

TECH TIPS

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Digital Art: Left to Your Own Devices

By Harris R. Greenberg

Creating digital art on one of your digital devices is a lot of fun, even if you don't know how to draw. It's inexpensive, setup is easy, and there's no mess to clean up afterward.

You don't need paints, lots of pencils and brushes, sketchbooks, easels or canvases. In addition to a computer, a tablet or phone, you may want a digital pencil or stylus – and a good digital art app – to get started. If you already know how to draw or are an experienced artist, you don't have to lug around a lot of art supplies to sketch anywhere on a dime.

Using a digital drawing app on your device lets you play with different media, such as pencils, pens, water colors, acrylic or oil paint, charcoal, chalk, crayons, etc. There are fun media for kids like glitter tubes, gloop pens and stickers.

You can pick and adjust the characteristics of the



digital brushes you use, such as hard or soft brushes, pens, pallet knives, paint rollers or airbrushes. And digital drawing and painting is a lot of fun to do with the grandkids or friends because it's easy to share one another's artwork.

ArtRage and ProCreate are two of the best – but inexpensive – apps

ArtRage (<https://www.artrage.com>) has several versions of the software that run on PCs, Macs and mobile devices from Apple and Android. The software for computers ranges from around \$30 to \$80, but ArtRage Vitae also runs on mobile phones and tablets, costs \$4.99 for those devices, and includes family sharing for up to six family members.

ProCreate (<https://procreate.art>) comes in two versions: ProCreate for the Apple iPad and ProCreate Pocket for the iPhone. While it's super easy to use, and any beginner can be happily drawing in minutes, professional digital artists also use the tool in their work. ProCreate is available for \$9.99. ProCreate Pocket costs \$4.99. Both ProCreate and ProCreate Pocket support family sharing.

If you're new to digital art, both apps offer easy-to-follow instruction guides and tutorials to get started – just go to the HELP menu to find them. Concepts like “layers,” “gridlines and perspective lines,” “color pickers and palettes” – even how to create your own digital paintbrushes – are simply explained.

You can also learn from professional digital artists who show how they create digital art on YouTube

or on their own websites, providing lots of tips and tricks. Just like the pros, these apps let you record each step of your creative process, allowing you to play a video showing how your artwork progressed from start to finish.

Tools you need to use the digital art apps

If you're using a mobile device or a computer with a touch screen, you can get started just using your finger to draw or paint. However, using a stylus with a touch-sensitive tip can give you a more accurate result. Smart “pencils” like the Apple Pencil or the Wacom Bamboo Ink Plus have features that sense the amount of pressure being applied, and also respond to the angle between the pencil and the screen to provide wider brush strokes.

The best smart pencils, like the two listed here, also have “palm rejection” that allows you to rest your hand on the screen without causing paint to be applied by accident.

Want more choices?

Here's a link to a website that lists “45 of the Best Drawing Apps and Art Apps in 2021”:

<https://tinyurl.com/45-art-2021>

LifeWire lists “The 9 Best Digital Art Software of 2021”:

<https://tinyurl.com/9-art-2021>

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