THE ARTSTATION GUIDE
TO FREELANCING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Hi there,

My name is Alex Beddows and I'm the Learning Content Manager here at ArtStation, but I also work freelance as a Lead Environment Artist at Dekogon (an outsourcing studio). I've been working as a commercial artist for 7 years, working in multiple areas including indie, mobile and AAA games. Throughout my career, I have worked as a freelance artist either as a side job or as my full-time gig.

This guide is coming around at a very interesting time, the world is adopting the work from home mentality which opens the doors to freelance as a career choice. ArtStation being the folks creating this guide is perfect too — they have become the hub for the professional art community so they kind of have a finger on the pulse of the art world, meaning they can get accurate and relevant information from some of the world's top artists.

I think this guide is perfect for all the artists trying to figure out how to forge a freelance career. Freelancing as a career isn't really laid out anywhere or officially taught so having this resource readily available will help fill in the blanks of the role while also preparing you for this lifestyle and avoiding the pitfalls of the job.
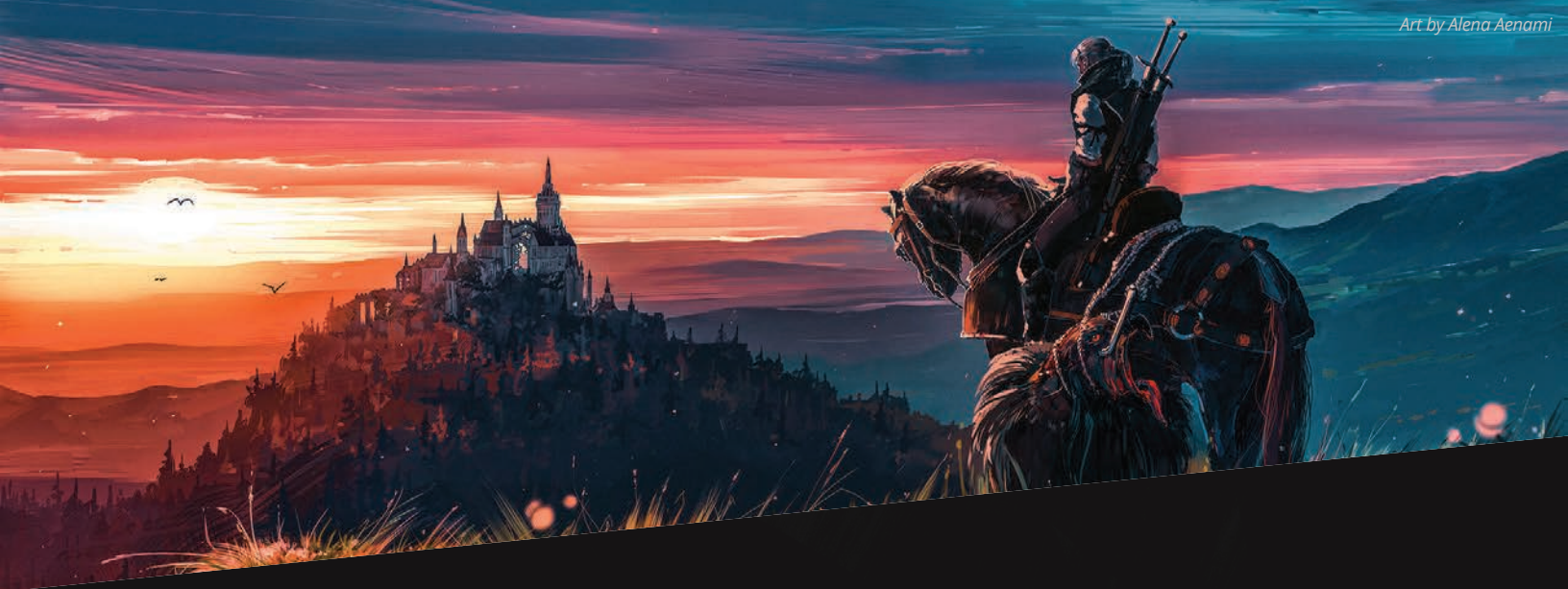
Best of luck!

Alex Beddows
ArtStation - 3D Learning Manager
Senior Environment Artist at Counterplay Games

Chapter 1

Your Portfolio

Every journey has its starting point, and for this guide and your career as a freelancer, it begins with your portfolio. Your portfolio is your first impression and it can be dismissed in a split-second if you're not careful. If you're going in for a job interview, you'll dress your best, look the part and say the right things — you need to treat your portfolio in the same way.

What's In Your Portfolio

Sitting down to put your portfolio together could be an overwhelming process; questioning what to include, questioning if your work is good enough or just questioning how to even begin.

Obviously, you're going to want to include your best pieces. Don't be limited by what you've done for clients—it's strongly encouraged that you work on your own projects. Work from clients, especially early on can be boring and unimpressive; they probably won't show the full range of your skill. This is why continued work on personal projects is important— it'll keep your portfolio up-to-date with the quality of your skill. Keep in mind that you'll be judged on your worst piece because that's what an art director can expect from you on a bad day.

The work you include should also show your knowledge of the industry and what production quality means for that industry. Clinton Crumpler, Studio Head and Creative Director at Dekogon Studios, gives the example of showing a model with a breakdown showing a 400k-poly model and stating it was created for game production shows you aren't quite ready or are unaware of real production requirements for assets for games. It's for reasons like this that most freelancers recommend working in your industry of choice for a few years before embarking on a freelancing career.

As with most things in life you're going to want to aim for quality over quantity. You have to fight the urge to throw all your work into a portfolio and call it a day. Challenge the voice in your head telling you to put every decent piece you've ever done just because it shows the minute variations in your abilities.

