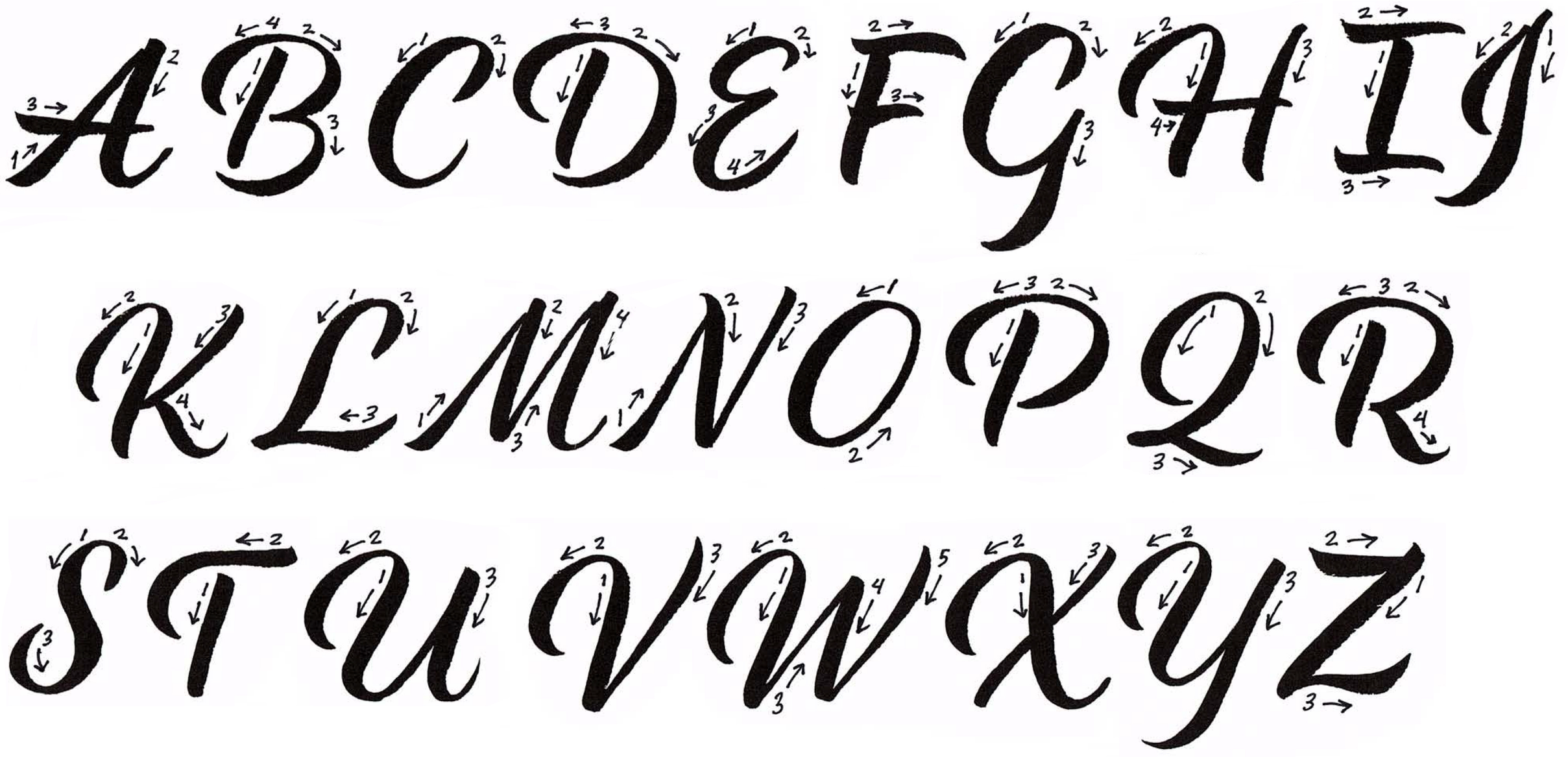

a b c d e f g h i j
k k l m n o p q r r
s s t u v w x y z

take a quick break and

STRETCH

Uppercase Alphabet


ABCDEFGH
IJKLMNOPQ
RSTUVWXYZ


A B C D E F G H I J
K L M N O P Q R
S T U V W X Y Z

Flourishes

Flourish styles & functions

Flourish styles

ideas & examples
on your handouts!

Graceful
fancy
Stylish
youthful
Beautiful

Vino
Eccellente

For the Love of
Silly laughter

Mythology
& folklore

How to make your flourishes amazing

Style

Match the flourish to the lettering style

Proportion

In general, flourishes should be at least as large as (preferably larger) the average size of the lowercase letters

White Space

for the sake of legibility and to avoid word shape interference

Breathe

Breathe

Add flourishes to the entrance and exit points of letters

Flourishes may be added to ascenders, descenders, cross-bars, at the beginning or ending of a letter

ascender descender cross-bar beginning ending

Ascender flourishes may be used as descender flourishes and vice versa

The parts of flourishes

arc / straight

curves

ogee

loop

spiral

reverse direction

How to approach flourishing

Start by sketching the word or phrase in its entirety,
THEN add in flourishes.

