Tradigital Maya

A CG Animator’s Guide to Applying the Classic Principles of Animation

Lee Montgomery
## Contents

**Acknowledgments** ................................................................. xvii

**Introduction – Traditional to Digital** ..................................... xix

**Chapter 1: Arcs – Organic Movement/Natural Motion** ............... 1

  Arcs in Object Motion ............................................................. 2
  Localized Arcs – Human Motion .................................................. 3
  Chapter 1.1 – Animation Test – Bouncing Ball ......................... 3
    Animation Preferences ............................................................. 4
    Maya Grid Display ................................................................. 5
    Creating the Bouncing Ball ...................................................... 6
    Animation Preferences – Key Tangents ....................................... 8
    Selection and Transformation Tools and Settings ....................... 9
    Animating the Ball Bounce ....................................................... 9
    Copying and Pasting Keys and Setting Height Key ...................... 12
    The Maya Graph Editor ............................................................ 15
    Breakdown Key (In-between) ..................................................... 17
    Playblast ............................................................................. 18
    Changing Key Tangent Type .................................................... 20
    Ghosted Playback ................................................................. 21
    Refining the Animation Timing – Key Tangents ......................... 24
    Squash and Stretch ............................................................... 26
    Looping the Animation .......................................................... 32
    Loop Animation – Curve Edit .................................................. 33
    Loop Animation – Bounce Across Ground .................................. 34
    Viewing and Editing the Trajectory Arc .................................... 35
    Validating the Animation and Additional Edits to
    Refine the Motion ................................................................. 37

  Chapter 1.2 – F16 Fighter Flight Path ..................................... 38
    Introducing the Asset ............................................................ 38
    EP Curve – Motion Path .......................................................... 40
    Motion Path – Connecting the Model to the Curve ..................... 41
    Editing Motion Path Timing .................................................... 46
Chapter 1.3 – Character IK Arm Swing ........................................... 49
  Maya Joint Chains, Forward & Inverse Kinematics, and
  Additional Controls ......................................................... 50
  Pose Blocking, Timing & Spacing, and Motion Arcs .................. 50
  Animating with Forward Kinematics (FK) ............................. 51
  Animating with Inverse Kinematics (IK) .............................. 53
  IK Rotate Plane Solver .................................................. 54
  Blocking in the Poses for the Arm Swing ............................. 55
  In-between Pose – Ease In ............................................... 57
  Validating the Timing and Motion ...................................... 58
  Motion Trail ................................................................. 59
  Editing the Arc on the Swing ............................................ 60
  Shifting and Scaling Keyframes ......................................... 61
  Camera Bookmarks ....................................................... 63
  Editing the Arm Swing – Out/In ......................................... 65
  Looping the Arm Swing .................................................. 67
  Editing the New Motion – Arm Swing Back ......................... 72
  Follow-through on the Wrist ............................................ 74
  Elbow Angle (Pole Vector) .............................................. 75

Chapter 1.4 – Character – Run Rhythm ........................................... 78
  Scene Setup and Animation ............................................. 79
  Lopping the Motion ....................................................... 87
  Hip Sway ................................................................. 89
  Looping Curves and Fixing Tangency ................................. 92
  Looping and Extending the Run Animation ......................... 95

Chapter 2: Anticipation – Building the Action .............................. 99
  F16 Fighter – Takeoff and Fight Sequence ............................ 100
  Head Turn Animation/Animation Appeal ............................. 100
  VFX – Dynamics Rocket Smash ....................................... 101
  Character Animation ..................................................... 101

Chapter 2.1 – Baseball Pitcher Throw ........................................ 103
  Reference and Thumbnailing .......................................... 104
  Character Asset and Display Modes .................................. 105
  Full Body IK ............................................................. 106
  Posing and Keying Modes ............................................. 107
  Effector Pinning ......................................................... 107
  Full Body IK – Effector Pinning in Action ........................... 108
Chapter 6: Follow-Through and Overlapping Action

