

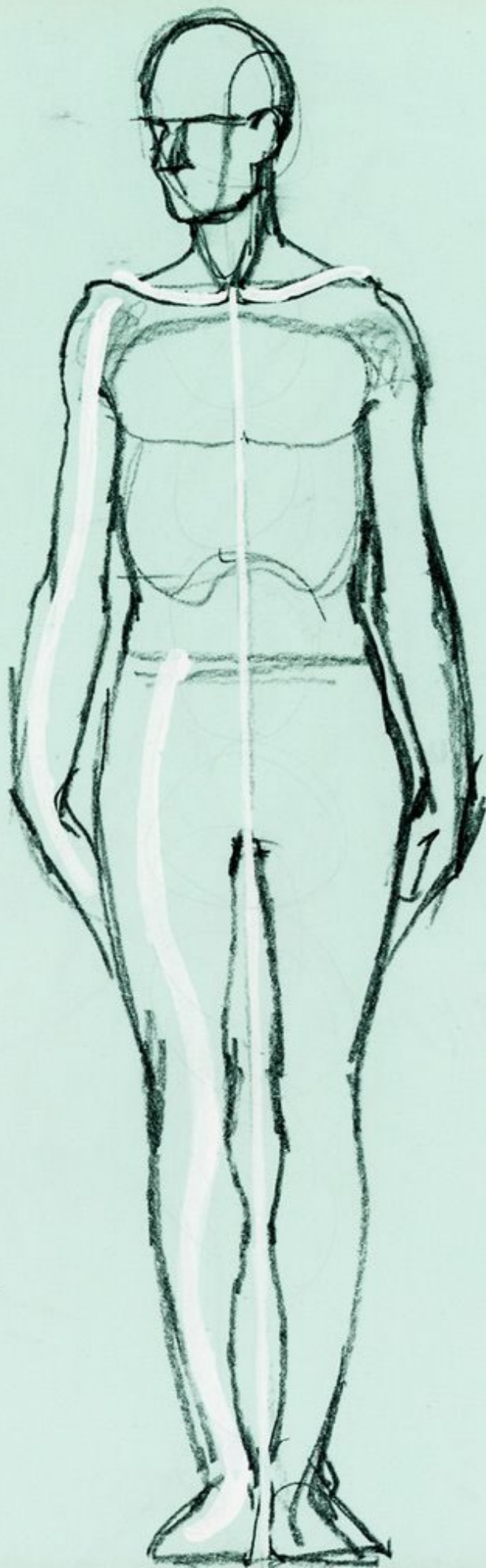
CHAPTER 1

CURVES

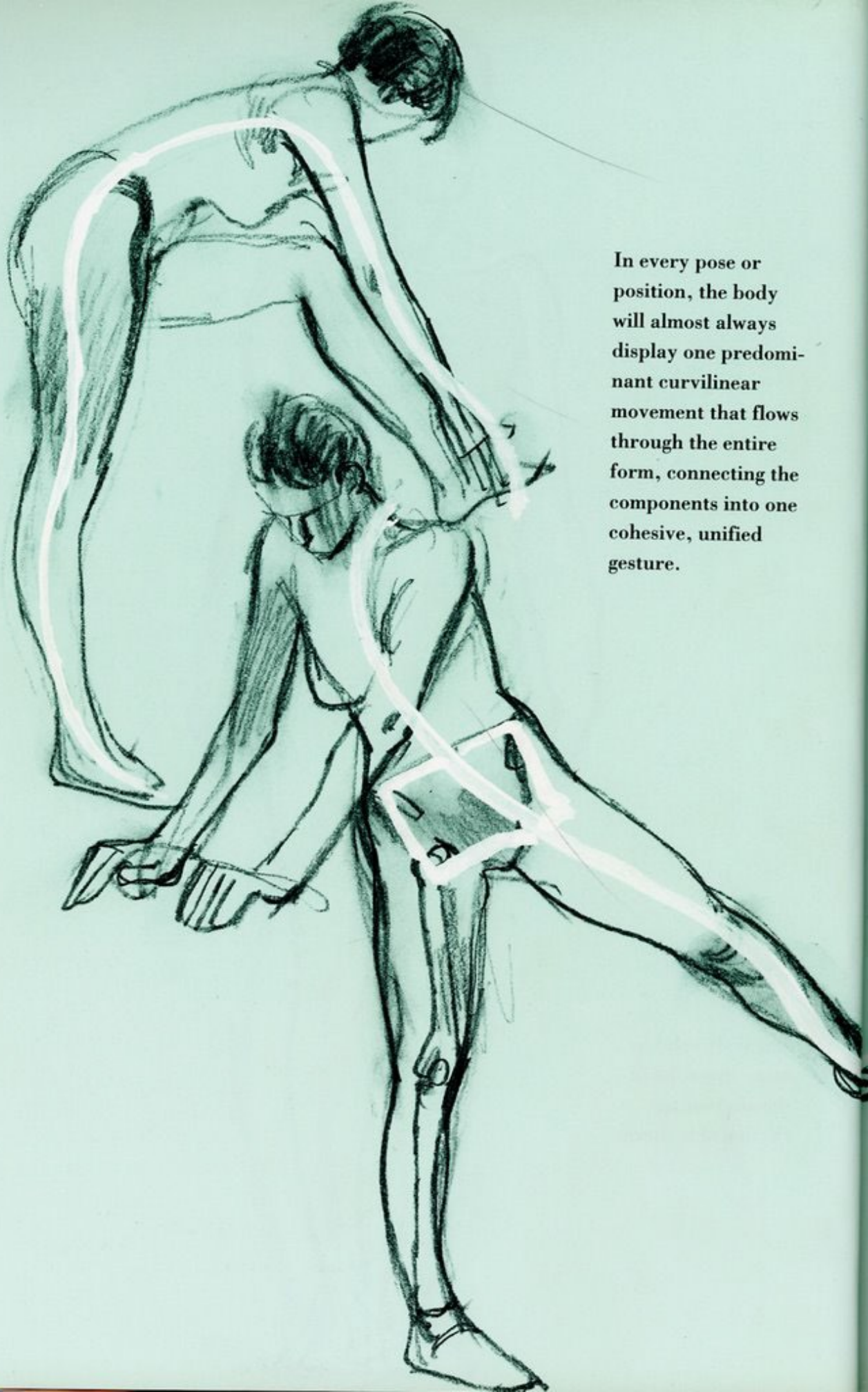
What gives the human figure its balance, flexibility and mobility is its design on an "S" curve. The S-curve is constantly visible in the human figure. While a straight line is a rigid and fragile form, a curved shape is capable of flexibility and can manage the crucial task of self-balancing. The drawings here illustrate the profile, front, and back views of bodies shifting weight and the way the "S" controls and allows such actions. It begins at the top of the spine (base of the skull), follows the spine to the pelvis, then emerges at the front of the upper leg to the arch of the foot. The S-shape is also visible when people walk, sit, kneel, lie down, swim, dance, etc.

The S-curve that courses through the human body gives it its characteristic grace and resiliency. The S-curve acts like a spring to cushion the impact of locomotion as it counters the downward pull of gravity.

