How to draw a squirrel

Hard: shape a hooked tail and tapered ears, then keep the right edges at each overlap.

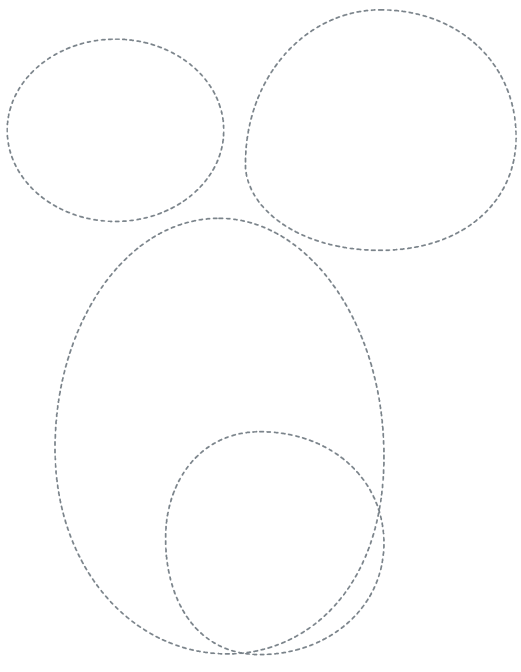
Use a pencil, an eraser and portrait paper. Follow the six goals in order. The overview helps you leave room; each goal shows when to draw its guides. The pictures show the small actions and the exact guides to erase.

Start high on the left with a wide head oval. Leave room above for the ears, more than a head-width to the right for the tail, and about two and a half head-heights below for the body and feet. Draw guides lightly. Check the whole arrangement before adding the small face shapes.

Finished reference



Preview the four main shapes



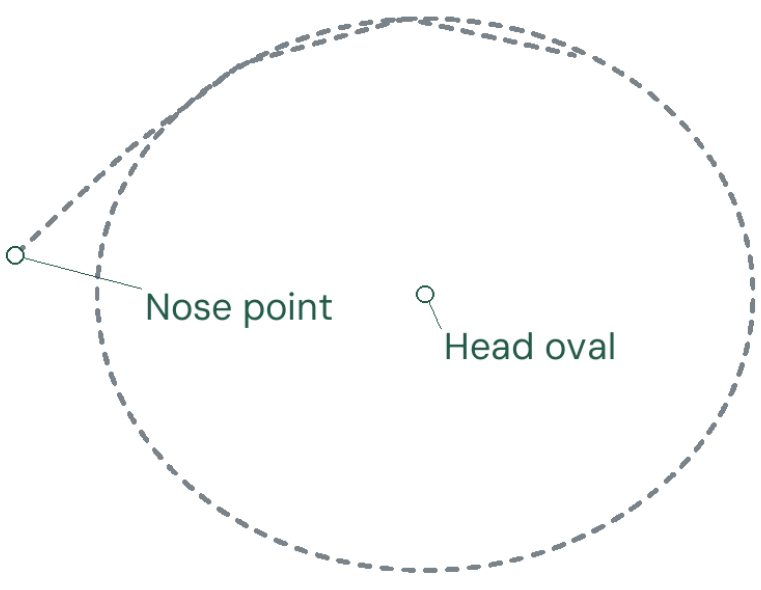
Before adding details, check that the tail cap reaches about as high as the ears and the body is wider than the head. If space is tight, move only the light guides now.

Gray dashes: light guides. Black: keep. Orange: draw now. Green labels and X marks are helpers, not drawing marks.

Shape the head and ears

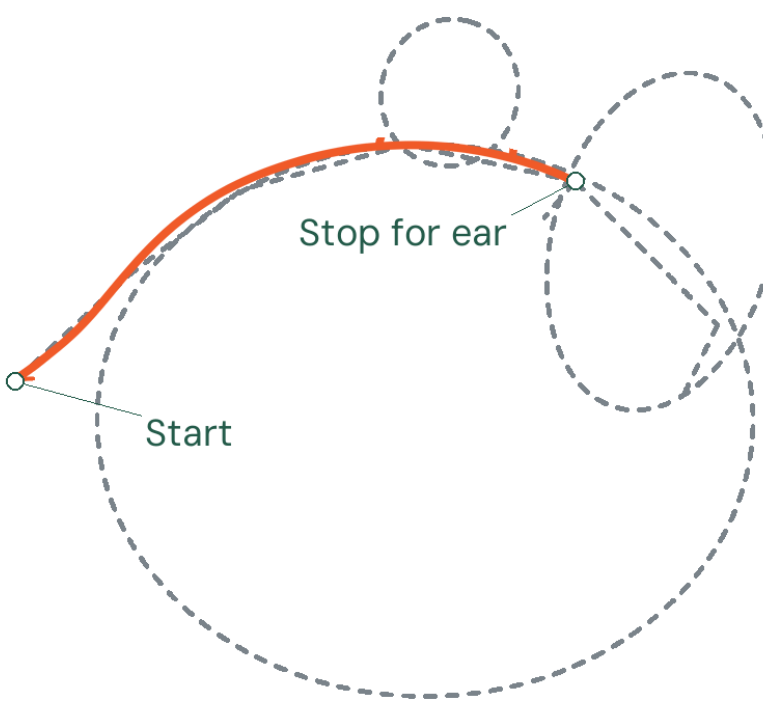
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: keep. Orange: draw now. Green labels and X marks are helpers, not drawing marks.

Place the head and the forward nose point



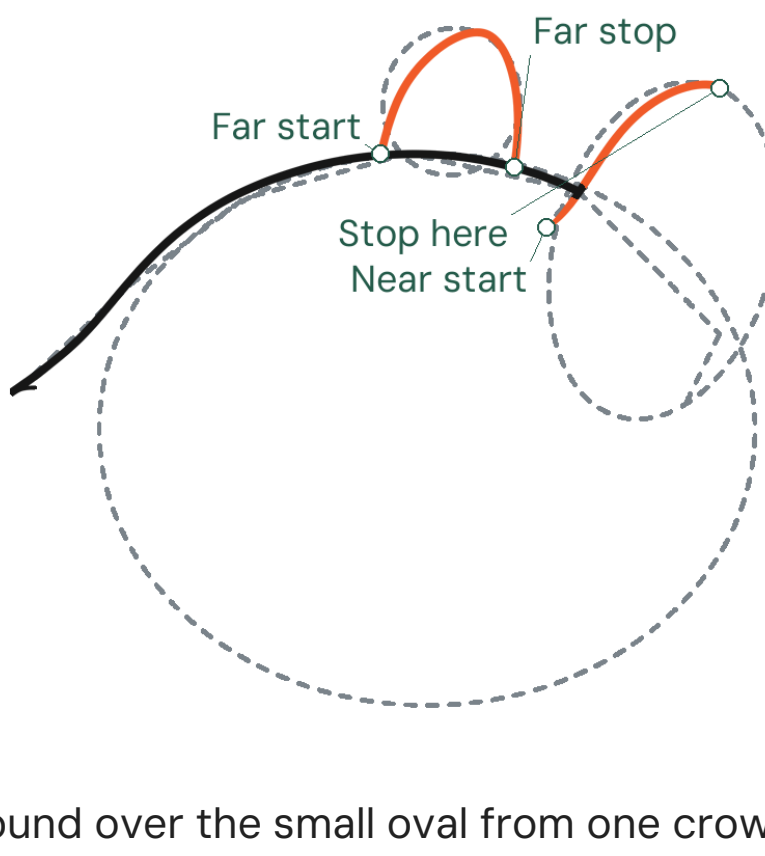
Lightly draw a wide oval high on the left. Mark the nose point just beyond its left edge, slightly above halfway down. Add the bent guide from that point to the forehead and across the top. Leave room above for ears, to the right for the tail and below for the body.