Why? To avoid collisions and to see how the addition
of flourishes will create a composition, structure or shape

flourish
flourish
flourish

Lettering is complex

letter style, spacing, word composition,

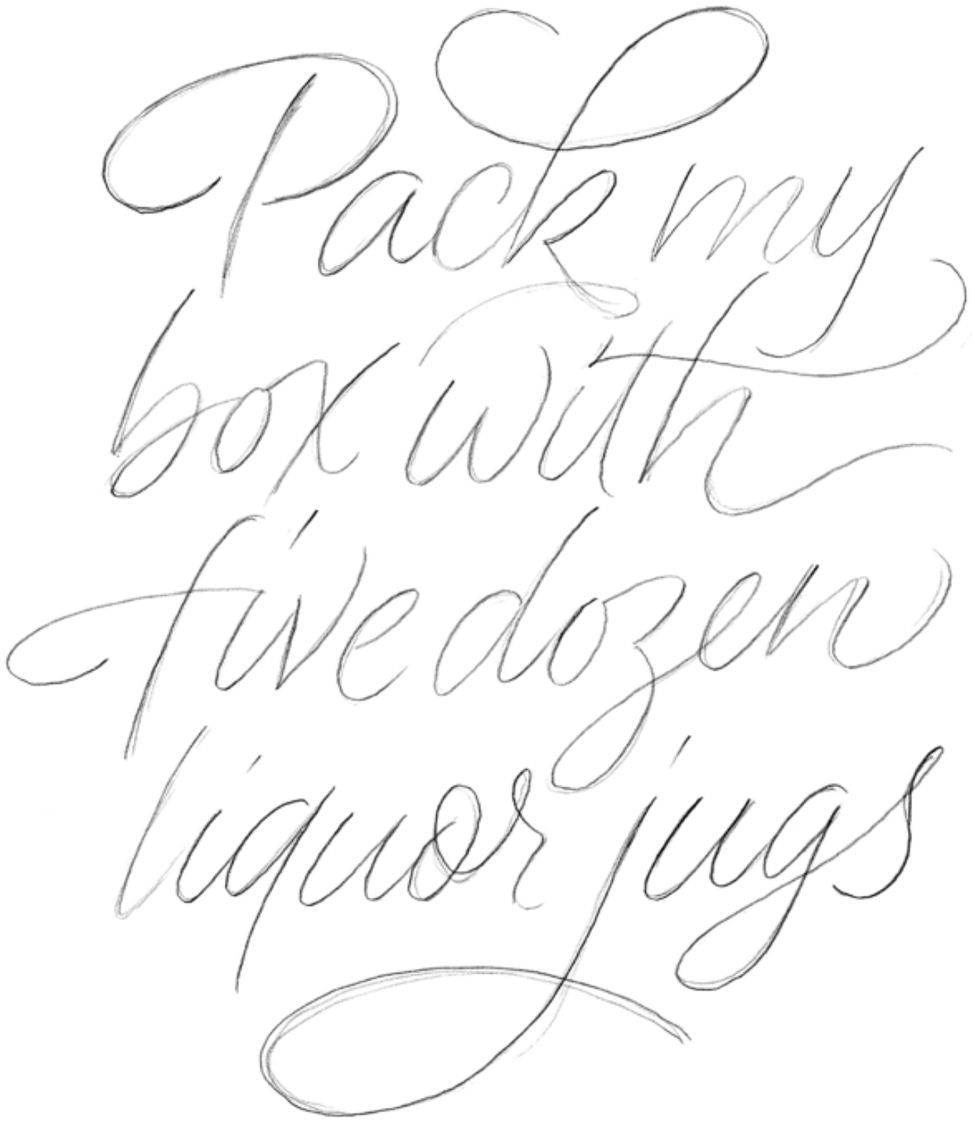
layout, brush techniques...

Simplify the process with the Pencil Skeleton

The Pencil Skeleton

- gives you freedom to experiment loosely
- sets up a foundation/guide to use for brush lettering
- lets you plan and compose your lettering works first to free you up to focus on using the brush
- helps you develop muscle memory – tracing over your skeleton can be a form of rehearsal

pencil skeleton



lettering over the pencil skeleton

Digital Rendering

Adobe Photoshop, Capture, Illustrator, Fresco

Adobe Photoshop

The iterative process

Adjustments (move, scale, rotate, warp) to a sketch, pencil skeleton or rough revisions to early lettering drafts to print out and use as the basis for brush lettering or as a guide for drawing vector outlines in Illustrator

Final refinements to textured or complex lettering

Some lettering may be too complex to accurately capture details with vector outlines. Scan in high resolution and revise with brush & eraser

Adobe Capture

Take a photo in SHAPES mode...

Make some adjustments in the app: erase, brush, crop, rotate, smooth and Adobe Capture will draw outlines for you and sync the file to you library, where you can open it in Adobe Illustrator and make further revisions or refinements

Adobe Illustrator

Draw outlines, revise, refine

Paste or place in an image of your lettering and draw vector outlines around it OR open a file from your library taken with Adobe Capture and make final adjustments there

Thank You!