Take a step back and look at your portfolio from the client's perspective. Ask yourself what they need to see? What will make you stand out from the other applicants as the right choice for the job? Get a second opinion, by asking your peers to look at your portfolio critically and to provide constructive feedback. Take advantage of portfolio reviews at career events, but always take these reviews with a grain of salt. Portfolio reviews are one person's perspective for one or two roles they commonly fill at the same company. They might not represent the majority of people hiring. Whether you ask a peer for advice or go for a portfolio review, go into it with an open mind and a willingness to rework the pieces in your portfolio to make it stronger.

It's important to never think of your portfolio as done—you should always be working on it, or tweaking it. As you improve as an artist, go back and either remove pieces that no longer match your current skill-level or update them so they have the same polish, detail and quality as your newest pieces. You don't want to have a AAA prop next to an untouched class project from university.

Assembling Your Portfolio

Your portfolio is an extension of yourself, so use it to show that you are a professional master of your craft. Show that you can manage yourself through your portfolio, through organization and valuing the client's time.

If you're a multi-disciplinary artist make sure to have different portfolios for different types of jobs. For example, artist Hannah Amy Watts uses ArtStation as her main platform to show off her 3D work, uses a personal website for UI and stylized work, and then an Instagram for her paintings.

Ensure that you show consistency in how you present your work. If you start putting a black border or watermarks on your work make sure all your pieces have them for consistency. It's not enough for your work to be polished and detailed. Any text or descriptions should be accurate and free of grammar or spelling mistakes. Include relevant information in your portfolio like the client a piece of work was made for, or if it was a personal project.

If a piece was a collaborative effort, make sure to detail exactly what you were responsible for.

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

Spellcheck
Make sure that your text (titles, credits, descriptions, etc) are free from spelling and grammatical mistakes. If you don't have spellcheck, try an extension like Grammarly.

Formatting
Make sure the font style and sizing are consistent throughout your portfolio.

The Boss
Ensure all work is labeled with who it was created for.

Due Credit
Make sure for collaborative pieces you've outlined exactly what your part of it was.

Production-ready
Does the piece reflect a finished product in the industry you're in? If not, remove it.
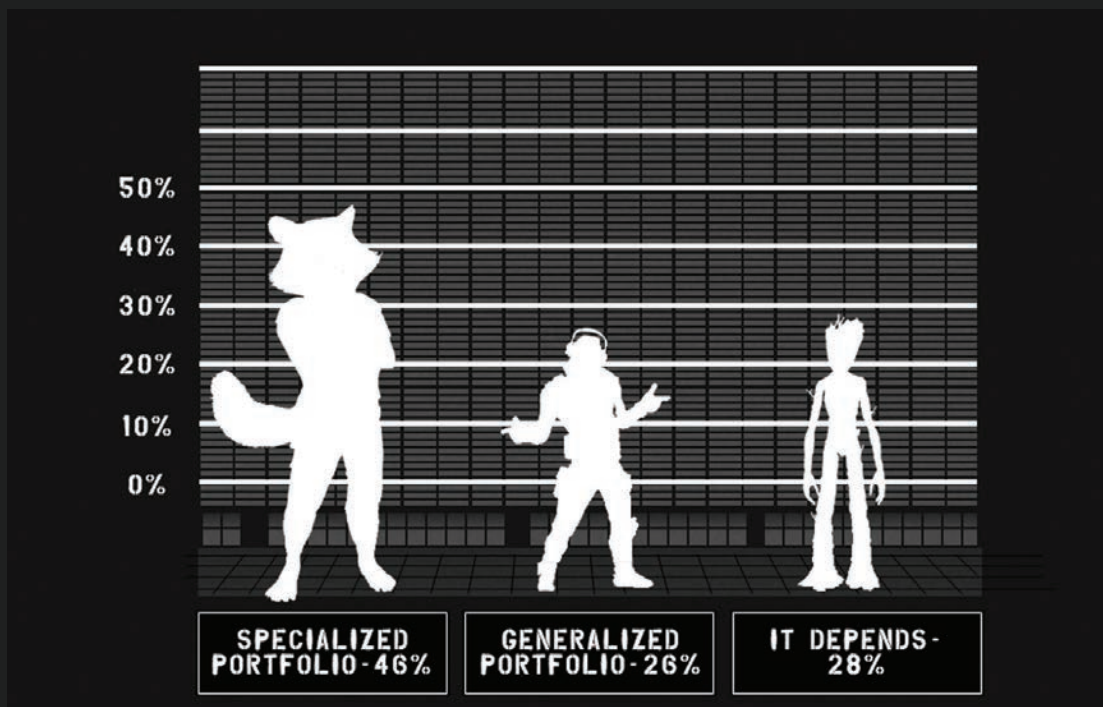
Kill the Weakest Link
After you've chosen all your pieces for your portfolio, decide which is the worst one and remove it.

ArtStation
Hosting your portfolio on ArtStation is always a good idea.

Portfolio Specialization vs Generalization

Data: ArtStation Freelancer Survey 2020

Specialized Portfolios

Work on what you love
While it's important to include your best work in your portfolio don't forget to centre the work around what you want to do as a job. You don't want to get stuck in a position where you get a job to create art you don't enjoy.

Master your skill
Specialization always allows more focus and attention to be given to a particular field of study, and thus the artist will grow more by delving deeper into that one area of expertise.

For the industry
A specialized portfolio might be critical depending on what industry you want to work in. For example, in the film industry, it's necessary to specialize because all the artists are extremely good at what they do in one category. Production designers and directors look for artists that have specific skillsets rather than trying to save money by hiring one person who is a jack of all trades but master of none.