Round the forehead and place the ears



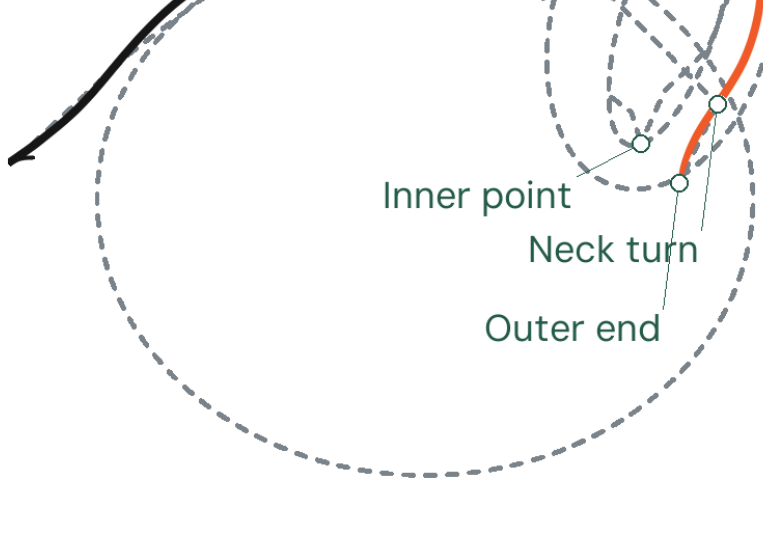
Add a narrow oval above the crown for the far ear. Put a taller, tilted oval on the right for the near ear, with its lower end inside the head. The marked meeting point is the forehead stop. From the nose point, round the forehead to that stop.

Draw the far ear and start the near ear



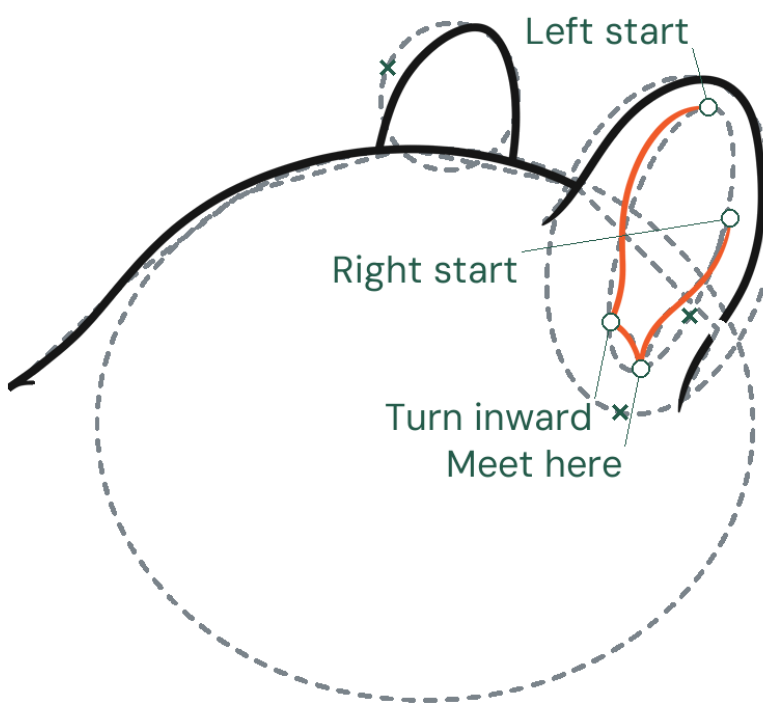
Round over the small oval from one crown mark to the other. Its bottom stays hidden behind the forehead. For the near ear, start at the short front root, curve up the tilted oval and round its top. Stop at the top-right mark; keep the return side light.

Return down the near ear



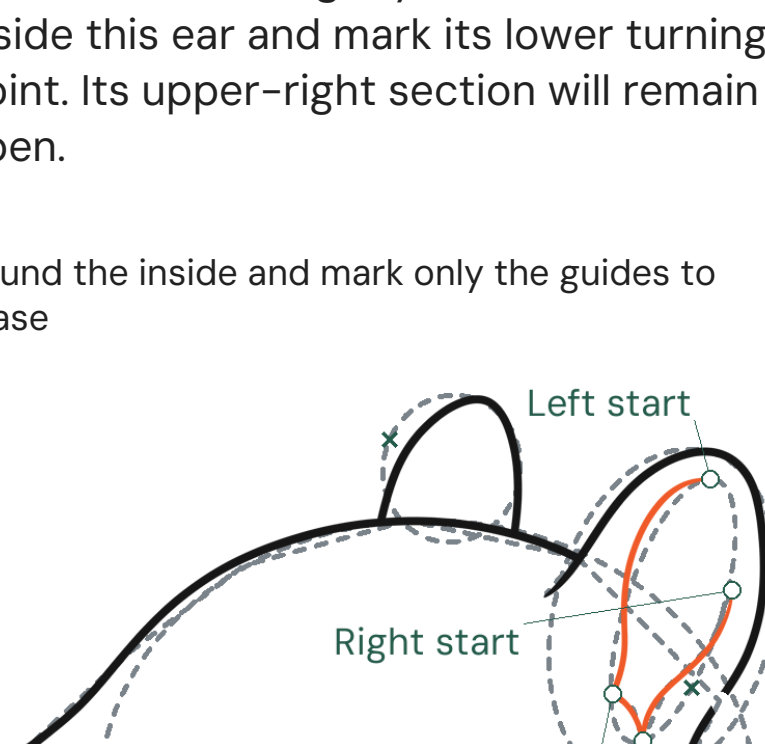
Continue from the top-right mark down the back of the ear oval. Turn inward at the neck mark, then taper to the lower end inside the head. Lightly add a smaller oval inside this ear and mark its lower turning point. Its upper-right section will remain open.

