

# **How to Make free Animations - Pivot Stickfigure Animator**

by Keith-Kid on February 13, 2008

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#### intro: How to Make free Animations - Pivot Stickfigure Animator

Hello, Are you one of those persons who just saw an animation and thought it would be cool to make your own? Or maybe you want to know if you're cut out to make some, but You don't wanna waste hundreds of dollars trying to find out?

Well There's a Solution: Pivot Stickfigure Animator

Pivot StickFigure Animator is a free animation program. It mainly uses lines and circles to create animations. It is a very simple program, that is great for learning to animate, and always good for practicing.

The creator, Peter Bone, decided to make a free to use animation program for people who would like to learn if they are cut out for animation, but don't want to spend money in the process. His program has been praised for being simple, effective and best of all FREE!!!!! Be sure to thank this guy any way you can!

## Pivot can be used for beginner projects:



By West921

## But don't think its just limited to two stickmen fighting:



By Alex Grinjov

Here is the official page of Pivot. Also, check out Peter Bone's other programs

An Msn Group for Pivot can be found here

So without further a do, here's how to make Simple Free animations

This Instructable is still under construction and is not even remotely finished. Some steps may seem out of place, but

#### please be patient.



#### step 1: Getting the Software

First of all, you have to download the software.

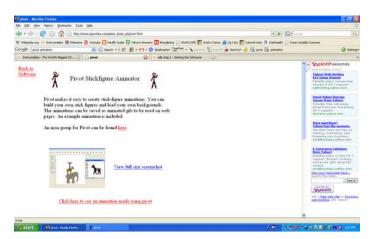
You're probably unsure if you should download this program. You might be Thinking that it may have a virus or spyware.

Well, search google all you want. This software has received numerous awards for being safe. If you still don't trust, ask around, maybe someone you know uses it.

Pivot Stickfigure Animation

There are two great reasons to download the program.

- 1) Its free!
- 2) Only takes up 1 mb. Really!





#### step 2: Get Familiarized with the Program

An icon saying "Pivot Stickfigure animator" will probably appear in your desktop. If not, look for it in the start menu.

Open up the program

First, Let's get familiarized with the program.

The first thing that you'll notice is that theres a stickman in a Large White Space. This Large space is the canvas, where you will put your animation.

On the top of the page, theres a Long Empty Space, this is where each frame will go in.

On the left, you'll see some buttons: ( In descending order)

- \* Play When pressed, will preview how the animation is coming along.
- \* Stop When pressed, will stop playing the preview and go to your current point in the animation
- \* Repeat If checked, will keep playing the preview until you hit stop, If not checkes, the preview will only play one time
- \* Add Figure This is where you can insert a new figure. When you open up the program, it will say stickman. This is because the stickman is the default Figure. If You've created new figures, you can insert them by choosing the name of the figure and clicking "Add Figure"

#### Current Figure - Options for the selected figure in that particular frame

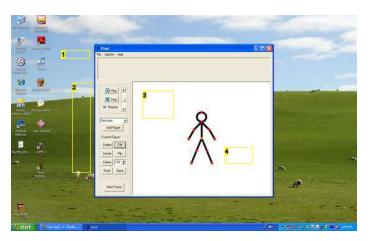
- Delete Will erase the selected figure from the frame
- Center Will move the selected figure to the center of the canvas
- Colour With this button, you can change the color of the selected figure
- Front -

- Edit WIth this button, you can edit and alter the figure. You can add or remove segments. You can also delete the whole figure and create a new one
- Flip Will move the figure to the opposite position of the one its currently on
- Size Determines the size of the figure in each frame
- Back -

In the Tabs:

#### File:

- Open animation Opens a saved file for editing. Can only import files made in Pivot
- Save animation Save the current animation as a Pivot file for editing, or as a GIF image so you can put it on other places. Can also save as a bitmap.
- Load Background Load an image or drawing made with Pivot, as a background Image. Different Backgrounds can be used in different frames.
- Clear Background Erase the background from the selected frame.
- Load figure type Upload a figure from another user or Internet site.
- Create Figure Type Create a new figure. More about this in step



### Image Notes

- 1. Tabs >
- 2. Buttons >
- 3. Canvas
- 4. Stickfigure. Will appear every time you open the program

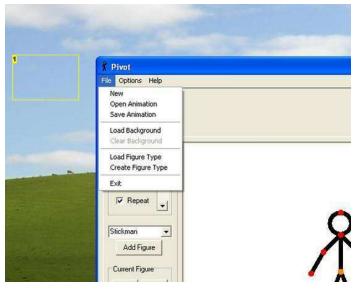


Image Notes

1. Tabs >

## step 3: Make a Stickman



Please Excuse the low audio, I have a cheap microphone

Although a stickman appears every time you open Pivot, you may want to improve on it or maybe even make your own character.

To make Your own stickfigure, first open up the files tab and click on "Create Figure Type"

<sup>\*</sup> Next Frame - Saves the current picture as a frame and moves on to the next one

A new window will open up. There you can edit or create a stickfigure of your own. When you click on a segment, it will turn blue, to signify that its selected

To create a segment, you must build it on the segment provided. All segments MUST be connected.

The buttons: (From up to down)

- Add line Add a new segment on the original segment or a new segment.
- Add Circle Add a circle to the figure
- Toggle Segment Kind With this button you can change a segment to a circle or Vice-versa (other way around). With this tool, you can also turn the original segment with a circle.
- Duplicate Segment Creates an exact copy of the selected Segment. Useful for making identical arms or legs.
- Segment Thickness Change the thickness of the selected segment
- · Static / Dynamic Segment Probably the most Important Button in this menu. Will change the segment type of the selected segment

A dynamic segment will have a handle and will therefore be able to move in an animation. The Dynamic segment is the default option, meaning that all created segments will be dynamic unless you change it.

A static segment will not. have a handle.

A segment is shown as grey in the builder if it is static and black if it is dynamic (when it's not selected). Static segments can be rotated in the builder, but not the animation.

