



Tip #2

Look Sharp!



How you sharpen your pencil makes a great deal of difference in how it will work for you. At left, a pencil sharpened with a knife or Exacto blade is stronger and more versatile than one you use a pencil sharpener on. It's less likely to break, and you can use the edge, the tip, the broad, chisel-angle, or the whole side of the lead.

You can refresh the point easily with a bit of fine sandpaper or coarse paper.

Try out a variety of marks and see how you like your pencil pointed, either way. (And actually, I end up using both!)

Of course graphite pencils are not made of lead any more, and thank goodness, as I tend to put mine in my mouth! They're graphite, instead, or as they called it in the 18th century, plumbago. If you see a 200 year old drawing called that, you'll understand that's just another way of saying a graphite or pencil drawing.

Check out more drawing and sketching tips in my Sierra Club Guide to Sketching in Nature, http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/_/0871569329/ref=pd_bxgy_text_1102_8505051_0620126?v=glance&s=books&st=* or The North Light First Steps book, Sketching and Drawing, http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/_/0891346155/qid=1092432656/sr=1_1/ref=sr_1_1/102_8505051_0620126?v=glance&s=books.