Round the inside and mark only the guides to erase



From the inner top mark, follow the left of the small oval, turn gently inward and curve to the lower point. From the right mark, round down to that same point. Keep the upper gap open. Mark the dashed forehead bridge and all ear guides for erasing; keep the large head oval.

Keep the open ear roots

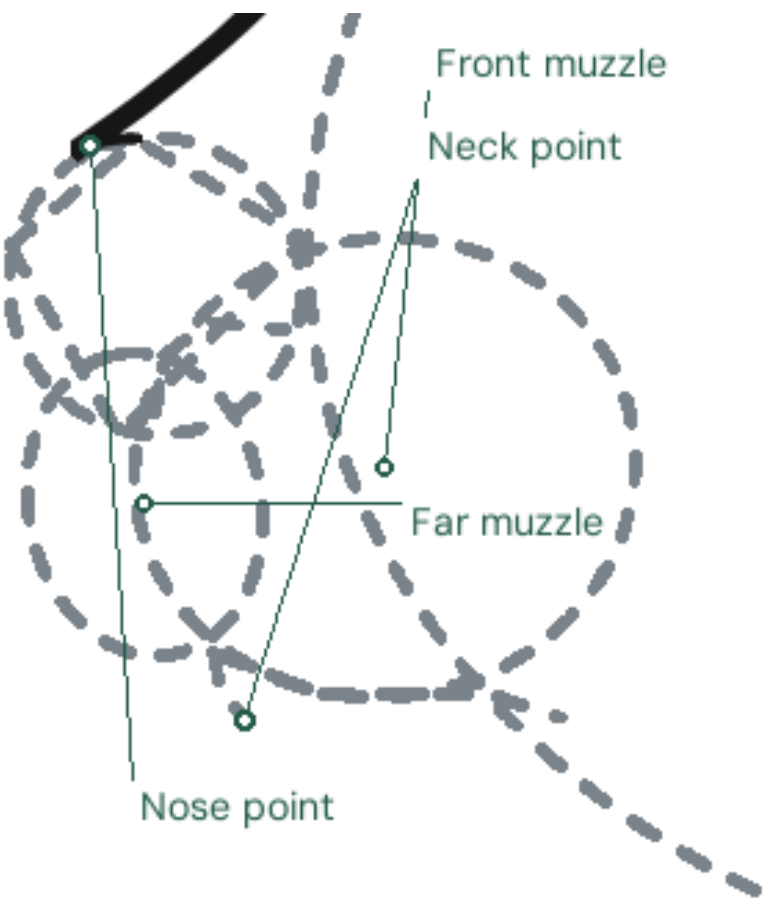


Erase the marked forehead and ear guides. Keep the solid forehead and both ears, including the near ear's inner point and open upper gap. Keep the large head oval light. Do not join across either ear base or add an inner line to the far ear.

Build the rounded muzzle

Gray dashes: light guides. Black: keep. Orange: draw now. Green labels and X marks are helpers, not drawing marks.

Place the overlapping muzzle forms



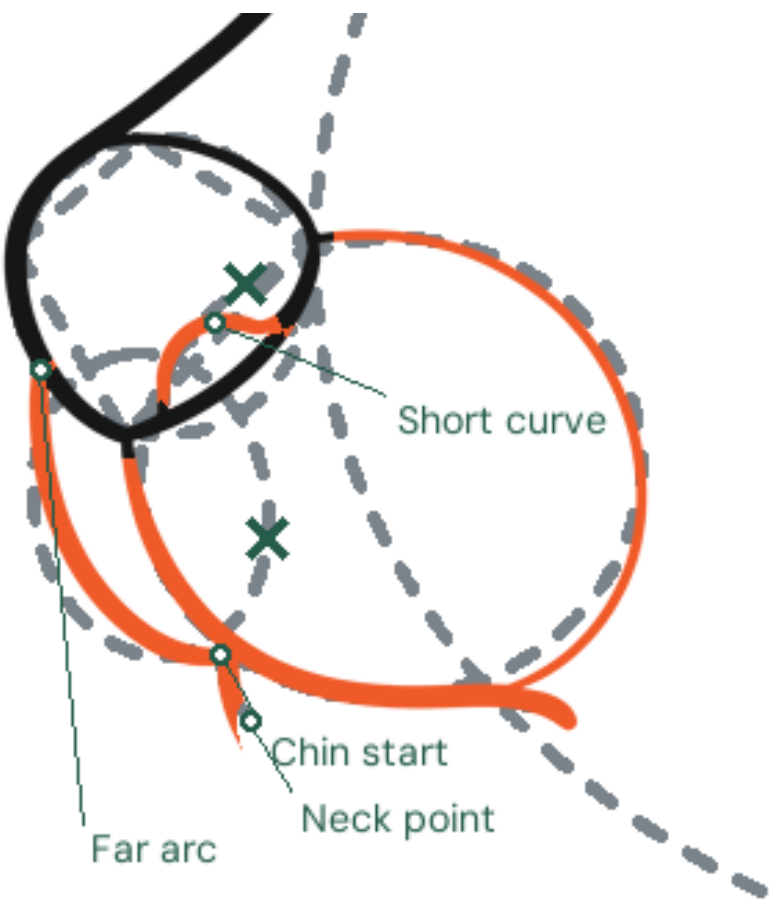
Around the nose point, place a small light nose oval and mark its soft bottom point. Overlap a larger muzzle oval below and right, with a smaller oval behind on the left. Add the short nose and mouth guides. From the bottom of the front muzzle, mark the short bend to the front-neck point.