• Delete Segment - Deletes the selected Segment

#### **Edit Mode**

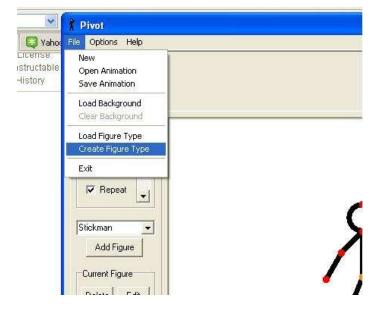
You can activate edit mode in the stickfigure builder by cliicking Options and selecting Edit mode

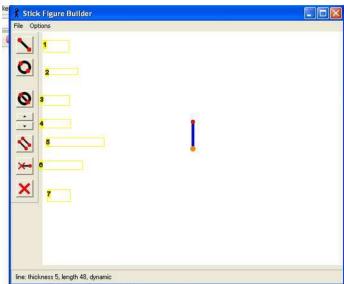
In edit mode, you can change the lenghts of segments. Remember to uncheck edit mode after you change the lenght of a segment, or it might ruin your stickfigure if you move something you shouldn't have moved

#### To save your stickman go to File> save as

To add the character to your animation go to File> add to animation. You have to name it.

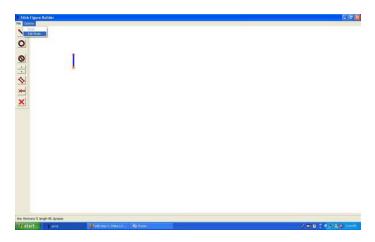
To make a stick or line as an object, simply create a character thats only a segment.





#### **Image Notes**

- 1. Create Segment
- 2. Create Circle
- 3. Toggle Segment Kind
- 4. Line Thickness
- 5. Duplicate Segment
- 6. Dynamic/ Static Segment
- 7. Delete Segment



### step 4: The Basics

Now Lets talk about the basics of making an animation.

Make a drawing, Change the frame, make another drawing, Rinse and Repeat

#### See an example:

When you download pivot, it comes with some demo animations to use as reference. Follow these instructions on how to open the walking demo:

- Open up pivot.
- · Click on the files tab and select "Open Animation"
- · Select the one that says "walking"
- The pictures on this step are taken from the walking demo. Not made by me. The demo.

#### To make Your own walking animation:

Open up Pivot.

Since the stickman is already there, simply click next frame. and move the stickman to any position.

First thing you'll see is a gray figure behind the stickman. This is a very neat and probably the most important feature in Pivot that shows the position of the figure in the previous frame. Its very useful if you forget what hes supposed to do now.

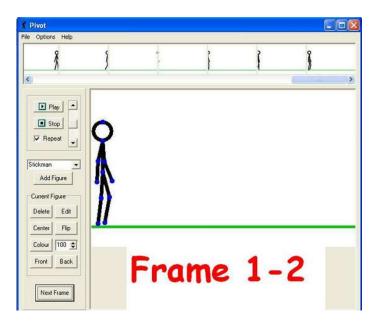
In this step I'm gonna cover the most fundamental and probably most asked question of Pivot animation: Walking

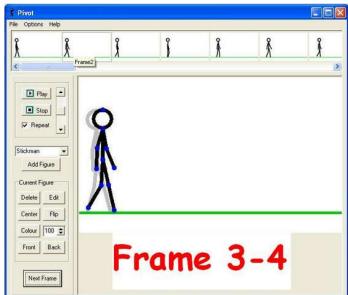
### Try this:

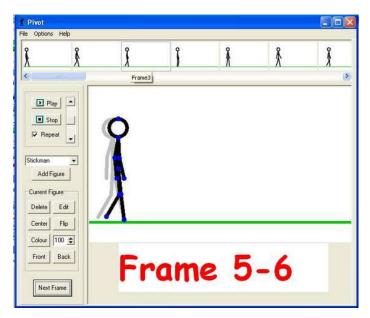
- Observe each ilustration.
- Make each illustration in 2 frames. That is, draw each picture and click next frame 3 times before making the other picture.
- When you're done click play
- You just made a walking animation!

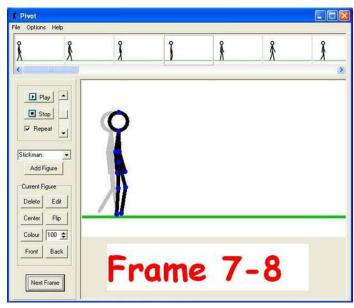
The Best Advice I can Give You when it comes to animating: If you're stuck n something, stand up and re-enact it a couple of times. If you're stuck on walking, try standing up and walking around, so you can better understand how it works.

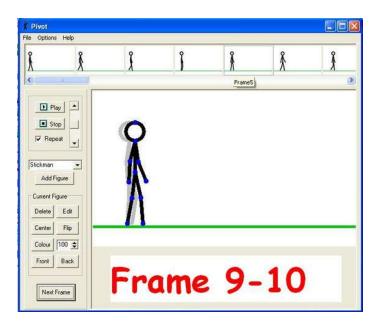
Save a copy of this project as a Pivot file by clicking file>Save animation. Call it walking. Trust me it WILL be useful in the future

