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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET STARTED WITH MODERN CALLIGRAPHY AND HAND LETTERING FOR BEGINNERS!! HOW TO: CALLIGRAPHY AND HAND LETTERING FOR BEGINNERS I'm SO excited about this blog post! I've been working on it for a couple of weeks now. It's taking me longer than usual. But I'm so happy it's finally here because I'm sharing with you today everything you need to know to get started with calligraphy and hand lettering! UPDATE: I MADE A MODERN CALLIGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS VIDEO!! In the video, I cover the basics of what you need to start learning Modern Calligraphy the RIGHT way! I hope you find the video helpful and start learning today. In this blog post, I'm going to answer all these questions, which some of the ones I get asked the most! (click on the links below and head straight to the answer you're looking for) AND... The #1 thing people miss when they start learning calligraphy! Do any of those sound familiar? If the answer is yes, keep reading... The best part, I made the FREE calligraphy practice worksheet below to help you get started. Head over to my resource library or fill in the form below to get access to it. There are SO many calligraphy myths out there. Before you start learning calligraphy, it's important that you let go of some of the most common beliefs about calligraphy and start with a clean slate. I go in detail on this blog post if you want to know more. First, let's define Modern Calligraphy: WHAT IS MODERN CALLIGRAPHY? You should have a basic understanding of what modern calligraphy is, what is not, and how to start learning it the right way. Calligraphy's literal meaning is "beautiful writing". Now, I know that most people see calligraphy and cursive writing, and they think they are the same. Or that you do need to know one to do the other. While they complement each other and are from the same family, they are not the same. Calligraphy and cursive writing are entirely different. The main differences between cursive and calligraphy are: 1. The writing speed. When you are writing in cursive, you tend to write fast and continuously. When you are doing calligraphy, you have to write slowly. You have to slightly pause or lift your pen after each letter, paying close attention to each stroke as you are making it. 2. The marked variation in the width of the strokes. With cursive, the strokes (the lines that make up a letter) are consistent in width. In calligraphy, there are thin upstrokes (when your pen is moving upward) and thick downstrokes (when your pen is moving downward). Calligraphy is made of strokes, meaning you break each letter down into different parts. Don't worry, I will go over the basic calligraphy strokes. I know cursive, but I can't get my calligraphy to look right... Based on what I mentioned above, now you know that knowing cursive, doesn't translate into knowing calligraphy. While they complement each other, cursive is not a requirement to learn calligraphy. And that might be the reason why you can't get your calligraphy to look right. You're probably doing calligraphy too fast and not concentrating on each stroke and how thin or thick they should be. Keep reading and I will help you with this... How do you start learning calligraphy? I always recommend you get started with learning faux calligraphy. Faux calligraphy gives you the ability to create calligraphy using a pen you're already familiar with. This is important because you'll be less intimidated to start learning. It will also give you the basics of learning the letterforms and get comfortable with the thin and thick downstrokes. To get started making beautiful letters today, check this step-by-step Faux Calligraphy tutorial post I made. If you're ready to start learning modern calligraphy using brush pens, keep reading. I have super helpful tips for you to get started or get my Modern Calligraphy workbook for beginners. I have ugly handwriting can I still learn calligraphy? Yes, yes, you definitely can. This question is right along the lines of this one: Do you need to have pretty handwriting to be good at calligraphy? Nope. Take it from me, I've always had a love for pretty letters, and I've considered my handwriting to be neat. This did NOT automatically translate into being good at calligraphy. My first calligraphy attempts were BAD! My writing is not neat all the time. Sometimes it looks like chicken scratch. I know many calligraphers who I admired, who's regular handwriting is NOT good at all. But their calligraphy work is mesmerizing! All this to say, pretty script or knowing cursive writing is NOT a requirement for learning calligraphy. In fact, the idea of having pretty handwriting led me to believe, I was going to create beautiful calligraphy right off the bat. I was SO wrong. My letters looked NOTHING like the ones on the videos. Instagram videos definitely make calligraphy seem extremely easy. And you know the secret to making those videos look easy? PRACTICE! Now you know. There is no magic tool or paper that'll help you be as good as the people you see doing calligraphy. Their secret is that they practice a LOT! Quick note: This post may contain some affiliate links for your convenience (which means if you purchase after clicking a link I will earn a small commission, but it won't cost you a penny more)! Read my full disclosure policy here. In this blog post, I go over in detail the different options you have for beginners. To make it easier for you, I will tell you my favorite tools for beginners. The ones you must-have to start, from there, you can decide to expand your pen collection. TOP 3 FAVORITE PENS FOR BEGINNERS: Tombow Fudenosuke Hard and Soft tipTombow Dual Brush Pen Other small-tip brush pens I recommend: Zebra Funwari Brush PenPentel Brush Sign PenMarvy Uchida LePen Flex Other large-tip brush pens I