Round the nose and narrow its bottom



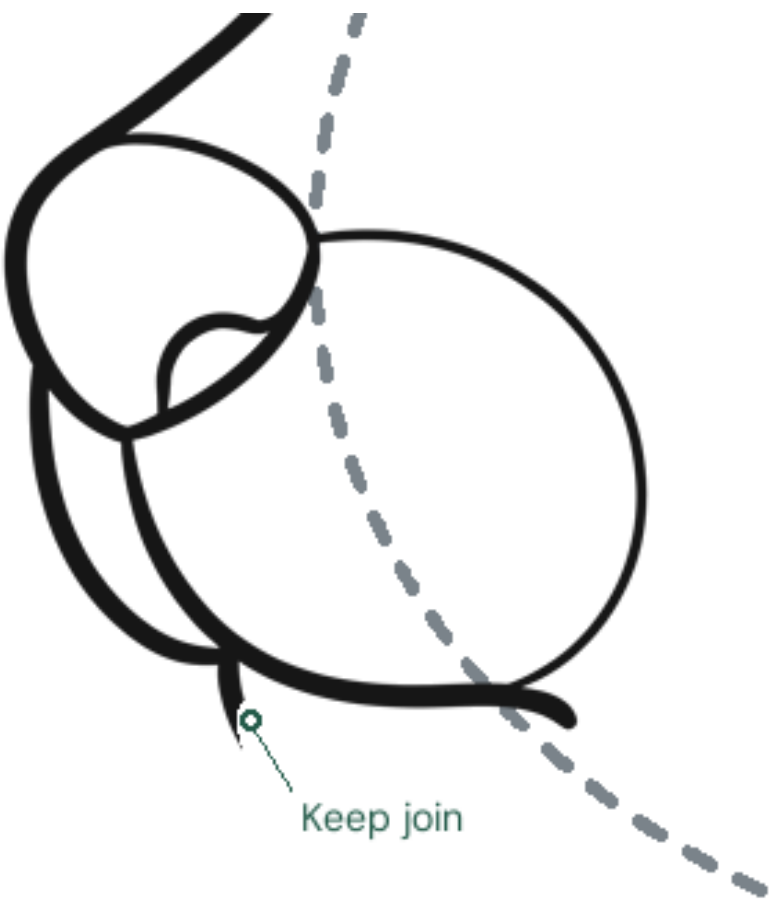
Start where the forehead meets the small oval. Round its top and right side, then curve down to the soft bottom point. Return around the left side to close the nose. The light corners guide the change in direction; keep them rounded rather than making a sharp triangle.

Join the muzzle and keep its overlaps



Round the inner nose guide. Trace the large muzzle outside the nose, continuing its bottom into the mouth. Draw only the exposed crescent of the far muzzle. From the bottom of the front muzzle, bow down along the short guide to the front-neck point. Mark the dashed guides for erasing.

Keep the nose in front

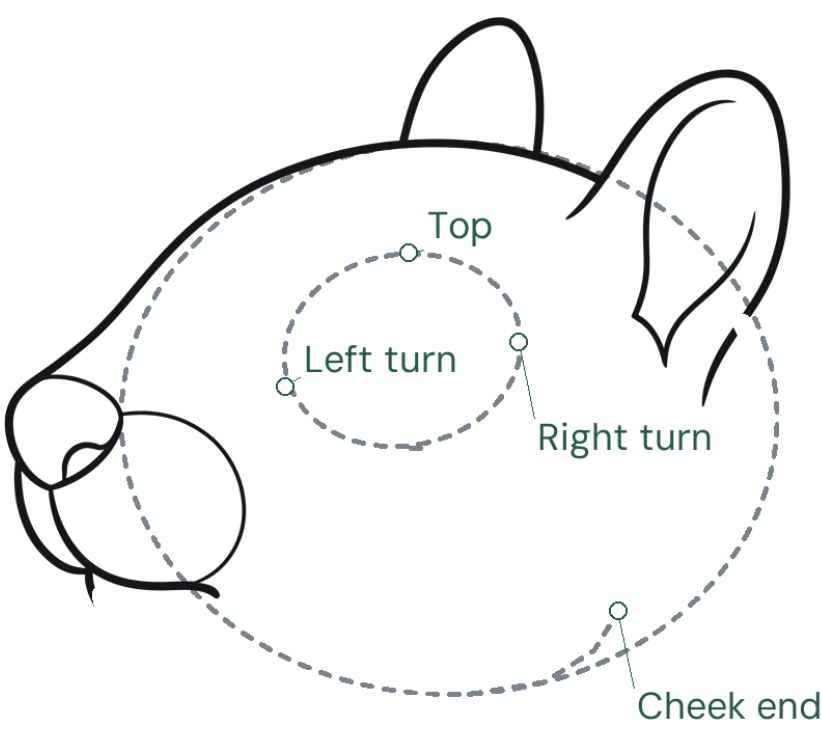


Erase the marked nose, muzzle, mouth and short chin guides. Keep the solid nose, its inner curve, the two exposed muzzle contours, the mouth and the short join to the front-neck point. Keep the broad head oval. No hidden oval arc should cross a front form.

Place the eye and cheek

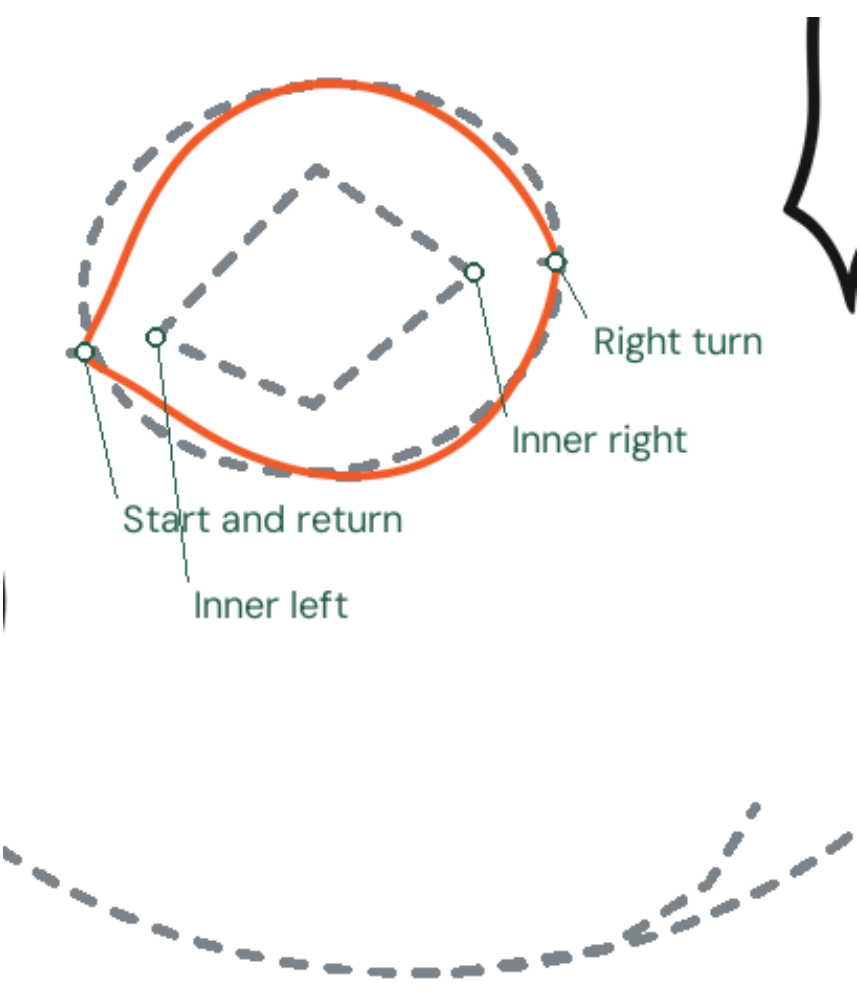
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: keep. Orange: draw now. Green labels and X marks are helpers, not drawing marks.