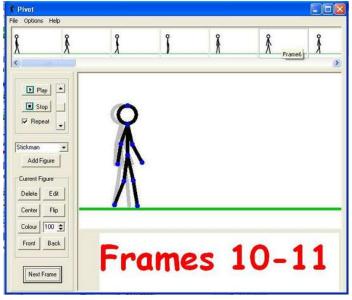


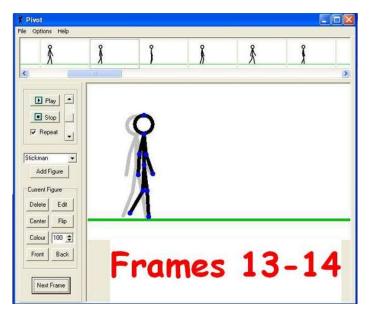


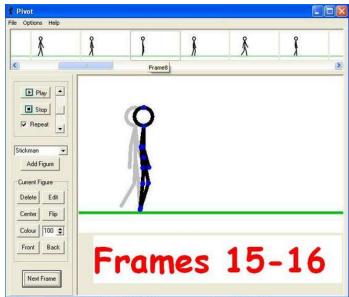


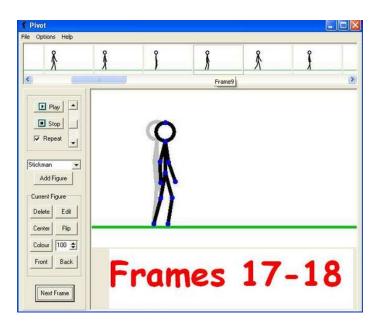


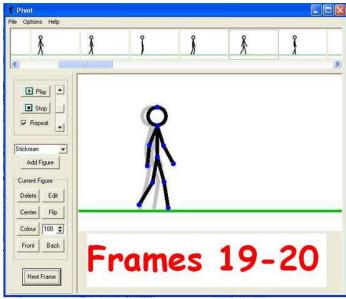


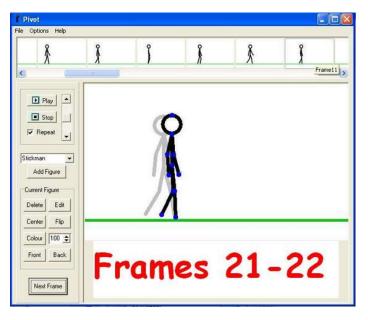


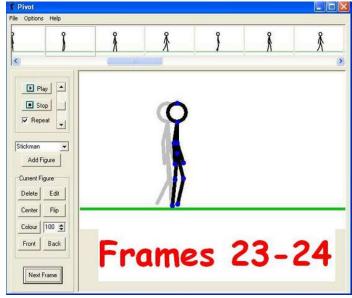


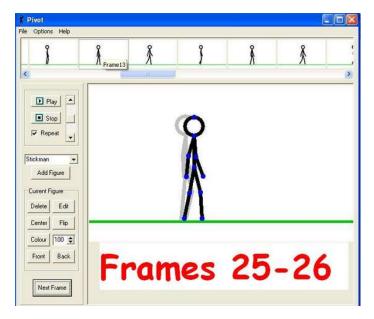


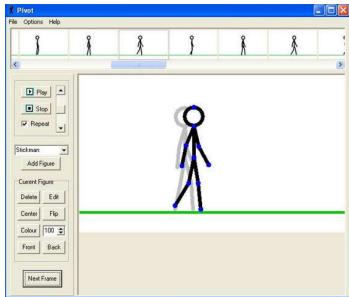


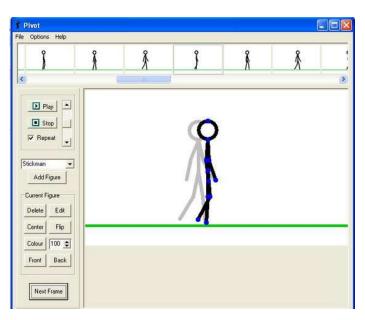


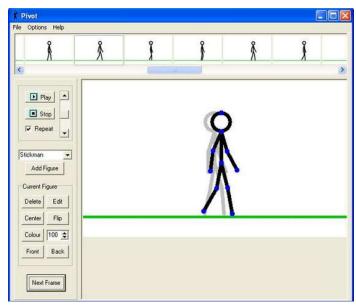


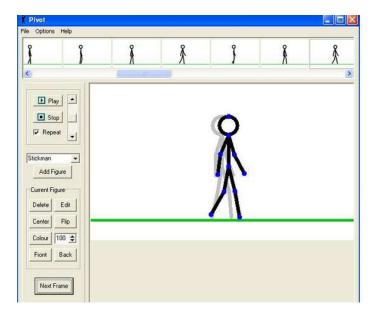


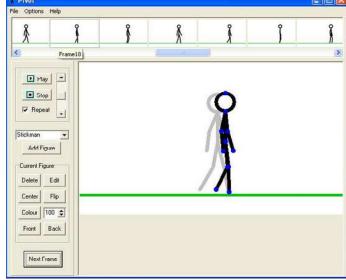


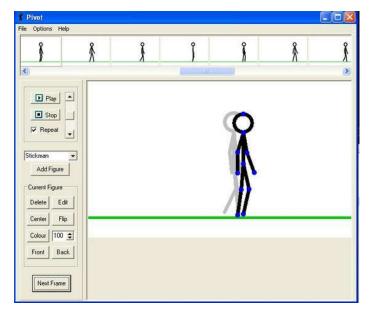


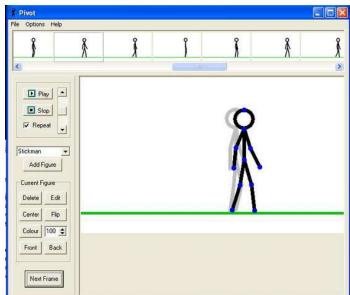


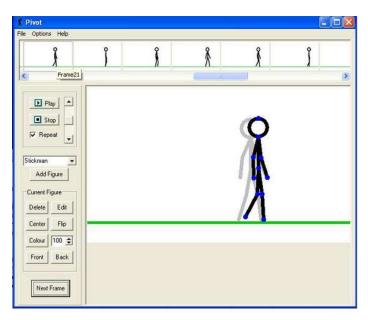


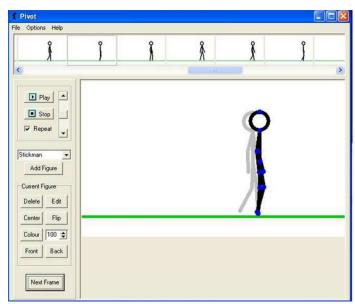


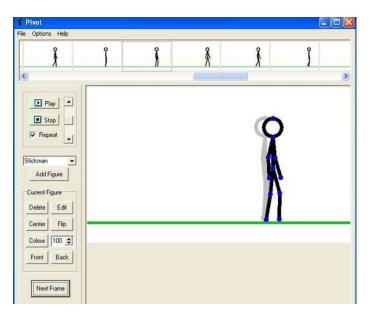


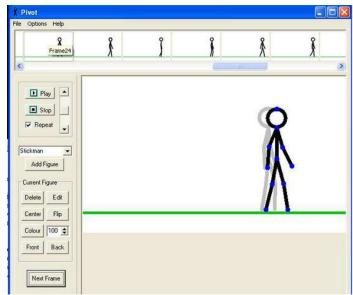


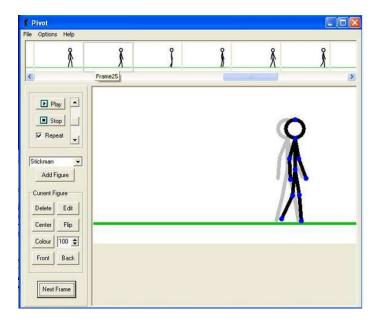


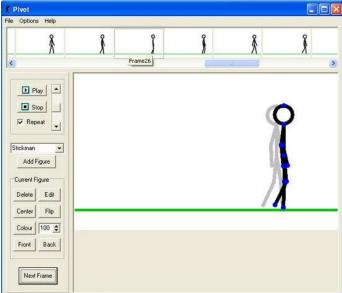


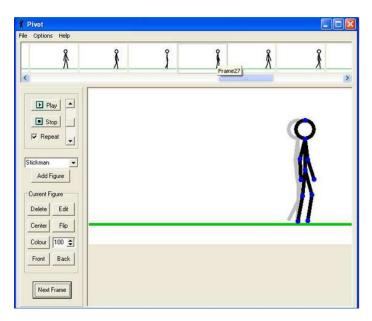


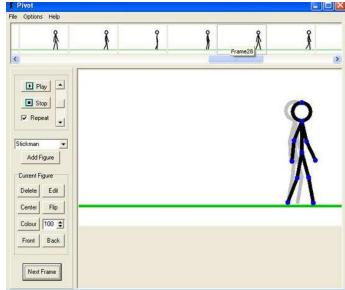










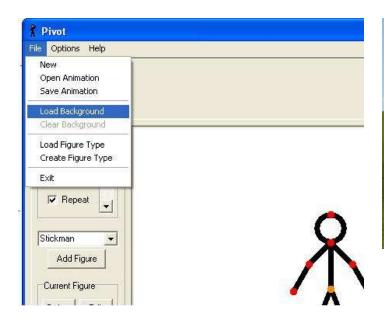


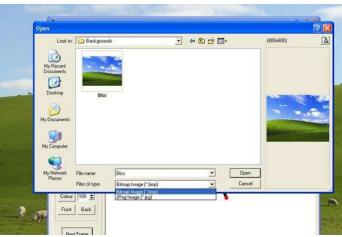
## step 5: Adding a Background

You can add a background to a Pivot Animation, but there's a drawback- You can only use one background throughout the entire animation. So its sometimes best to create your own backgrounds in each frame.

## To upload a background:

- Go to File > Load Background
- Select a picture
- Choose to upload it as a Bitmap or a JPEG
- · Click open







### step 6: Making objects

Here's a car I made in Pivot, using an old poster in my room as a reference:

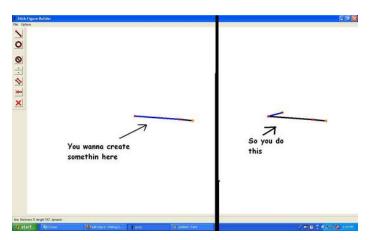


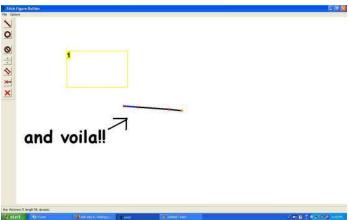
A good artist knows how to use all the elements. SO now that you know a couple of basics, lets try using the resources.

Its always good to keep images close for reference. If you like you could put the picture as a temporary background so you can look at it

#### Tips:

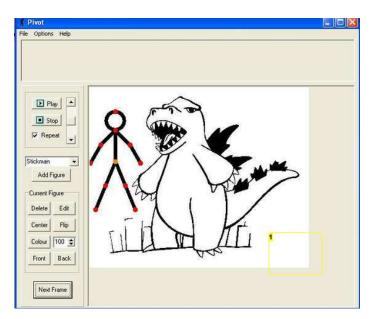
