



CHARACTER ANIMATION BOOTCAMP

KEY POSES & KEYFRAMES

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO ANIMATE

Most of us are used to the concept of working with “keyframes” in After Effects or other animation software. The term “keyframe” originates from the traditional character animation terms “key pose” or “key drawing”. In traditional animation there are two main ways to animate, each one having their own pro’s and con’s. These two “styles” are so important they are one of Disney’s 12 Principles of Animation; POSE TO POSE and STRAIGHT AHEAD, which refers to the two distinct techniques that the early traditional (hand-drawn) character animators employed and still use today.

STRAIGHT AHEAD

When working “Straight Ahead” the animator starts with the first drawing and works drawing to drawing until the end of the motion.



POSE TO POSE

The “key” or “lead” animator draws the “extreme” or “key” drawings or poses at intervals throughout the motion, and the “assistant animator” or “inbetweener” fills in the drawings in between.



THERE ARE PRO'S AND CON'S TO EVERY DECISION

And each of these techniques of animating come with their own....

	PROS	CONS
STRAIGHT AHEAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for creating very fluid, flowing motion • Allowed animators to improvise as they worked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to plan and control timing and staging • Hard to revise • Slower process • Very difficult to maintain consistent character design
POSE TO POSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise planning and control over timing and staging • Easy to revise • Easy to maintain consistent character design • Faster “assembly line” process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement can sometimes be stiff • Difficult to get fluid, flowing motions using strict pose-to-pose

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Ultimately, because Pose to Pose had the most pros and fewest cons overall, most of those early animators decided on a hybrid technique based largely on a foundation of Pose to Pose animation, but using Straight Ahead techniques to finesse the Pose to Pose base - especially for fluid things like tails, capes, big floppy ears, etc.



CHARACTER ANIMATION BOOTCAMP

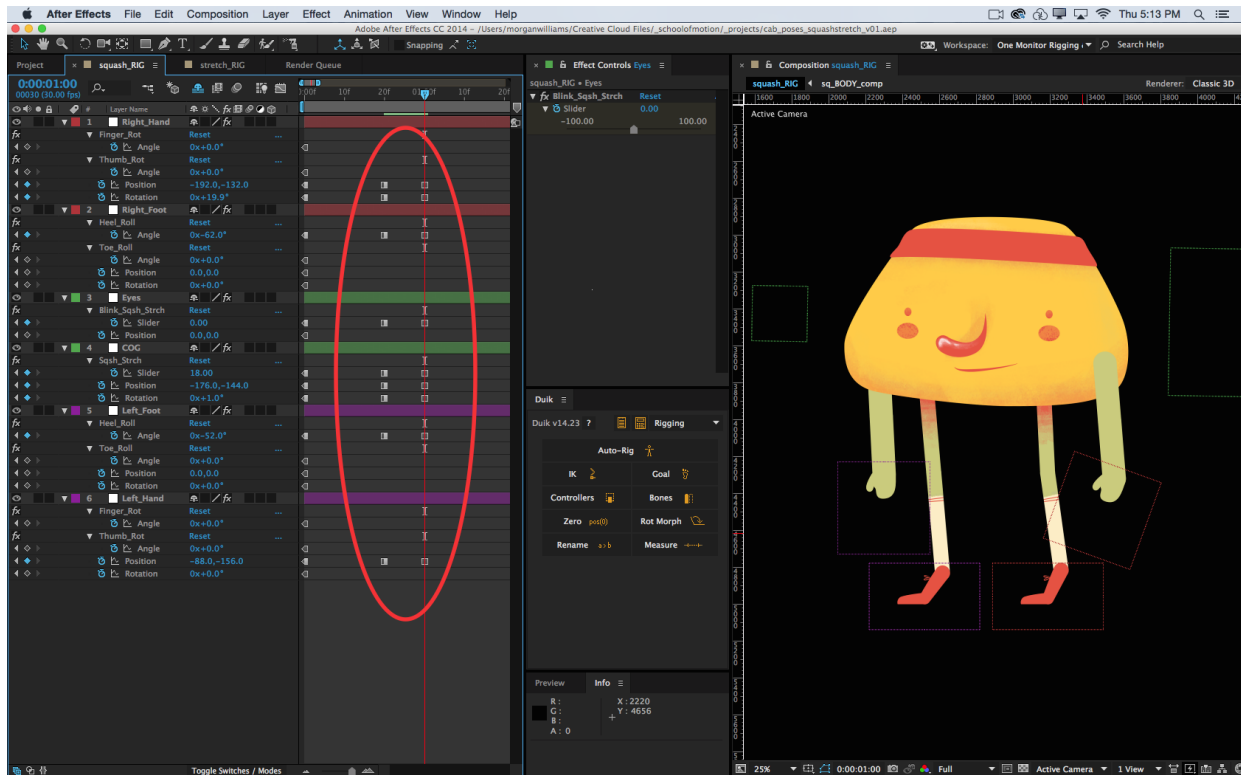
KEY POSES & KEYFRAMES

TRADITIONAL CHARACTER ANIMATION

When animating characters using software like After Effects it's usually best to work Pose to Pose with the software acting as our "inbetweener", and then use various software techniques to finesse the animation to give it a more natural, fluid feeling as you would with Straight Ahead animation.

The concept of Pose to Pose - i.e. moving from one extreme position or pose to another - is directly related to the idea of "keyframes" in animation software; You set the keyframes to "extremes" and then let the software fill in the frames inbetween.

Since our characters will have multiple attributes controlling their different body parts, we'll be creating Key Poses that are made up of many Key Frames.



WHY WORK POSE TO POSE?

For some looping and repetitive movements, including walks, you can create great character animation without keyframes or key poses using oscillating expressions, but for more complex sequences of movement or for more complex narrative "performances" the Pose to Pose technique is by far the most efficient both creatively and economically.

WORKING POSE TO POSE?

- Is very organized, avoids confusion and chaos as you work.
- Allows for careful planning and refinement of staging and timing.
- Gives you a work flow and structure that makes revision and finessing more efficient.
- Allows you to "design" your poses for more attractive and more expressive movements.
- Will give you a better understanding of the forces at work in character motion, so when using expressions or other "tricks" you know what to look for!