Follow-Through and Overlap – Object Animation, Simulation, and Dynamics ........................................ 228
Squash and Stretch – Maya Muscle Setup ...................................... 228
nDynamics – Rocket Smash .................................................... 229

Chapter 6.1 – Baseball Pitcher Throw Pt. 2 – Follow-Through .......... 229
Pose Blocking ........................................................................ 229
Character Pose Blocking Part 1 – Pre-Release Pose to Step ............. 232
Character Pose Blocking Part 2 – Foot Plant ................................ 234
Re-Timing the Motion ................................................................ 237
Weight Shift – Throw Readiness ................................................ 238
Throw Pose – Corkscrew Follow-Through ...................................... 240
Throw Pose – Corkscrew Follow-Through 2 .................................. 243

Chapter 6.2 – nCloth – Cape Follow-Through .............................. 245
Modeling the Base Mesh for the nCloth Cape .............................. 246
Nucleus Space Scale Attribute .................................................... 250
nRigid – Adding the Character Mesh to the Simulation ................. 251
nConstraint – Connecting the Cape to the Character ..................... 252
Previewing the Simulation – nCloth Rest Pose ............................. 253
Collision Thickness Attribute .................................................... 254
Geometry Cache – Adding the Character Animation to the nCloth Setup .................................................. 255
nCloth Attributes and Presets Pt. 1 – Leather .............................. 258
nCloth Attributes and Presets Pt. 2 – T-Shirt .............................. 261
nCloth Attributes – Refining the Simulation to Improve Quality ...... 263
Increasing nCloth Mesh Resolution and Fixing Collision Thickness .................................................. 266
Final Tweaks to the nCloth Simulation ........................................ 268

Chapter 6.3 – Prop Follow-Through and Overlap – Character
Baseball Swing ........................................................................ 270
Full Body – Major Weight Shifts on Swing and Arc of Bat .............. 270
Upper Body – Torso Coil Rotation and Arm/Bat Follow-Through ........ 271
Start Pose to Swing Pose 1 ...................................................... 272
Swing Pose 1 to Swing Pose 2 .................................................. 275
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swing Pose 2 to Swing Pose 3</th>
<th>278</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swing Pose 3 to Swing Pose 4</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing Pose 4 to Swing Pose 5</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 7: Secondary Action – Enhancing the Shot ........................................ 287
- nCloth Simulation/NDynamics ............................................................... 288
- Layered Animation and Supporting Action ........................................... 288
- Detail Animation .................................................................................. 289
- Chapter 7.1 – Hand Animation Rig Setup ............................................. 290
  - Introducing the Hand Rig ............................................................... 292
  - Attribute Connections for Finger Joint Rotation .............................. 294
  - Working With the Finger Controls .................................................. 296
  - Animating With the Rig Clenching Fist .......................................... 298

Online Chapter 7.1: F16 – Plane Landing Mechanism ............................... www.tradigitalmaya.com

Chapter 8: Straight Ahead Action and Pose to Pose .................................... 311
- Pose to Pose – Walk and Run Cycles and Video Game ......................... 312
- Straight Ahead Action and Combining Both Methodologies .................. 313
- Chapter 8.1 – Pose-to-Pose Run Cycle ................................................. 314
  - Leg and Hip Pose ........................................................................... 315
  - Mirroring the Pose across the Character (Left <> Right) .................... 317
  - Copying Pose from Frame to Frame ................................................ 319
  - Foot Plant ....................................................................................... 319
  - Centre of Mass – Weight Rise and Fall ............................................ 320
  - Editing the Motion Curve Through the Graph Editor ......................... 322
  - Cycling the Motion Curve ............................................................. 322
  - Hip Rotation .................................................................................... 323
  - Upper Torso – Main Pose ............................................................... 324
  - Torso and Head Follow Through .................................................... 325
  - Torso Counterbalance Rotation – Part One .................................... 326
  - Torso Counterbalance Rotation – Part Two .................................... 328
  - Head Counterbalance ................................................................. 329
  - Arm Swing on Run ......................................................................... 330
  - Mirroring the Arm Pose ............................................................... 332
  - Hip Weight Shift ............................................................................ 333
- Chapter 8.2 – Dynamics Rocket Smash ................................................ 334
  - Rigid Body Dynamics – Scene Setup and Attributes ......................... 334
  - Rigid Body Dynamics – Refining and Directing the Effect ................. 335
  - Dynamics – Scene Setup and Elements ........................................... 335
Surprise/Shock .................................................. 413
Austere/Aloof .................................................. 416
Dejected/Subdued .......................................... 419
Bright/Chatty ............................................... 421