- · Avoid round objects, use as many edges as you can find
- Fancy cars are actually easier to draw because they have a lot of edges. regular cars nowadays have a lot of curves, which are quite hard to trace
- You can try cartoon characters too!! For example, my avatar!

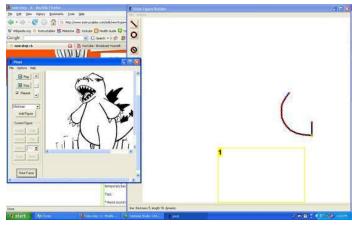




#### **Image Notes**

1. Now you can create a segment here!



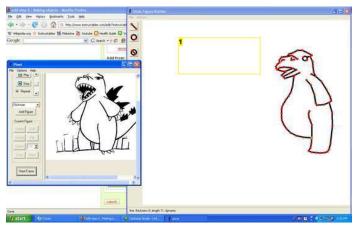


#### Image Notes

1. Oh he's a fat one!

#### **Image Notes**

1. Ahhh monster!!!!



#### **Image Notes**

1. The resemblance is Uncanny

### step 7: Exporting and Using your animation

As you know, Pivot 2 (The Version we are using in this instructable) only exports animations in GIF format, which is not well accepted in a lot f websites.

In Instructables, GIFs are either slowed down of sped up. A lot. This basically ruins the whole animation.

A lot of people have noticed that the GIF is not accepted into movie maker, so they cannot upload their animations to websites.

Pivot 3 beta, offers the option of saving your animation as AVI, a format which is basically accepted by most sites and editing programs.

Personally, to show animations, I either:

- Play the clip on Pivot itself, and use a screen recoding software to Record the animation.
- Convert the GIF using a converting program. My personal Favorite is MediaConverter.org

## step 8: Running

Running is usually a crucial part in most flash animations.

To make running:

- Basically its the same process as walking, but you have to flex the knees more and make the space between legs bigger
- Remember to move the character a little more, since running covers more distance than walking.
- Don't forget to move the arms, its a crucial part that many people (Including me) leave out

Observe the Sequence of Pictures, because a picture is worth 1000 words

Remeber to save a copy by clicking File>Save animation. Trust me it WILL be useful in the future!!