Place the eye patch and cheek turn



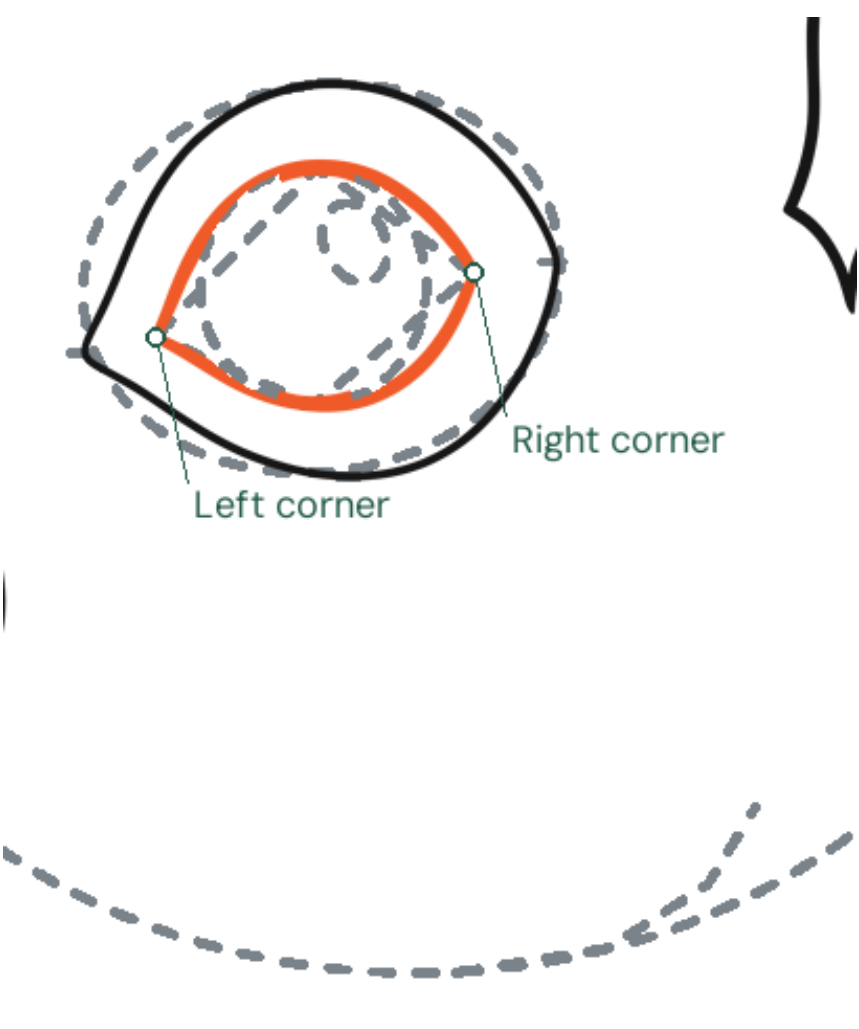
Above and behind the muzzle, draw a light oval for the eye patch. Mark its top, bottom and two side turns; the left turn sits a little lower than the right. Below the eye, add a short bent guide for the cheek. Keep this guide inside the head oval.

Round the patch and plan the eye opening



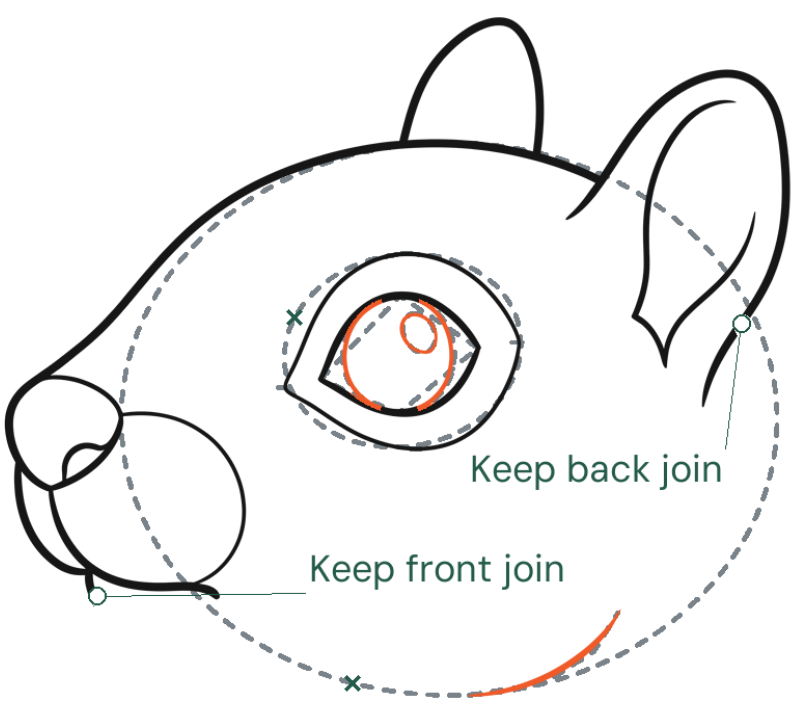
From the lower-left mark, curve up around the oval to the top and then down to the right mark. Round underneath and return to the left mark. Inside this patch, lightly join four marks into a slanted diamond. Its left and right corners locate the eye opening.