Better for newbies
New artists should focus on their craft and get a few gigs before starting to expand their skillset into other forms of art. When you do expand your skills, ensure you expand them in a way that makes sense — if you're a prop artist, it would make sense to expand to vehicles and weapons.

Better for pros
The more clients and projects you have under your belt, the pickier you can be about what type of work you want. Your portfolio should reflect this.

Generalized Portfolios

Beggars can't be choosers

You might be cutting yourself off from available work if your portfolio is too specialized. If there's a job you particularly want to work in (like lighting) keep that as a focus in your portfolio but also have other types of work (like environments) so that you're not limiting yourself.

For the industry

Having a generalized portfolio can be an asset if you're aiming to work in mobile games or at an indie studio. In these industries, budgeting is key, and it can be a good move to generalize as there is value in being a jack of all trades.

Better for newbies

Don't try to chase a style too early in your career. Just make good art; style will come with time. A studio/client will have you specialize if that's what they need.

Better for pros

As artists get more experienced and known in the industry, a strict portfolio is not always necessary. It's important when breaking in or trying to specialize, but after having some well-known projects under your belt, it shouldn't be an issue to keep uploading work or diversifying.

Art by Pablo Carpio

Chapter 2

Setting Your Rate

When it comes to discussion topics, moneys is always a touchy subject. It would make a freelancers life so much easier if you could just ask your peers "hey, how much do you charge per hour?" or if you could just Google "how much should i be making?" and get a reliable answer. Luckily for you, we've collected that data for you and put it together in this chapter to help you figure out what your rate should be.
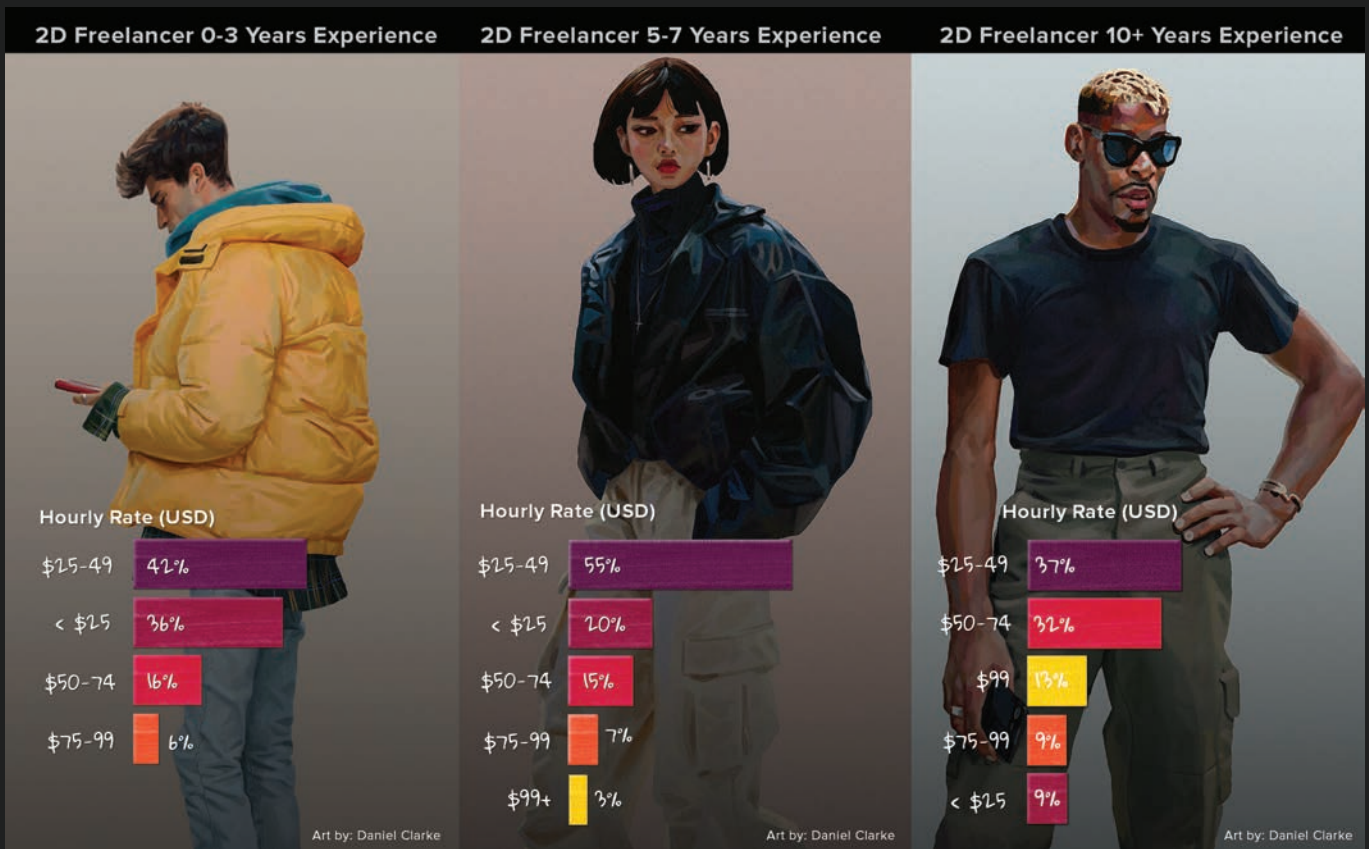
Factors That Can Affect Your Rate

Schedule

How busy you are should factor into how much you charge. First, this indicates how in-demand you or your skills are, so you should charge a bit more. You can also consider offering a higher rate for clients to jump the queue if they want to out-bid clients you have lined up so they can get their work done sooner.