Image Notes
1. Step 1

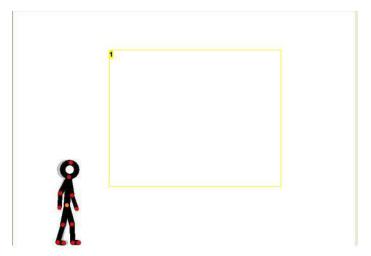
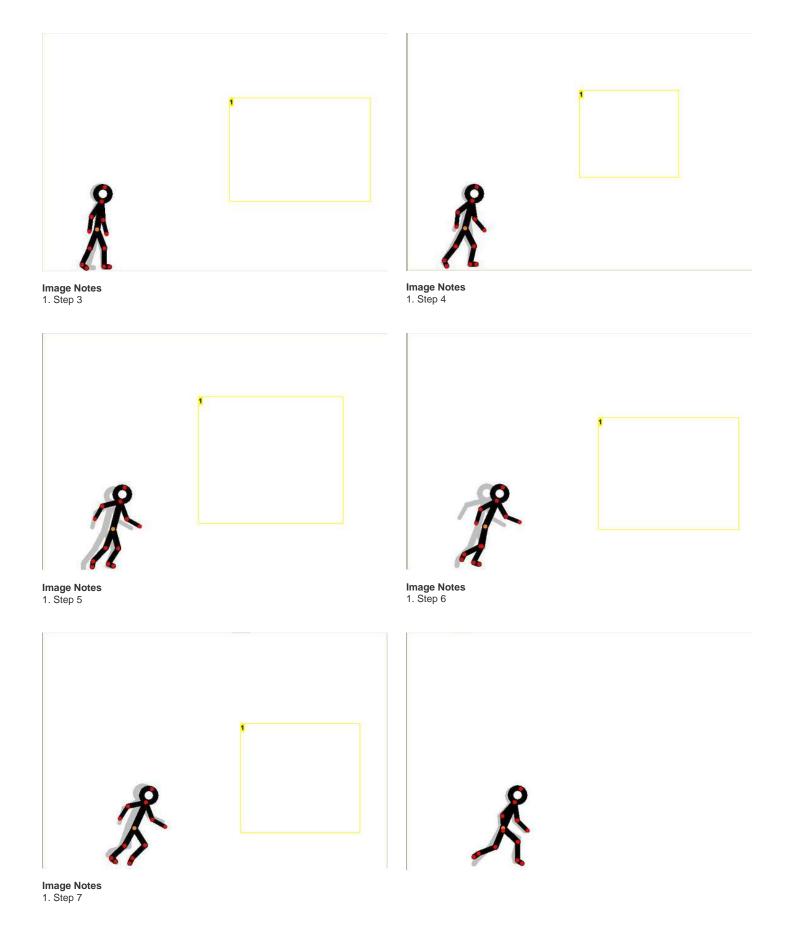
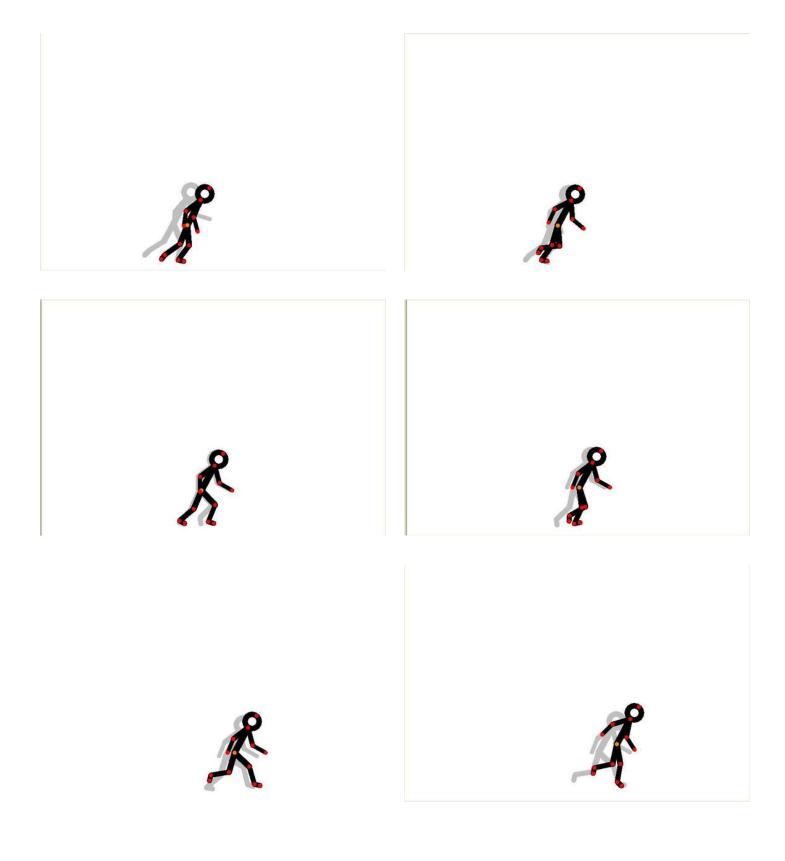


Image Notes
1. Step 2







**step 9: Running up Against a Wall**A neat trick in most stickmen fights is **running up against a wall and flipping**. So let's do that