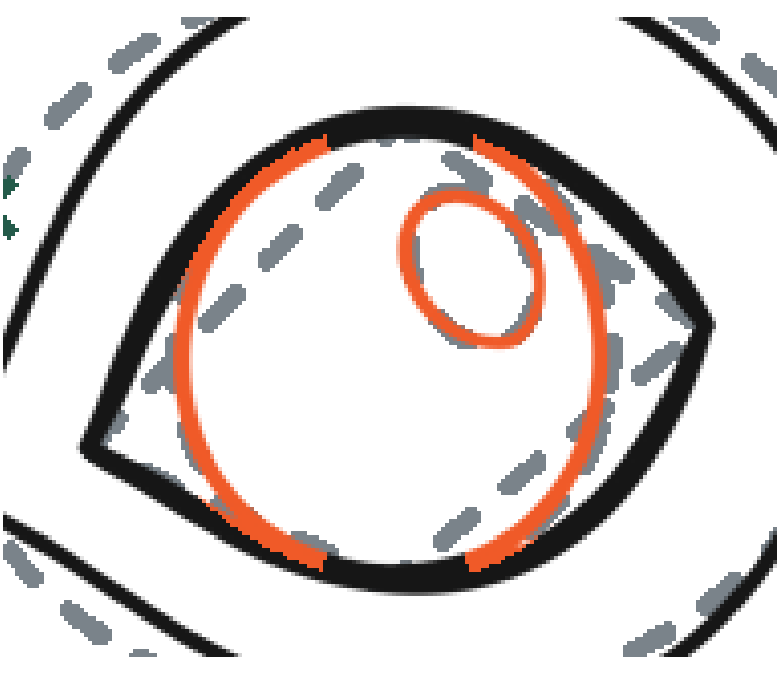
Curve the eye opening



Curve from the left diamond corner over the top mark to the right corner. Return beneath the lower mark to the left corner. Inside this opening, draw a light circle that touches its upper and lower curves. Place a small tilted oval near the circle's upper-right side.

Finish the eye and cheek, then choose the last guides

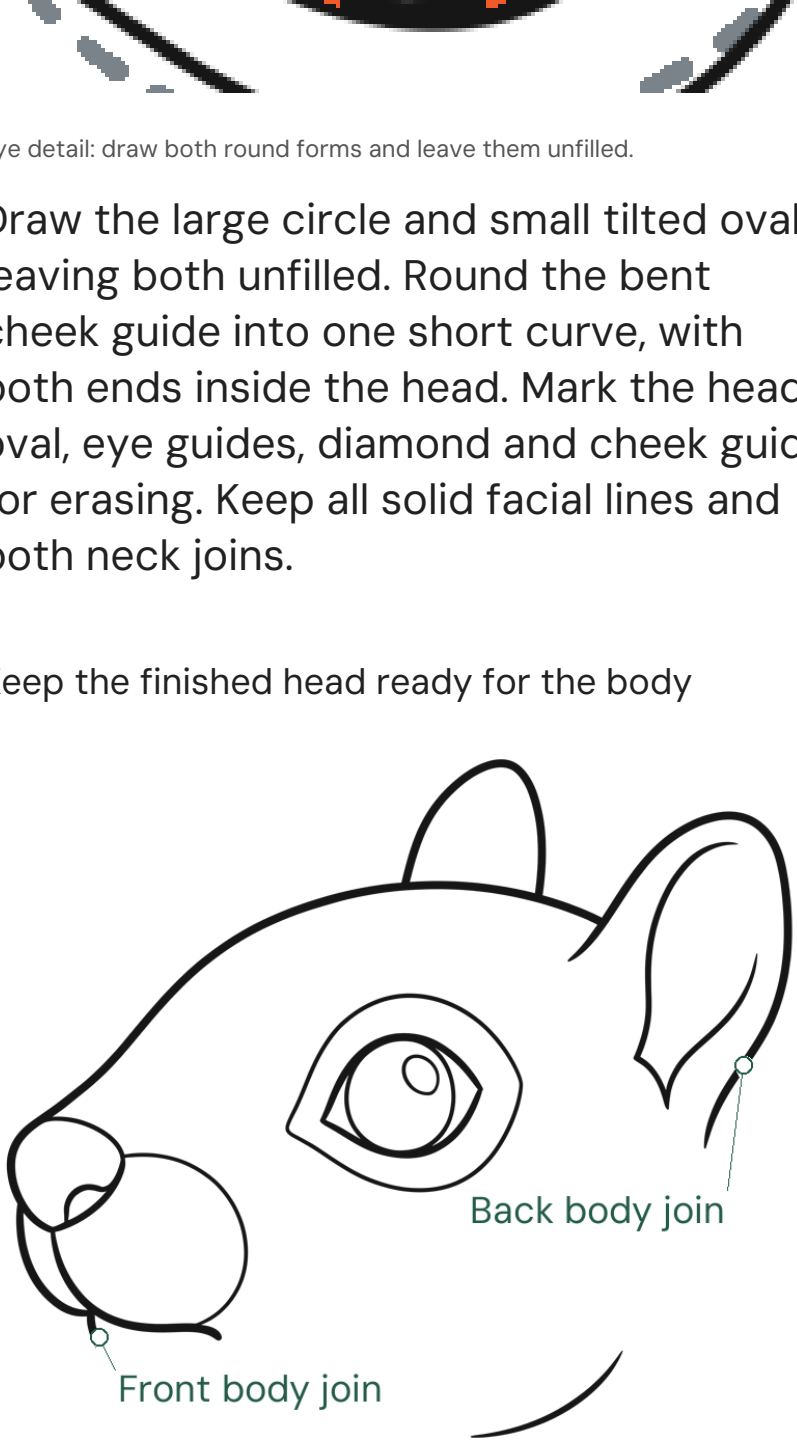




Eye detail: draw both round forms and leave them unfilled.

Draw the large circle and small tilted oval, leaving both unfilled. Round the bent cheek guide into one short curve, with both ends inside the head. Mark the head oval, eye guides, diamond and cheek guide for erasing. Keep all solid facial lines and both neck joins.

Keep the finished head ready for the body



Erase only the marked head and face guides. The ears, muzzle, eye and cheek stay in place. Leave the two neck joins open for the body: one below the muzzle and one behind the near ear. The head is ready; the squirrel is not finished yet.

Reshape the torso

Gray dashes: light guides. Black: keep. Orange: draw now. Green labels and X marks are helpers, not drawing marks.

Keep the head in place

These three views use one scale. Keep the two neck joins fixed while the body guides and new curves appear.



Keep the head



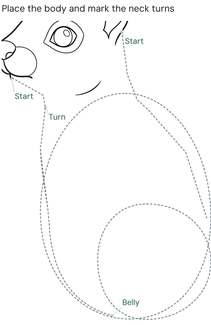
Add the body guides



Join chest and back

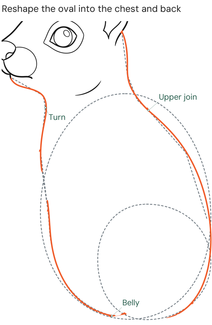
If a neck join has moved, erase the new light body guide and move that guide back to the head. Keep the head you already drew.