Location, Location, Location

This doesn't just apply to real estate. You need to factor in your location and the location of your client when you're working on a quote. For example, clients from the USA tend to pay 10-15% more than say a Scandinavian client. In some countries like Brazil, the client sets the rate so your ability to negotiate is limited.

2D Freelancer 0-3 Years Experience | 2D Freelancer 5-7 Years Experience | 2D Freelancer 10+ Years Experience

Hourly Rate (USD)

$25-49 42%
< $25   36%
$50-74 16%
$75-99 6%

Hourly Rate (USD)

$25-49 55%
< $25   20%
$50-74 15%
$75-99 7%
$99+   3%

Hourly Rate (USD)

$25-49 37%
$50-74 32%
$99   13%
$75-99 9%
< $25   9%

Art by: Daniel Clarke

Data: ArtStation Freelancer Survey 2020
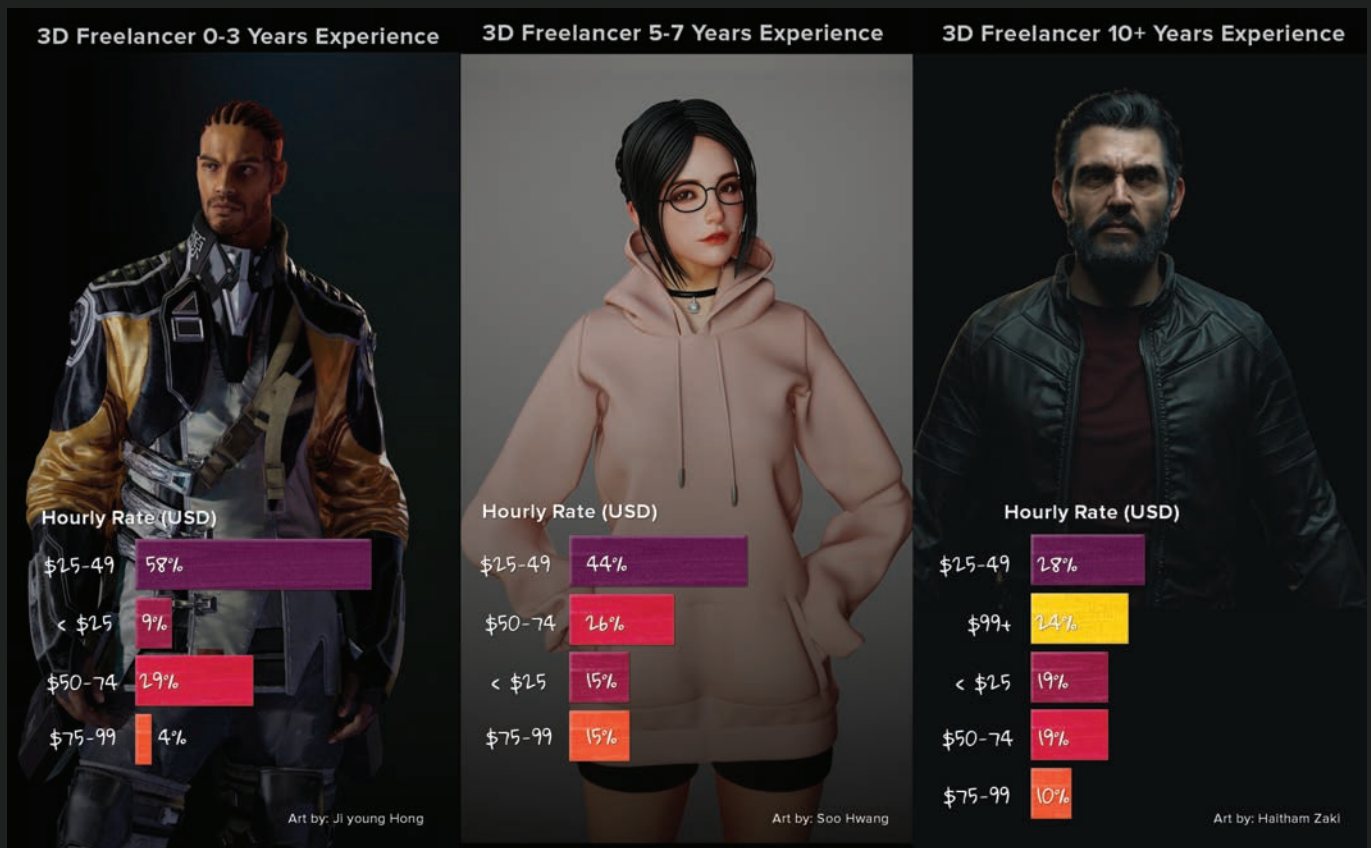
Deadlines

How fast you need to deliver the work should also increase your rate. If you think about it, at a normal job, pulling long hours would get your overtime pay. The tighter the deadline, the higher your hourly rate should be.

The Gig

Depending on the type of contract you'll need to adjust your rate accordingly. For a short rush job, you'll have a higher hourly rate, but for something like a 6-month contract with a 40 hour a week schedule, you'll need to charge a little less per hour.

Protip from Alex Beddows

If you have no clue where to start with setting up your rate, find out what a general laborer makes in your area. That way it's easy to justify your cost: if the hourly rate of an unskilled laborer is $X then obviously it's a justified rate for a skilled artist.

3D Freelancer 0-3 Years Experience

Hourly Rate (USD)

Rate	%
$25-49	58%
< $25	9%
$50-74	29%
$75-99	4%

Art by: Ji young Hong

3D Freelancer 5-7 Years Experience

Hourly Rate (USD)

Rate	%
$25-49	44%
$50-74	26%
< $25	15%
$75-99	15%

Art by: Soo Hwang

3D Freelancer 10+ Years Experience

Hourly Rate (USD)

Rate	%
$25-49	28%
$99+	24%
< $25	19%
$50-74	19%
$75-99	10%

Art by: Haitham Zaki

Data: ArtStation Freelancer Survey 2020

Complexity

The head is not a hat rack; charge for your brainpower. Regardless of the length of the gig, you should up your rate for more complex work or work that requires special software or resources.