recommend: Kuretake Brush PensSharpie Stained Brush PensKarin Brush Pens BEST PAPER PENS FOR CALLIGRAPHY – BEGINNERS: Rhodia Pad (dot grid) HP Printer Paper 32Lb Tracing Paper CALLIGRAPHY PRACTICE WORKSHEETS OR BOOKS But before I go into more detail, a super IMPORTANT tip is to hold your brush pen correctly! HOW TO HOLD THE BRUSH PEN? Make sure your brush pen is at about a 45-degree angle from the paper. This is what's going to help you master the thick and thin strokes as well as help you get smoother transitions between them.Your pen grip is loose. When you hold your pen too tight, your hand will get tired faster, and you won't be able to move your pen freely.Hold the pen a little bit away from the tip. This is what I recommend based on my experience with calligraphy. I know many people hold the pen differently when writing. Find a grip that's comfortable enough for you. I have a full blog post dedicated to calligraphy practice tips. You can check it out here, to help you get the best out of your calligraphy practice time. The two main things you need to get used to when it comes to calligraphy: Upstrokes = light pressureDownstrokes = heavy pressure. As I mentioned before, calligraphy is composed of "strokes." Use light pressure for the upstrokes (when you're moving the pen upwards) and heavy pressure for the downstrokes (when you're moving the pen upwards). Strokes are what make up a letter, and they are the foundation of the alphabet. That's why it's so important to know, master, and practice them. And yet, most people skip this critical step. This might be the #1 thing people get wrong when starting calligraphy, not mastering the basic calligraphy strokes. The first time I heard about the basic strokes, I was into calligraphy for about five months! I knew something was missing on my calligraphy to make it look better, but I had no idea what it was. All that to say, I certainly did not start at the beginning with my calligraphy journey. These are the basic calligraphy strokes: Upstrokes DownstrokeEntrance/exit strokeUnderturn strokeOverturn strokeCompound curveOvalAscending stem-loopDescending stem-loop Once you know the basic calligraphy strokes, the important thing is to practice them. And practice them, a LOT. Continue doing them until you master these basic calligraphy drills because they are what make up each letter. Learning these strokes will help you create muscle memory, which will allow you to be more consistent with your calligraphy. Now that you know the very basics of brush calligraphy, we can go into using those basic strokes to form letters. Uppercase Reference Page from my Modern Calligraphy Workbook for Beginners! I go over how to practice the basic strokes extensively as well as how to create every letter of the alphabet and more on my Modern Calligraphy Workbook for beginners. You can get it here: Practice the Basic Calligraphy Drills and even practice writing the whole alphabet to get you going when you're feeling stuck or having a creative block. I also practice the basic drills every time I'm using a new brush pen or when I haven't practice in a while. If you need help to find time to practice, check out this blog post. The next step is to keep practicing the whole alphabet. Then, move onto doing words and phrases, which I also have lots of FREE calligraphy worksheets on my resource library to help you. I've started calligraphy, but I can't improve. Am I just not creative enough? Getting the hang of calligraphy can take a little time. If you've been doing it for a couple of weeks or even months, keep practicing! Please don't give. If you continue to practice consistently, you'll see an improvement with your calligraphy. This is something you'll need to keep working on it. It's not a one-time deal type of thing. The more you practice, the more you'll see the improvement. If you want a more structured and step-by-step approach to learn and improve your calligraphy, check my Modern Calligraphy Workbook for Beginners here. Last, but not least, let's cover the difference between Modern Calligraphy and Hand lettering. Hand lettering: creating, writing, drawing letters by hand. Lettering refers to any and all writing created by hand, including handwriting, cursive, and calligraphy. The difference is the effort to incorporate design aspects to the overall look of the piece. Brush Lettering: calligraphy created using brush pens, which have a flexible tip needed to achieve the thin and thick strokes of letters. Basically, Modern Calligraphy is a form of hand lettering! I hope you find this calligraphy and hand lettering for beginners post useful and are ready to dive into hand lettering. A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU START THIS CALLIGRAPHY JOURNEY... Always aim for progress, NOT perfection. Your early letters are not likely to be perfect – if that is even possible when it comes to lettering. It's meant to be unique. The best way to make progress is to start!Be kind to yourself. We are our most prominent critics. If you doubt that, come post a photo of your first lettering project in our Calligraphy Made Simple Facebook group and ask what folks think of it — you'll be amazed at how others see the beauty even when you just see the mistakes. I wrote this Modern Calligraphy for Beginners blog post with you in mind! If you still have any questions comment below and let me know. You're always welcome to our Facebook Group with like-minded calligraphy lovers like you. In the group, we have daily prompts to help you learn and improve your new favorite hobby! You can have access to the FREE Basic Calligraphy Drills Practice worksheet by filling out the form below: Happy Lettering! Xo, WANT TO REMEMBER THIS FOR LATER? SAVE THIS MODERN CALLIGRAPHY AND HAND LETTERING FOR BEGINNERS POST TO YOUR FAVORITE PINTEREST BOARD! Insert this code into the code block:

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