Chapter 11: Squash and Stretch ......................... 425
Manual Squash and Stretch and Deformation ........... 426
Character Posing and Squash and Stretch .............. 426
Facial Animation – Blend Shapes Setup ................. 427
Dynamics .................................................. 427
Dynamics – Maya Muscle ................................ 428
Chapter 11.1 – Animation Test – Flour-Sack ............ 428
Squash ................................................ 430
Stretch ............................................... 432
Twist ............................................... 435
Follow-Through and Overlapping Action .............. 437
Ease In & Ease Out and Timing ......................... 438
Appeal and Performance ................................ 438
Chapter 11.2 Character – Hero Jump .................... 438

Online Chapter 11.2: Maya Muscle .................. www.tradigitalmaya.com

Chapter 12: Exaggeration .................................. 465
Baseball Batter Animation ................................ 466
Walk Cycle Animation .................................. 466
VFX Dynamics ........................................ 467
Chapter 12.1 – Exaggeration – Character Baseball Swing . 467
Animation Lead-In ..................................... 468
Swing Animation ...................................... 469
Exaggerated Torso Rotation ......................... 470
Bat Angle Edited ..................................... 470
Pre-Step Pose1 – Left Foot Raise Exaggerated ........ 472
Pre-Step Pose2 – Hips Shift Forward Slightly ....... 472
Exaggerated Action Line ......................... 474
Chapter 12.2 – Exaggeration – HumanIK Retarget and Edit . 478
Character Rig – HumanIK ............................... 479
HumanIK – Character Controls Window .............. 480
HumanIK – Character Retargeting .................. 483
Chapter 12.3 Exaggeration – Dynamics Explosion
Dynamics – Scaffolding Setup Part 1 – Scene Setup
Basic Rigid Bodies Setup – Collapsible Scaffolding
Dynamics – Scaffolding Setup Part 2 – Rigid Bodies – Hinge Constraint
Dynamics – Scaffolding Setup Part 3 – Hinge-Connected Elements
Dynamics – Roof Smash – Fields
Viewing the Additional Simulated Effects in Combination
Follow-Through and Overlapping Action
Secondary Action and Exaggeration

Chapter 13: Conclusion
Chapter 13.1 Recap – The Principles and Application
Pre-visualization, Scene Layout, and Revision
Character Animation
Dynamics and Simulation
Chapter 13.2 Industry Trends Moving Forward
Industry Specialization
Digital Pre-visualization
Virtual Cinematography and Performance Capture
Video Games – Real-Time Animation and Run-Time Blending
Chapter 13.3 Selected Reading and Additional Reference
Timing for Animation, Second Edition by Harold Whittaker and John Halas (Authors), Tom Sito (Editor)
Animation: The Mechanics of Motion by Chris Webster
Drawn to Life: 20 Golden Years of Disney Master Classes, V1 by Walt Stanchfield and Don Hahn
The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation by Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas
The Animator’s Survival Kit (Paperback) by Richard Williams
Contents

*Acting for Animators: A Complete Guide to Performance Animation*  
by Ed Hooks ........................................ 529

*Cartoon Animation (The Collector's Series)* by Preston Blair ........ 529

*The Human Figure in Motion* by Eadweard Muybridge ............. 529

*Animals in Motion* by Eadweard Muybridge ....................... 529

Industry Periodicals, Websites, and Training ........................ 530

**Index** .................................................................. 533