Increasing your rates

You may not have a boss or an annual review but a regular raise should still be on your mind. There are a few ways to go about this. You can experiment with your rate from time to time; set your rate and then ask a bit more from your next client, and then again until people start saying it is too much. Then bring it back a bit and you should have found your rate for that time until your experience level has raised enough for you to then push it again.

Getting Paid

When you're starting out as a freelancer, you might be limited in how much you can charge or your ability to negotiate, but there are some areas where you can and should hold your ground.
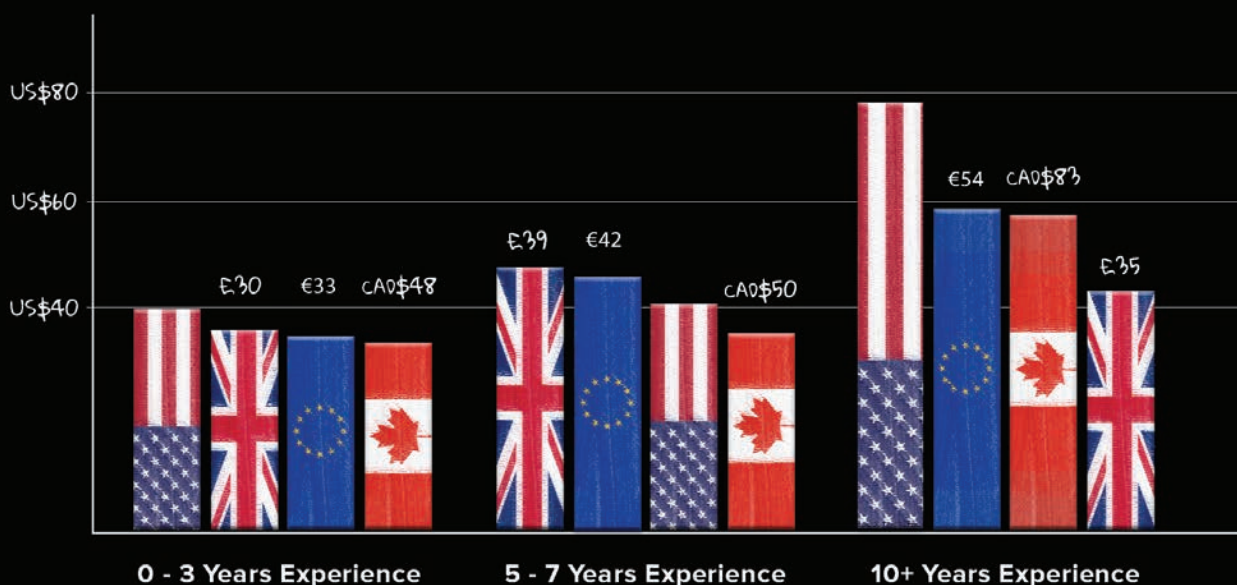
Payment Schedule

Demand 50% of the payment upfront and 50% at the end of the project. Don't send the assets until you've received the final payment. You need to stand firm on this policy because even the most honorable people can forget to send money.

Ask First

What their budget is or what their rate is first—companies will hate this but this way you can be sure you're not getting underpaid.

Scope Creep

As a project progresses, it's not unusual that it'll result in more work. This is great for you but only if you handle it correctly. Don't start on any additional work until a new agreement is reached with the client. This means outlining the new requirements and demanding a 50% upfront payment.

Average Freelance Hourly Rate (by region)

Experience	US	UK	EU	CA
0 - 3 Years Experience	US$40	£30	€33	CAD$48
5 - 7 Years Experience	£39	€42	US$40	CAD$50
10+ Years Experience	US$80	€54	CAD$83	£35

Data: ArtStation Freelancer Survey 2020

Chapter 3

Finding Work

Finding work can vary greatly from industry to industry, and region to region, but regardless of these factors, here is some tried and true advice to get you started.

The Hunt

School Resources

If you're still in school, take advantage of all the resources at your disposal. Attend job fairs, corporate events and talks at your school. If your school has a physical or online job board, keep a keen eye on it for opportunities.

Events

Don't just attend events to look for work or to network but also be an active participant in the events. Doing talks and panels are also a great method of both advertising yourself and giving back to the community. If you haven't done talks before, local colleges or Universities are a great place to start. Expand your reach in terms of events, don't isolate yourself to events strictly in your field; if you're a game artist, attend game dev events too.

Make Friends

Networking is awkward and cringey, and you can tell when someone is trying to network

with you. Instead, make friends with people in the industry, attend events and just talk to people. Find industry meet-ups in your area and just chat with others in the same industry as you. This is a great way to make friends that can commiserate with you and also help further your career. Having friends in the industry is a great way to find out about upcoming opportunities. Also, it's a gamble to hire someone you don't know and people want to work with their friends.

Say Yes

Have the confidence to say yes to (almost) any job. As famously said by Richard Branson, "Say yes then learn how to do it later." Taking the plunge into freelancing is pretty scary—scarcity of work can also weigh on you. Until you can be picky about work, say yes to everything.

Word of Mouth

Make it known that you're freelancing, through your online profiles, through networking, and tell your friends, etc. The more work you do the more your name will get out there, so again, don't say no to the small jobs.

