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general rule of thumb is the use of a 3:2:3 ratio. The letters are also slanted at a 55 degree angle. One of the things I like about modern calligraphy is the creative freedom you have. We still want to follow esthetical principles such as balance, contrast, consistency, etc. Its precisely the reason why even with modern calligraphy, you still want to use guidelines. So, how do you size guidelines for modern calligraphy without any predetermined rules? The answer is you determine the sizes and angles that you want to use. What matters is that you remember to draw out all of the lines I mentioned in the previous section (the anatomy). Here are a few examples to better demonstrate this. Here I decided to have an equal size for the x-height and the ascenders and descenders, a 1:1:1 ratio. As for the angle, I went for a 20-degree slant. Here I used a 3:1:3 ratio, meaning that the ascenders and descenders are three times bigger than the space between the baseline and the waistline (a.k.a. The x-height). Ive also increased the slant to 35 degrees. Higher descenders and descenders are helpful when you wish to implement calligraphy flourishes. Here Ive decided to make the ascenders and descenders smaller and actually reverse the ratio from the previous example 1:3:1. Additionally, I also reduced the angle to 15 degrees, giving it a very soft slant. As you can see, once you know the needed lines, you can easily switch them up and get totally different looks for your calligraphy. If youre interested in learning how to write the whole alphabet in calligraphy, check out this tutorial. Personally, I always draw my guidelines from scratch using a pencil and my rolling ruler. Ive done this for a very long time, and its just the method I prefer to use. That being said, I know that others might prefer something more streamlined. Here are a few methods to achieve that. Over the years, Ive stumbled upon several calligraphy guidelines generators. The idea is simple, you create your guide sheet, and then you print it out. These two are my favorites as they provide a live preview and a high level of customization. Additionally, you can also try these. These guideline generators are also great if you want to improve your handwriting. The marker paper I mentioned earlier (in the tool section) is excellent for both brush pen and broad-edged tools. On top of that is relatively thin (only 70 gsm/18 lbs). We can take advantage of the thin paper by making our own guide sheet template. Grab a blank piece of paper, a ruler, and a black fineliner. You can then use the guide sheet template over and over again. If you dont have a thinner paper you can use a light tablet instead. The bright light from the tablet will shine through the paper without any problems. With the light tablet you can even use regular (thicker) paper. The benefit of using these methods is that you dont have to use an eraser to remove the guidelines. Its especially beneficial if you are working on an important project. I personally never tried it, but Ive seen many calligraphers using it, and thats why I included it on the list. The laser line level seems like a good alternative if you are working on an important project where you cant draw pencil guidelines. The only downside is that you are only working with a baseline, so I think this could only be suitable for more experienced calligraphers. Here is a quick example by @suzcunningham. View this post on Instagram. A post shared by calligrapher (@suzcunningham). Additionally, you can sign up for the Lettering Crate and get instant access to all the free worksheets currently available. There are worksheets including full alphabets, drills, different calligraphy and lettering styles, and much more. Simply drop your email below and follow the instructions (two easy steps). And there you have it, friends. Thats pretty much everything you need to know about calligraphy guidelines. Here is a quick recap of the article. Guidelines are super helpful to keep your letters nice and consistent. The rolling ruler is the best tool (IMO) to draw guidelines. Understanding the anatomy and terminology is a crucial part of knowing how to make guidelines. Traditional calligraphy scripts have well-defined sizes when it comes to drawing guidelines. Modern/brush calligraphy is more open to personal interpretation. You decide the sizing and angles of your letterforms. You can either draw your guidelines or print some templates using one of the generators I mentioned above. I hope this post was helpful to you. If you have any questions about this topic or even suggestions for future tutorials feel free to drop a comment below or even shoot me an email. Until the next one, Stay AWESOME! Pin me!

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