Video

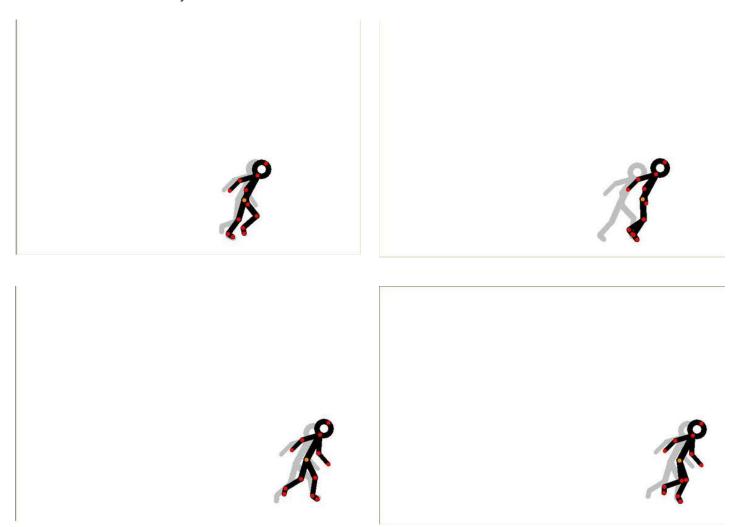


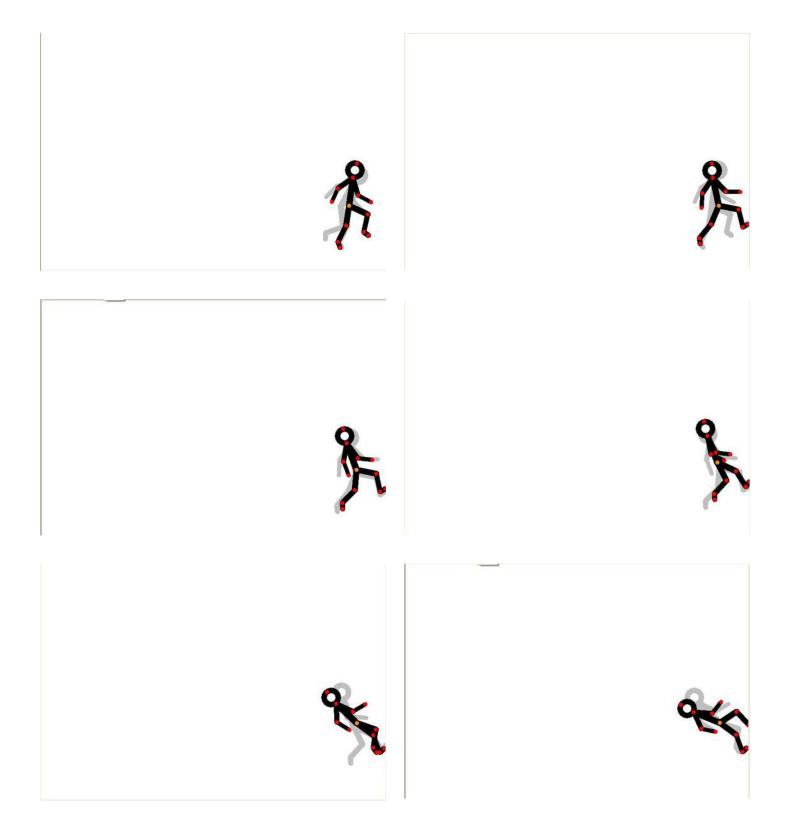
### To do a wall flip:

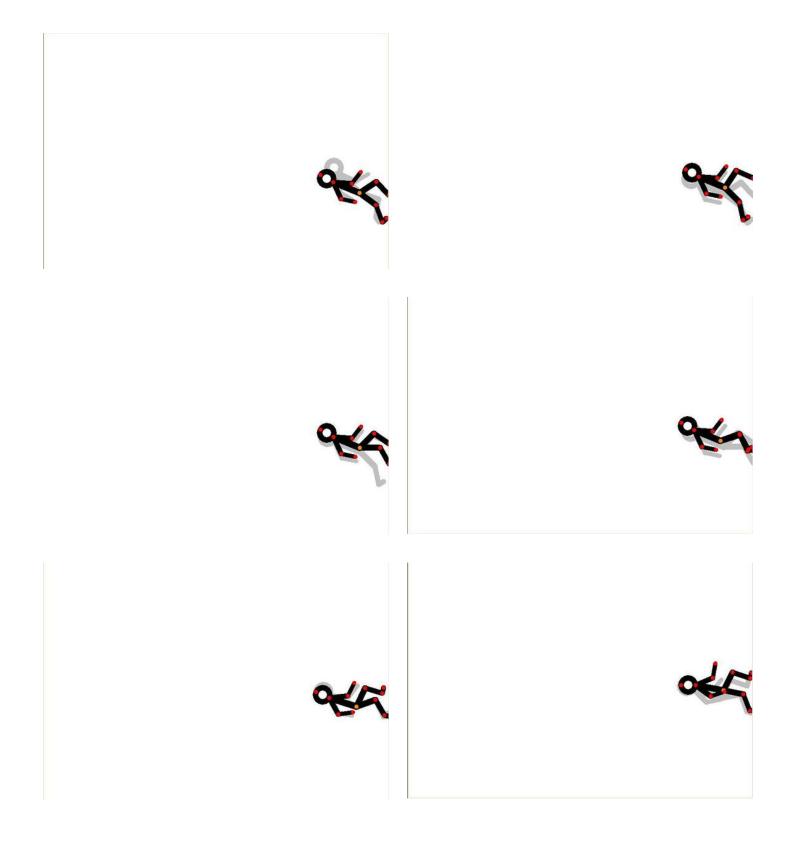
- First of all, the character needs a running start, it would look horrible to just put him there on the wall already
- You need to define a wall. The easiest way is to just use the animation border, or the end of the canvas, as a wall.
- Remember to curve the character while flipping after jumping off the wall, or else he'll look stiff and lifeless....well as far as that goes....
  Also, sticking the landing can be tricky, so practice! Remember to flex the knees gradually as he (she) starts touching the ground, it will look much better if you do

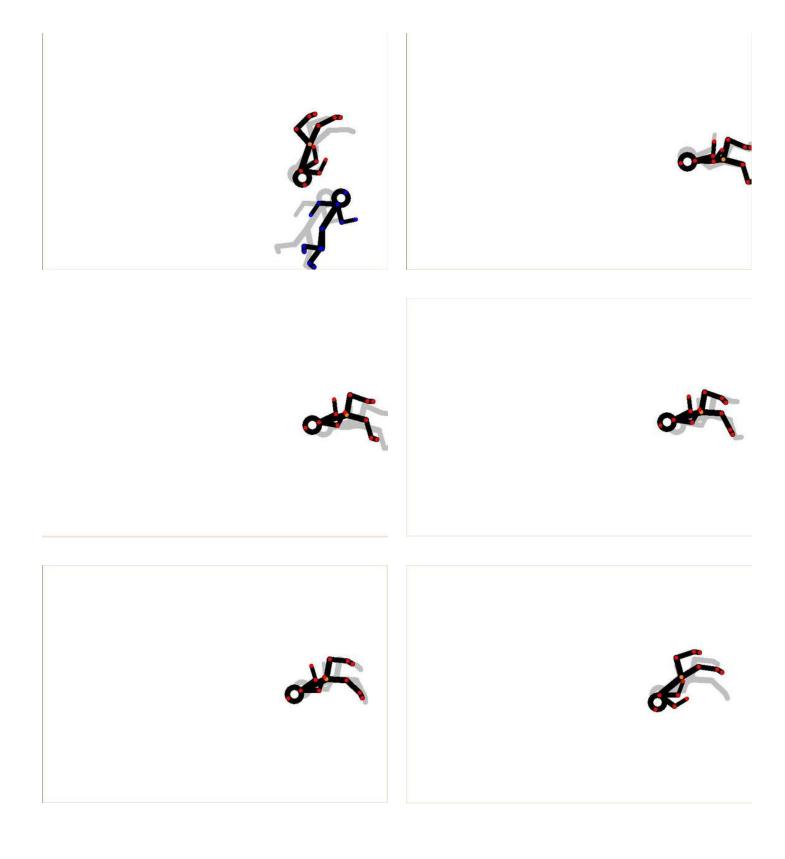
Since we just created a running scene moment ago, let's use that. I'm starting from the 16th picture