Protip from
Clinton Crumpler

" *Quality triumphs over quantity. Many times I've been at a studio where one of the artists on the team sees an amazing piece of work an artist has posted on ArtStation and that leads to the studio potentially connecting and contracting with that artist in search of those skills. Keep your quality bar high, maintain top quality from piece to piece and release to the public.* "

ArtStation Jobs

The ArtStation Jobs board lists thousands of job opportunities each year with 10% of listings for freelance opportunities, and 15% of studio listings offering remote work opportunities. With the COVID-19 pandemic you can expect to see more remote work opportunities for the rest of the year. The first three months of 2020 have seen an increase of 34% in remote work listings!

Be Social

Love it or hate it, social media is your ticket to freelancing. It goes both ways — you can find work on social media and recruiters and contractors will look for freelancers on social media. You'll need to nurture and maintain a presence on as many key social media platforms as you can manage.

Across all platforms, it's important to post your art regularly but also join groups, communities and look for job postings. Like events, it's important to engage in groups and communities, and not just sit around watching.

Social Media Checklist

⬛ **ArtStation**	📷 **Instagram**	🐦 **Twitter**
f **Facebook**	**in** **LinkedIn**	**Discord**
💬 **Forums**		

Don't Starve

It's a harsh reality but getting started as a freelancer is extremely difficult. Many freelancers agree that it's best to start your career by working in a studio. The benefit of working for a studio is that you get to learn by doing. A lack of a production background can hold you back in terms of finding work as a freelancer, so take that 9 to 5 gig. Use the opportunity to not only learn about studio structures and pipelines but make contacts in the industry. You will also learn the kind of timeframes you'll need to complete various industry-standard tasks and then be able to quote and bill more effectively.

Freelance Artist Time Allocation

| Full-time Freelancer | Full-time Day-job | Part-time Day-job |
| 73% | 14% | 13% |

Data: ArtStation Freelancer Survey 2020

You might have exciting dreams of kicking it off on your own, and being your own boss. This overnight career shift may not be the reality. You will probably need to keep your day job until things pick up—whether that means juggling freelancing with your studio job or waiting tables on the side—you will probably need to supplement your income.

Don't ignore unglamorous work, because it will pay the bills. You don't have to love every gig you have as a budding freelancer. Your first instinct might be to chase dream clients, but those will come with time—but not if you starve first.

Freelance Artist Experience

| 0 - 3 Years Experience | 5 - 7 Years Experience | 10+ Years Experience |
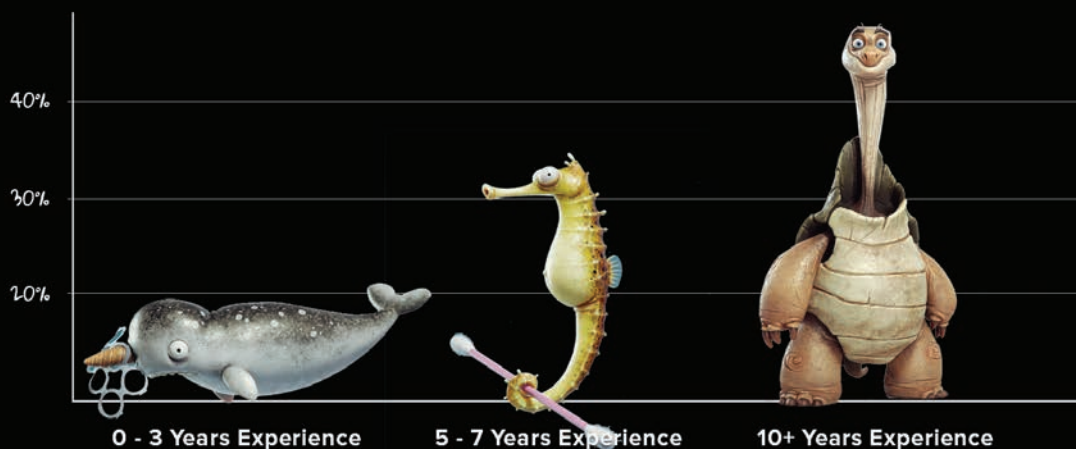
Art by: Borislav Kechashki

Data: ArtStation Freelancer Survey 2020

Chapter 4

Dealing with Clients

You've honed your craft, and you're a stellar artist but how are your people skills? It's one thing to be able to do the job, but it's another skill entirely trying to navigate the client and their wishlist.

Get It In Writing

No matter what you're freelancing in, always, always, always get the terms of the job in writing. As a freelancer, you need to protect yourself. There's no HR department to help you out, so getting terms in writing is your best friend.

Regardless of the clients or how amazing they've seemed up until now, you still need to make sure you don't end up getting cheated. Make sure everything is in writing, and contracts are agreed upon and signed before you start working. Remember, nothing is ever a "quick change" or "small tweak". Allowing this behavior from a client to go unchecked (and undocumented) is asking for trouble.

This seemingly over-board documentation might annoy the client, but remind them that getting details in writing protects them as well as yourself. Getting the terms in writing ensures that you also have to hold up your end of the bargain.

Don't Forget!

So you don't forget here's a handy list of all the things that should be written and agreed upon:

Delivery date/schedule

Get your schedule in writing, whether you're delivering in increments or a lump drop. If you're planning to send the assets only after the final payment is received, and get that in writing too.

Payment schedule

Regardless of what payment schedule you're using (we recommend 50% upfront and 50% on delivery) and get it in writing. Don't just assume payment will come.

Deliverables

Be direct about what you are delivering. Don't leave anything up to interpretation

Changes to the scope of work

Scope creep happens, but new work should come with a new written agreement.

Changes to due date

Don't just document the change of date, but also any consequences of the date change, whether it be your rate or the list of deliverables.