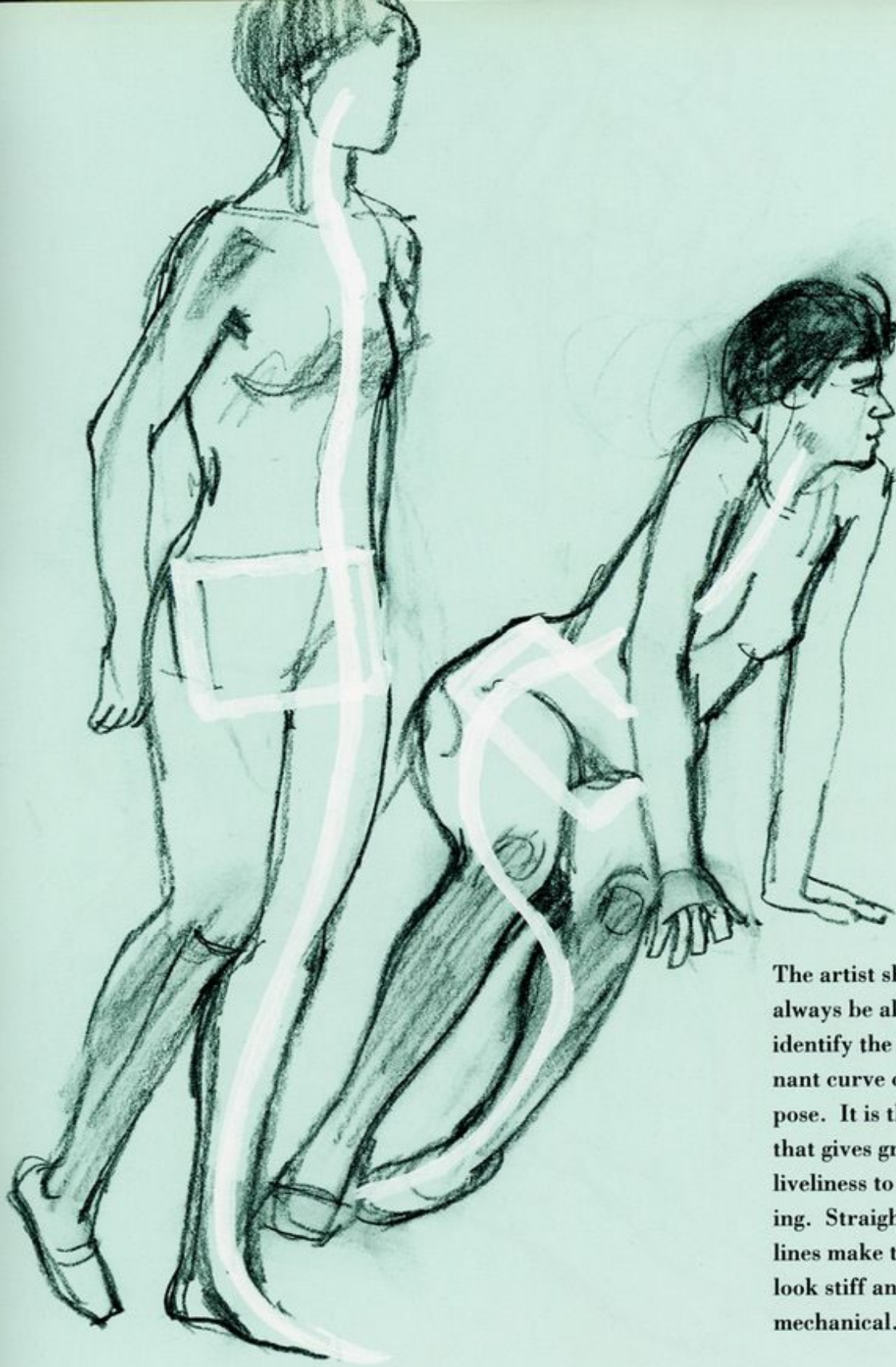




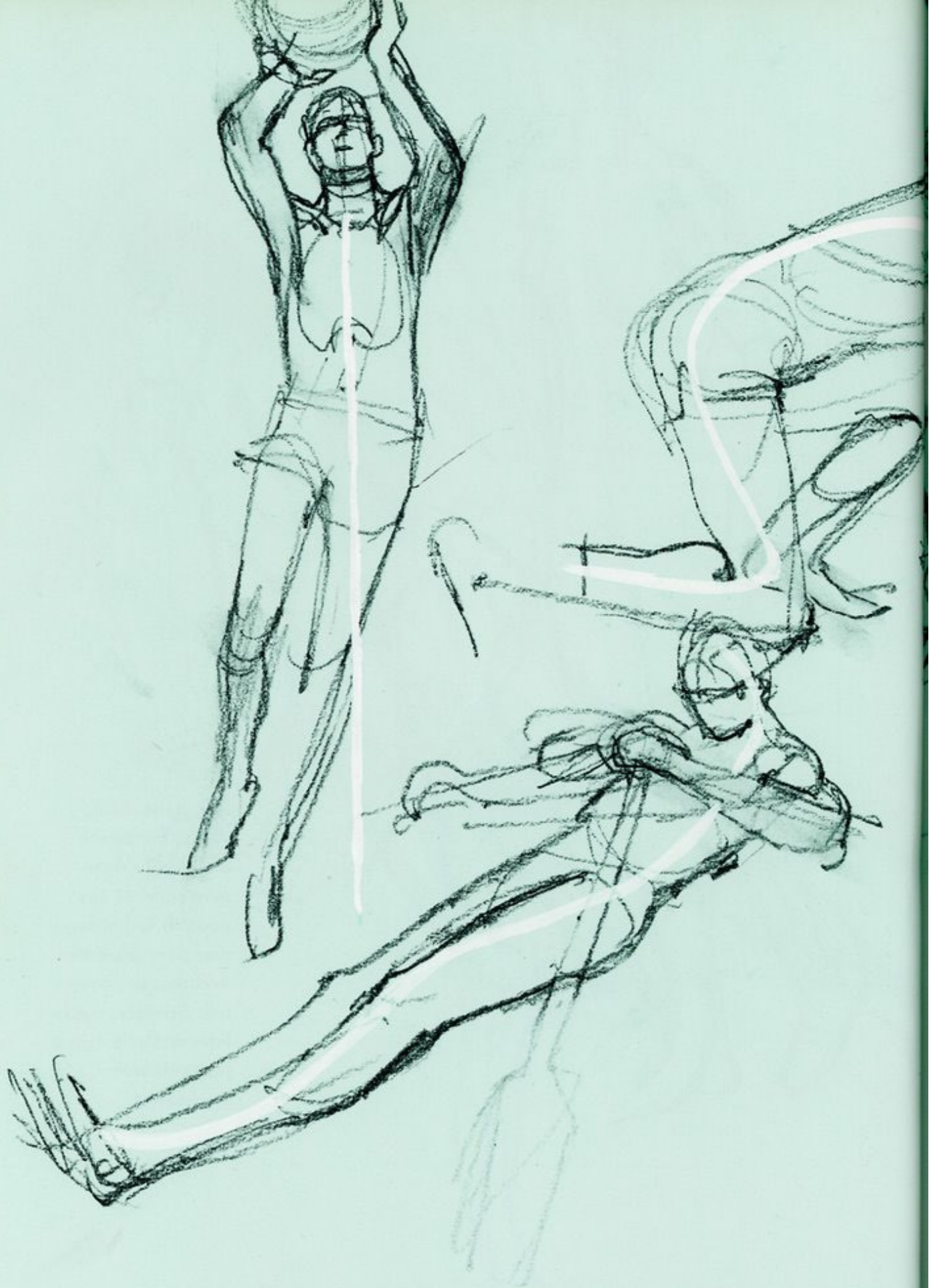
The body exhibits many examples of the alternating rhythm of S-curves.



In every pose or position, the body will almost always display one predominant curvilinear movement that flows through the entire form, connecting the components into one cohesive, unified gesture.



The artist should always be alert to identify the dominant curve of any pose. It is this curve that gives grace and liveliness to a drawing. Straight, rigid lines make the figure look stiff and mechanical.



Although the most important S-curve in the body is that of the spine, the rest of the skeleton and the muscle masses echo and enhance its rhythms. Even the muscles and their distribution on the skeleton maintain the alternating rhythm of the S-curve. For instance, the large muscle mass of the thigh is found toward the front of the body, while the large muscle of the lower leg, the calf muscle, is placed in back, thus maintaining the alternating pattern of curves.