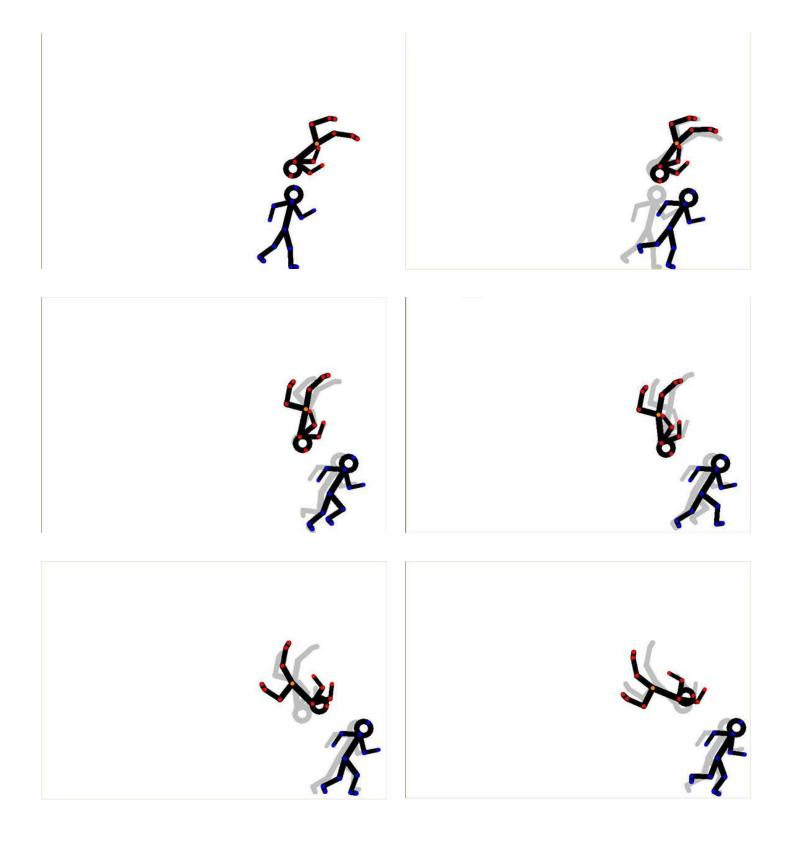
Remeber to save the animation after you make it. It WILL be useful in the future





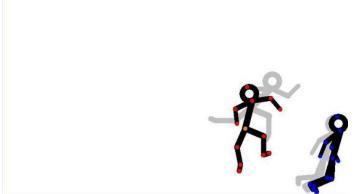


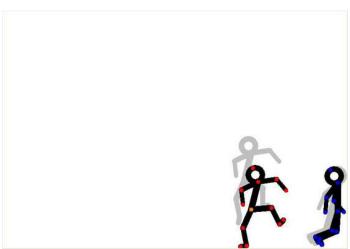












step 10: Speed Bursts
My all time favorite: Speed bursts.

You know, that Dragon Ball Z style moment where the characters throw thousands of lightning fast punches and kicks at each other in a matter of seconds.

#### To make Speed bursts, There are two methods:

Method 1: Skip some frames:

- This method is much easier. Simply create a punch scene in one corner.
- In the Next frame, create another punch scene, far away from the original one. Repeat.
- It will look like the characters moved all the way to the other side in the blink of an eye.

Method 2: Quick frames:

- The key to this kind of speed burst is to make movements that only last one frame, and repeat them a lot
- For example, make a left punch, then a right punch. Repeat that sequence 25 times, and you just made a speed burst.
- Since you will repeat various positions a lot of times try this. Make a stick man in a left punch position. Save him and add him to the animation. Name him Left.
- Now make another stick man in a right punch position. Save him and add him to the animation. Call him Right.
- · Now alternate them between frames. Make frame one have right punch guy and the second frame have left punch guy.

\*You have to be patient. Speed burst often take a lot of time, but the outcome is very much worth the wait. Don' get frustrated if you don't get it the first couple of times

Remember to move the characters in correct positions, you dont want your guy to be punching randomly into the air!

## Pic 1 is method 2

<sup>\*</sup>Repeat this and youve made a speed burst

Note that it took me SO long for this 3 second thing using the second method





#### **Image Notes**

1. Boy vs. Cowboy

#### 

These aren't explosions. It's Dragon Ball Z styled Energy Bursts. If you're a kid, this is your favorite part of any show!

Here, I'll list the methods I use to make bursts.

#### **Burst 1**

I use this small burst for when energy balls hit the ground. Explosions are very hard to do if you're a novice, so instead settle for this quick method. This method

This list shows the order of frames I used to make the GIF below. This burst is good for about a second or two. I use it to avoid complicated sequences of explosions.

The Ball I used is about 1 /12 inches and size 164 if you measure it with a ruler (I should have worked on this....)

- Frames 1-4 are the energy ball. This is used to show where it comes from. (Remember to add the color in this first part, or else the whole thing is basically ruined!)
- In frames 5-6, I moved the ball closer to the center. Remember to think up the path the ball will follow before you start the animation.
- In frame 7, the ball is below the center. Its close to the wall and the ground. (The canvas)
- In frame 8, I changed the ball's size to 500.
- In frame 9, I made it size 800, so it would cover the whole screen
- In frame 10, I used the same size as in frame 7. I moved it a bit closer to the ground also.
- In frames 11-21, I once again changed the size to 800 and changed its color to a clearer tone.
- In frames 22-23, I once again made the color clearer
- In frames 24-30, I made it even more clear.
- Finally, In frame 21, I used a tone that almost resembles white.

Then you can continue the rest of the animation. Now try it!

#### step 12: Extras

I will not say farewell, because I still have SO MANY things to add to this instructable, but not enough time.

Still to come:

- Swords
- Blood and effects
- Downloadable resources
- Backgrounds

Please contact me if you have a good pivot tutorial or have an idea for another step

Hope this helps you understand flash and if you're really cut out for it!!!!



step 13: Inspiration
Before you start using pivot, see what its capable of doing. These are some EXCELLENT videos:

### By Alex Grinyov:



## By J'Brian (Jayther)

THis guy is Awesome!!!!!!