When a client goes against your advice

If the client wants something that could be a problem (e.g. it goes against Apple's guidelines) be sure to inform them of the issue. If they want to proceed, make them give you the request in writing and note that it went against your professional advice. Just because the client has the final say, doesn't mean you should get the blame for bad decisions.

Stay Organized

Spending a bit of time getting organized at the start of a project can save you a ton of time in the long run. There's no one way to stay organized—you have to find what works for you and your industry.

We recommend using an app like Trello to keep track of the projects you're working on. You can organize your projects from multiple clients and even put in due dates. Use Trello to keep all important information in one place: contracts, screenshots, emails, to-do lists, etc. The last thing you want to do is spend tons of time searching through your inbox for that one specification you can't quite remember. If you upkeep a system (like Trello) to hold all that information together you'll make the most of your time.

Get into the habit of staying organized, even with small simple jobs. You'll thank yourself when the bigger projects hit.

Protip from
Taylor Brandenburger

"I've found that clients like when you present yourself as a friend and less of a working robot that they have to type commands into. Clients like when you show you are personally invested in their projects and have character.
There have been times where I'll be in meetings and I just crack a joke to break the ice and get the room a nice chuckle. This adds to your charisma and makes working with you a more enjoyable experience.

Of course, it's all about the artwork at the end of the day, but adding charisma to your character only boosts your likability with a client."

Communicate

Communicate. It seems like a no-brainer, but it can often be overlooked or communication tactics can get sloppy. If nothing else, it's important to be mindful of your communications.

Whenever possible, opt for a phone call. Your knee-jerk reaction might be to just answer an email but getting on the phone or on a video called provides a more human approach. Talking to the client in real-time can get you so much more information and detail about

what they want. In terms of landing a job, you'll be a lot more convincing over the phone. As a freelancer, you're also acting as a consultant so the client will appreciate hearing that you're enthusiastic about the project and that you have ideas to pitch to them.

This may seem counterintuitive, given that you'll want everything in writing, but there's an easy fix for that. After your call, just recap the discussion in a few bullet points in an email.

When you do have to send emails, make sure to go the extra mile to be personable and professional. With the lack of intonation and facial expressions of an in-person meeting, it's easy for your emails to sound cold or harsh.

Feedback

If you're going to be a freelancer, you better develop a thick skin. There's nobody to shelter you from negative feedback. As much as you're running the show, you have to accept that the client has the last word. This means you can't get upset when changes are requested or criticism is given—you just have to keep calm and do the job.

At one point or another, you'll have clients make some crazy requests or ask for something you know will look terrible. While it's alright to explain why something might not work, ultimately it's their decision. Don't take it personally or fight for your way because at the end of the day it's not your project.

You'll also get your fair share of unsolicited feedback, so take all feedback with a grain of salt. There's no reason to hurry home to redo your entire portfolio based on one person's advice. The advice clients will give may be true for their particular project but not always the industry at large.
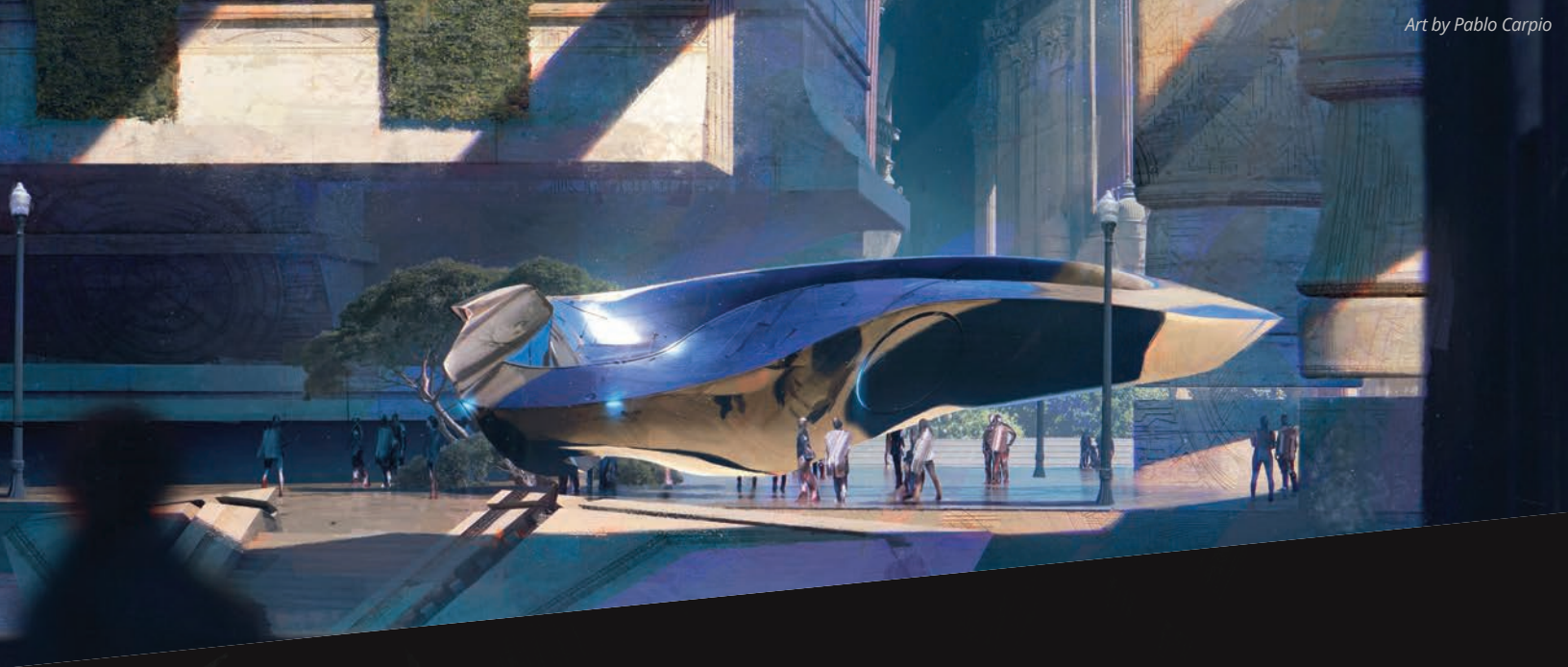
Chapter 5