Place the body and mark the neck turns



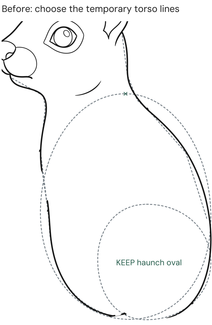
Use the head you have just drawn. Lightly draw a tall body oval below it and a smaller haunch oval low on the right. Mark the front neck bend and the sloping back. The light chest guide continues behind the place where the paws will go.

Reshape the oval into the chest and back



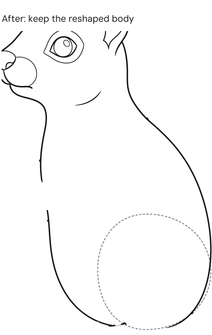
From the chin, curve out to the neck bend, then turn inward toward the chest mark. Below the future paws, bow down to the belly turn. From behind the ear, bend out through the upper tail mark and around the back. These new curves replace the body oval; they do not follow every part of it.

Before: choose the temporary torso lines



Erase the large body oval and the dashed neck, back and belly guides. Erase the light chest continuation where the paws will cover it. Keep both solid body edges. Keep the smaller haunch oval for the leg joins.

After: keep the reshaped body



The chest is narrower than the lower body. Keep the gap reserved for the paws and the haunch oval. The body stays in exactly the same position when its guides disappear.

Build the hooked tail

Gray dashes: light guides. Black: keep. Orange: draw now. Green labels and X marks are helpers, not drawing marks.

Plan the high tail and its notch



Put a large oval above and behind the back. Add a small oval for the inward notch at its lower right, then a long bowed guide down to the low tail mark. Mark both tail attachments. The top bar spans the large oval; the two lower bars mark the space between the back and the returning tail curve.

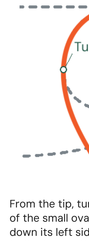
Sweep up and around the large oval



Start at the upper attachment. Curve left into the oval, travel over its top and down its right side. Stop at the marked tip beside the small notch oval. This is one outer sweep; do not close the large oval at the bottom.

Round the notch and return to the lower join





From the tip, turn up around the right side of the small oval. Round its top, curve down its left side and follow the long bow to the lower attachment. The tip is a turning point, not a gap. Keep the back line in front of the tail.

Before: clear the tail guides



Erase the two complete planning ovals, the long bow, the short outer join guide and all three bars. Erase only the short dashed tails that continue behind the back at the two attachments. Keep the solid outer sweep, hooked return and body boundary.

After: two joined edges, one hooked tail

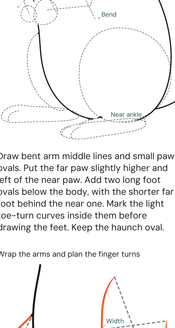


The upper edge meets the back high up; the lower edge meets it beside the haunch. Both joins stay connected. The notch remains open white space, and the body line stays in front.

Join the arms and feet

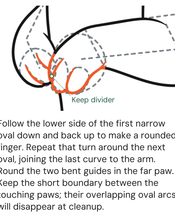
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: keep. Orange: draw now. Green labels and X marks are helpers, not drawing marks.

Place two arms, two paws and two feet



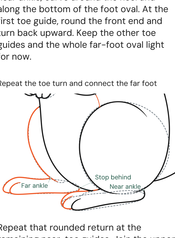
Draw bent arm middle lines and small paw ovals. Put the far paw slightly higher and left of the near paw. Add two long foot ovals below the body, with the shorter far foot behind the near one. Mark the light toe-turn curves inside them before drawing the feet. Keep the haunch oval.

Wrap the arms and plan the finger turns



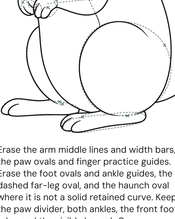
Use the width marks to round the near arm down to its elbow and back toward the paw oval. Round the shorter far arm, stopping at the near paw. Inside the near paw, add two narrow ovals for the finger turns. Put two short bent guides inside the far paw.

Round the paw ends and keep their dividing line



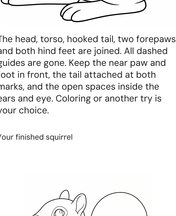
Follow the lower side of the first narrow oval down and back up to make a rounded finger. Repeat that turn around the next oval, joining the last curve to the arm. Round the two bent guides in the far paw. Keep the short boundary between the touching paws; their overlapping oval arcs will disappear at cleanup.

Join the haunch and make the first toe return



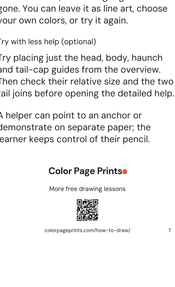
Follow the top and left of the haunch oval, leaving its lower-right part open. From the near ankle, curve around the heel and along the bottom of the foot oval. At the first toe guide, round the front end and turn back upward. Keep the other toe guides and the whole far-foot oval light for now.

Repeat the toe turn and connect the far foot



Repeat that rounded return at the remaining near-toe guides. Join the upper foot curve to the haunch. Then follow the far-leg guide into its ankle and around the far-foot oval, using the same rounded turn at its toe. Stop the far foot at the marked overlap behind the near foot; do not draw its hidden edge through the front foot.

Before: clear only the limb guides



Erase the arm middle lines and width bars, the paw ovals and finger practice guides. Erase the foot ovals and ankle guides, the dashed far-leg oval, and the haunch oval where it is not a solid retained curve. Keep the paw divider, both ankles, the front foot edge and the visible haunch C.

After: your squirrel line drawing is complete

The head, torso, hooked tail, two forepaws and both hind feet are joined. All dashed guides are gone. Keep the near paw and foot in front, the tail attached at both marks, and the open spaces inside the ears and eye. Coloring or another try is your choice.

Your finished squirrel

Your squirrel line drawing is complete when the body and tail join, both paws and feet are visible, and the light guides are gone. You can leave it as line art, choose your own colors, or try it again.

Try with less help (optional)

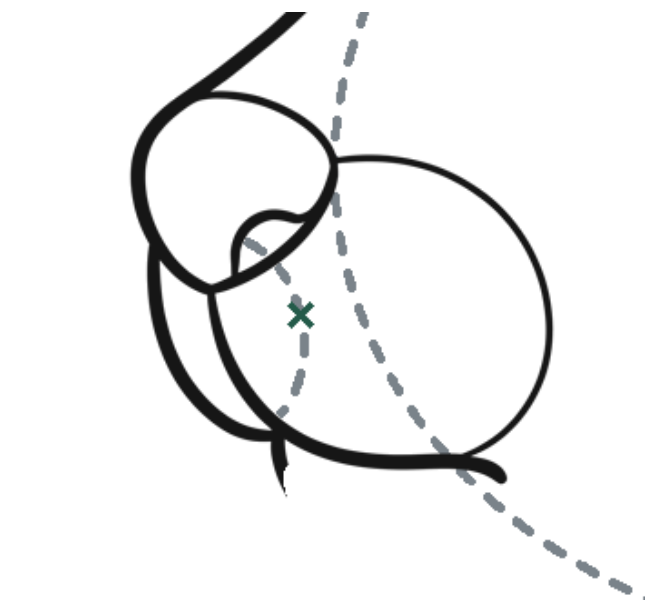
Try placing just the head, body, haunch and tail-cap guides from the overview. Then check their relative size and the two tail joins before opening the detailed help.