Stick em Up



Stick Em right

## Video



#### Stick em Left



#### Stick em down



## **Related Instructables**



How to draw anime by Super\_David



Encen's Animation tutorial by creatortrent



Easy fast lightboard Toddson

**IM Emoticions** using Adobe Flash by Eric95



Make a Valentine Video by apuschak



Flash Vector Illustration Walkthrough by darkmotion



How to get rid of unwanted animals -**Updated** by RadBear



Easy Stuffed Animal Flash **Drive** by Brennn10



## Comments

50 comments

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The Jamalam says:

Sep 29, 2008. 9:54 AM **REPLY** 

Hey keith, can you tell me whether when you download pivot, does it download any other files (dll, non-pivot scripts etc.)? see my dad's not sure.



Keith-Kid says:

Sep 29, 2008. 12:27 PM REPLY

Nope, it's just a 1mb application. It makes a couple of folders, but they are just for storing animations and whatnot.

No dll, no other scripts.



The Jamalam says: cool, thanks!

Sep 30, 2008. 7:49 AM REPLY



The Jamalam says:

Aug 4, 2008. 10:11 AM REPLY

typo, in the first set of bullets, you have said gifures instead of figures



Keith-Kid says:

Thank you!

Aug 4, 2008. 2:33 PM **REPLY** 



The Jamalam says: you haven't changed it lol...

Sep 27, 2008. 6:40 AM **REPLY** 



Keith-Kid says:

hehe...? Sorry......done.

Sep 27, 2008. 7:31 AM **REPLY** 



poppp says:

it is hard with the walking and all

Sep 26, 2008. 6:43 PM **REPLY** 



salbabob says:

can u plz tell me how to make blood?

Sep 8, 2008. 5:29 PM **REPLY** 



Keith-Kid says:

Sorry, not right now. droidz.org has some great blood downloads. That's an effect I should cover.....

Sep 8, 2008. 5:39 PM **REPLY** 



The Jamalam says:

can you continue making this plz?

Sep 15, 2008. 10:11 AM REPLY

Aug 26, 2008. 6:01 AM REPLY

The Jamalam says:

it is a pc thing



#### preettypoop7 says:

how did you guys do it, di you have an apple laptap or computer

Aug 26, 2008. 6:00 AM REPLY

Aug 17, 2008. 6:05 PM REPLY



## The Jamalam says:

it is a purely pc thang

Aug 13, 2008. 11:20 AM REPLY



## Super Cheese says:

One last question...

Ok, I have tried to save my pivot videos as .gif files. My problem is that, by saving it under .gif, it will cut off some of my videos or speed it up. The video I am trying to save right now is 1,950, and another video I have is 2,100ish. Does it depend on the length of the video? Or is it my computer's fault? Thanks much! I'll try to add more videos soon.



#### stallionspirit8 says:

Aug 25, 2008. 5:40 PM REPLY

try sun. files, they seem to save it better, and are more compatible with windows movie maker, if that it what you want to use. although, i do not know if you can save pivot files as a sun.

it that does not work, try the other filed that it offers and test each one.



#### Keith-Kid says:

Aug 13, 2008. 2:02 PM REPLY

Since there's a lot of frames, it takes a toll on your computer, since its basically loading 2000 images.

Gifs like these take a long time to load. Which is why I simply record it directly from the program. I use a screen capture program and press play. I'll get you the link later ok?



#### Super Cheese says:

Aug 14, 2008. 2:21 PM REPLY

Ok, cool. What screen capture program do you use? I use HyperCam, and while that works ok for me, if there are any other programs (free, of course)I'd be interested in checking them out. Thanks much!



#### Keith-Kid says:

Aug 14, 2008. 4:32 PM REPLY

Personally, I use Camstudio which is a free and safe screen recording software. It's relatively easy to use.

Also, you can reply to a person's comments here by pressing the reply button on their comments. Welcome to Instructables!



xiaoxiao says:

Aug 4, 2008. 8:56 PM REPLY



#### The Jamalam says:

Aug 4, 2008. 12:47 PM REPLY

hey keith, do you know if pivot gives you any DLL files which will help only pivot run or will it have Commonly used DLL which may interfere with anything on my PC?



## The Jamalam says:

I voted

cool

Jul 13, 2008. 7:46 AM REPLY



#### The Jamalam says:

there is no pic 2 on this step

Jul 8, 2008. 12:36 PM REPLY



## **Keith-Kid** says:

I removed it.

Jul 8, 2008. 12:53 PM REPLY



### The Jamalam says:

the 17th picture is out of place btw on step 9

Jul 8, 2008. 12:34 PM REPLY



ac1D says:

Feb 19, 2008. 4:44 PM REPLY

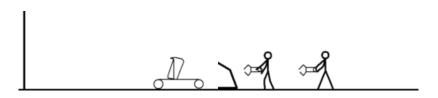
I made some some time ago. they got deleted from xs.to image hoster!

A guy from my gaming communauty (dumbass@gamingrapture) made some, too. but they are not deleted. look at them here: (last two are related to the











The Jamalam says: gmod!!!

Jul 6, 2008. 1:17 PM REPLY



ac1D says:

Jul 7, 2008. 7:43 PM REPLY



Keith-Kid says:

I cant see them

hhhmmm... COuld you send em one at a time or a video perhaps?



naruto 777 says:

i finished mine with like 481 frames at 10:30 last night.

Feb 24, 2008. 9:51 AM REPLY

Feb 20, 2008. 12:21 PM REPLY



#### Keith-Kid says:

Feb 24, 2008. 10:22 AM REPLY good. PLease post it. Also I made another one. I think its 500 frames bout now. I just kids kept makin up stuff, so the plot wont really make snense.



## Keith-Kid says:

I didn't say kids. Darn Spell Check!!!!!!

Feb 24, 2008. 5:48 PM REPLY



#### naruto 777 says:

well if you cold tell me how to post it i would. i tried to upload it on youtube but i couldent it said it failed to upload or something



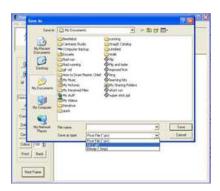
## Keith-Kid says:

okok. I already posted this in my instructable AND on the comments.

Feb 24, 2008. 3:52 PM REPLY

Feb 24, 2008. 2:38 PM REPLY

when you save the file, where it says pivot file on the save window, click it and select GIF. If you don't undertsnd that then, just hit save animation and do this:





Feb 23, 2008. 11:28 AM REPLY



Feb 23, 2008. 11:35 AM REPLY

Keith-Kid says: Feb 23, 2008. 11:35 AM RE although i gotta warn you, takes some time to get used to. Theres a chance youll get furious for it not working, you start cursing uncontrollably and spit at your computer.(at least in my case)

view all 201 comments