

Double Your Animation Output In 7 Easy Steps.

Foundation:

1. Orientation or Pre-Planning.

Get to know your scene, your characters and your script. Where does your shot fit into the mood and pacing of the overall story?

Are there any hook-ups? - Memorize the audio.

2. Imagineering.

Play out the scene in your head and try to imagine your characters playing the roles to the voice track. Get up and act it out if you can.

Thumbnail your ideas very roughly and get your supervisor involved. Make sure you are on the right path before moving on.

3. Inspiration.

Watch reference and search for some inspiration! Be inspired and get truly excited about your scene.

4. Plan.

Imagine your scene in your head once again, working in your inspiration.

Sketch out thumbnails of your structured ideas.

Check your **Staging** and **Silhouette**! It's much easier to correct and push these here than later. Also make sure your poses have **Appeal**.

Plan out your Key frames (Storytelling poses) and your Extremes (change of direction or action)

Structure:

5. Block

We're 70% through these steps, and we haven't even TOUCHED our animation package. Now it's time. But first, I want you to unplug and detach. I want you to remove every distraction; turn off your phone, close your email and messaging application(s). Close all internet windows. Focus only on your scene.

Now do a blocking pass and don't stop until you're finished blocking! You can go as far as you like with this stage, but make sure it is AT LEAST developed enough to convey the story, personality and mood that is required.

Remember that at this stage, you need to view your Key Poses from all angles to get the weight right. Don't animate "to camera" until the very last pass.

Take a break, relax. You've done great! Now you need to get your directors approval before moving on (depending on your pipeline). Again, this blocking stage is the time to really focus on your, **Squash and Stretch, Staging, Appeal, Timing and Clarity**.

Details:

6. 2nd Pass

You've had your break, now unplug again and come back to your scene, ready to focus with laser precision on your target. It's time to nail a few more principles; **Anticipation, Arcs, Secondary Action, Slow in and Slow out, Reversal of Arcs**, and refine your **Timing**. You can also start incorporating **Overlap and Follow-through**, but don't get stuck on these just yet.

Don't stop and don't lose focus until you've finished this stage. Once you have, take another break. Step back and rest your mind for a bit. Good work!

Polish:

7. Polish

Now is the time to come back to your scene with fresh eyes and really look at it objectively. You're about to mess things up, so be sure you have a backup. Be positive that your timing is final before you start offsetting keys or adding any complex overlap and secondary.

Again, you need laser focus and concentration, so unplug. Your emails can wait! Now go through your scene like a madman (or mad woman) and polish the hell out of it! Add in the **Secondary** and **Overlap**, polish the **Arcs** and strengthen the poses and **Staging**. Make sure the personality and attitude of your character(s) really shine through to the viewer.

Don't lose focus! It's a lot of information that you've uploaded into your brain, it would waste a lot of time to lose that information to correct your workmates Star Wars quote. Just tune out and focus until you're done.

This is the real secret of the Pro's!

Laser focus and endurance is what separates the good animators from the Great ones. This focus is what is often referred to as the "Zone". The "Zone" is the place where true inspiration and genius is born. Work done in the "Zone" is what will make your reel stand out to a company, or your shot reach out to an audience.

I talk more about "The Zone" and how to get into and stay in the zone in my video on energy management: www.AnimationSalvation.com/guardian