A helper can point to an anchor or demonstrate on separate paper; the learner keeps control of their pencil.

OPTIONAL HELP

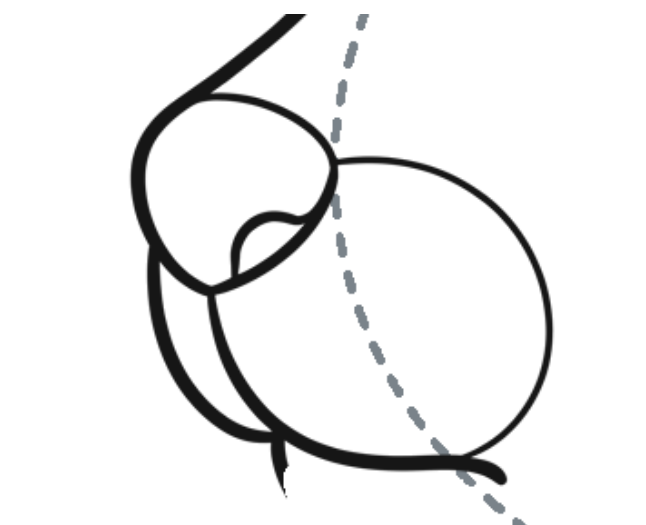
Small repairs, without restarting

Find the extra line



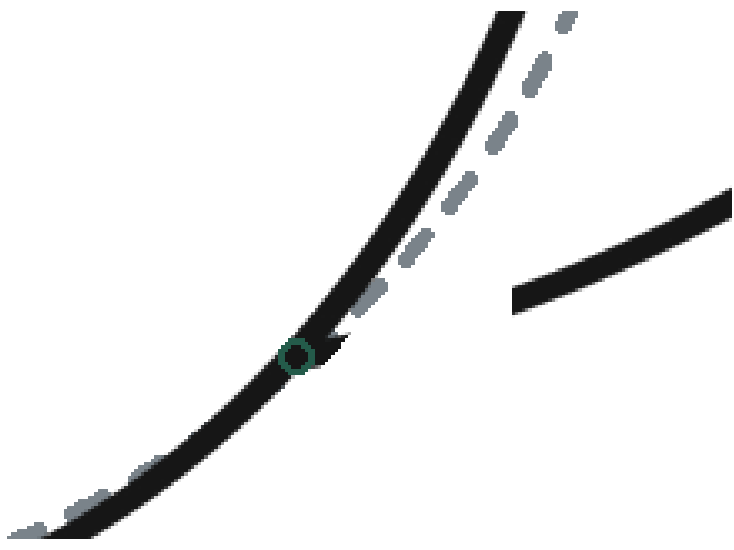
If a light far-muzzle oval crosses the front muzzle, find only the dashed arc inside that front form. Keep the solid front edge. Keep the broad head oval: it is the longer dashed curve on the right.

Remove just the hidden arc



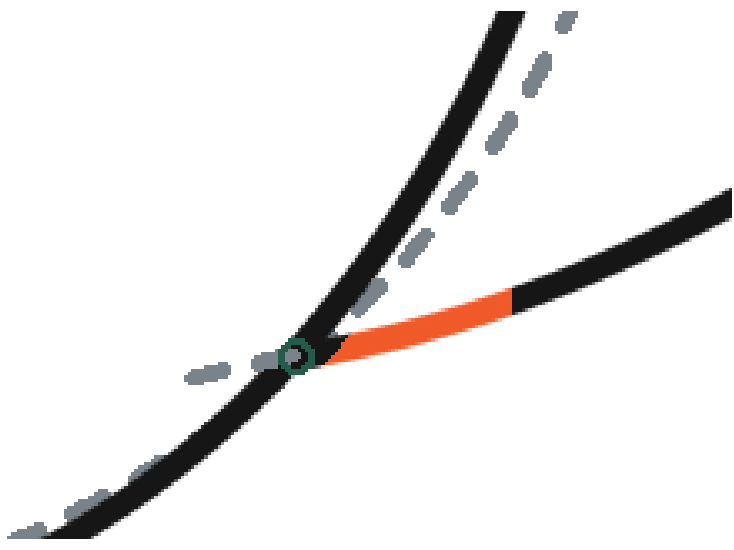
Erase the marked guide arc and keep the exposed far crescent. The nose, muzzle and head stay in exactly the same position. Keep that head guide for placing the eye.

Find the short gap



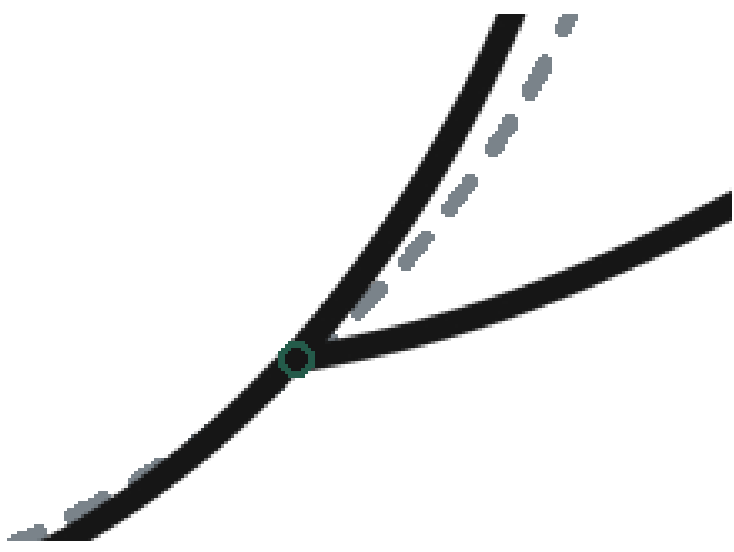
The lower tail stops before the body. Keep the whole squirrel in place and find the marked lower attachment.

Restore only the short join



Continue this same lower tail curve to the original attachment. The short dashed continuation shows the part hidden behind the body.

Erase the hidden continuation



Erase that dashed continuation. Keep the repaired tail edge and the body boundary in front. No other part has moved.