Time Management

You've got a certain set of skills, and time management probably isn't one of them. Making your own hours can seem like a dream come true, but unless you are one of the few people who is ultra-disciplined, it could be disastrous if you don't keep a regular schedule. One of the biggest mistakes freelancers can make in terms of time management is "working whenever" because whenever is usually never.

Set Your Hours

It's dangerous to think "I can work when I want," it leads to time inefficiency, sleeping in and then overworking. Set core hours for yourself so you can have a healthy work-life balance. There's no need to reinvent the wheel, just following a 9 to 5 studio schedule is the simplest way to go about it, but ultimately find what works best for your life.

It's easy to get carried away on a project so set alarms or be strict with yourself to cap your day at 8 hours. If there's a tight schedule (that you've charged more for) you'll obviously need to extend your workdays, but this should be the rare case and not the norm.

For freelancers that still have their day job, setting hours is even more crucial to prevent burnout. Everyone sets alarms to wake up, but consider setting alarms to walk away from your work at the end of an evening too.

Night-owls might seek out an inverted schedule—work all night, sleep all day—but keep in mind that you will typically have to communicate with the client during normal business hours. Do you really want to get up mid-sleep to take a call?

Timeline

So you've set your daily schedule, and now you have to set a timeline for yourself and for your clients. The reality of freelancing is that you never know where your next gig is coming from so when it's raining opportunities you might be tempted to take on too much. Keep true to your schedule and plan your job timeline accordingly.

Likewise, clients should only expect a normal day's work from you (unless it's specified as a rush job at a higher rate) so if they're not giving you enough time, let them know. If they want to keep the same short timeline, you'll have to inform them that the quality of the work will suffer.

Protip from
Hannah Amy Watts

"*Choosing your own schedule means you can take advantage of a lot of off-peak services and appointments! As someone who's had years of packing every errand into weekends, it's definitely a perk.*"

Part of managing your work timeline is tracking time spent on tasks accurately. There are several apps out there that can help—we like Clockify! Keeping track of time spent as you go will make it easier for you to invoice the project later. It will also help you better estimate how long a project will take for future projects.

Chapter 6

Marketing Yourself

This is not a chapter to skip if you want to get your name out there. Marketing isn't a one-and-done task, it's an ongoing process. As the times change, as your career changes so should how you market yourself. Just like your portfolio, marketing yourself is never done.

In Person

Bad news for the introverts out there. One of the best ways to market yourself is by getting out into the world socializing.

Hit up events, if you can afford it. The reality is that you can't afford not to go. Industry events are one of the best ways to find work. Major industry events like GDC, tend to happen around the same time every year, so plan around them and save up to attend them.

Attending events isn't just about showing up. Have your portfolio at the ready and be prepared to talk to people. Carry yourself with confidence because first impressions matter. Fit in with other attendees and don't let your self-doubt tell you that you don't belong there.

Both in and out of events you're going to want to brand yourself. Have a personal logo, a color palette and a consistent style in which you present your work. Remember when interacting with people that your personality becomes part of your brand too.

The more in-depth you get within an industry, the more you learn that it's a small world where everyone knows everyone.

On Social Media

In today's market, it's absolutely crucial that you have an online presence. Managing your social media is a balancing act and takes some regular work. You can't just log in once a month and dump all your work—it requires an on-going presence and a bit of finesse.

You'll need to consistently post your art online and on a diverse range of platforms. Keep in mind the audiences on each platform but the ultimate goal is to get people's eyes on your work and your name.

Post Often

Whether it's once a day or 1-2 times a week, you're going to want to instill a schedule for regular posting. Avoid posting multiple things at once—it's spammy and because of social media algorithms, it'll make it less likely your work will get seen.

Get Involved

Having a strong social media presence isn't just about posting your work on a regular basis—you have to get involved in the community as a whole. Engage with other people and their projects in a sincere way. Join groups on Facebook and get into Discords.

Be Straight-forward

You have all these social media platforms, and you're posting great art, so use this as an opportunity to let people know you're available for work. All it takes is one line under your work that says something like "if you need any artwork done, I'm available for hire."

Get Personal

While it might seem counterintuitive, don't just publish your work on social media, also post a bit about yourself. Even if you're going to have your Instagram for just art, make your stories about you. Remember anything about you that you post reflects as part of your brand and image.

Timeline

Showcasing your work is your biggest asset when it comes to marketing yourself. Look at portfolios that you deem to be great and identify what about them makes them great. Learn from others' portfolios and keep them in mind when displaying your own work.

When it comes to posting your work, don't be afraid to share your progress. Make sure that feedback, especially online, is give and take. Take into account the feedback you get when trying to improve your skill. Things like your style as an artist and a social following will come with time, so the important part is to keep working on your craft.

Protip from
Michael Kinsey

I recommend the book Show Your Work by Austin Kleon for anyone looking to market themselves as an artist.

Just because your work is your best marketing asset, doesn't mean you should work for free. Exposure will only get you so far, and it definitely will not pay the bills. When you're starting out, it's not all about finding the highest paying gig. You should also consider the value of the exposure you'll get from that project.

Where do Freelancers on ArtStation come from?
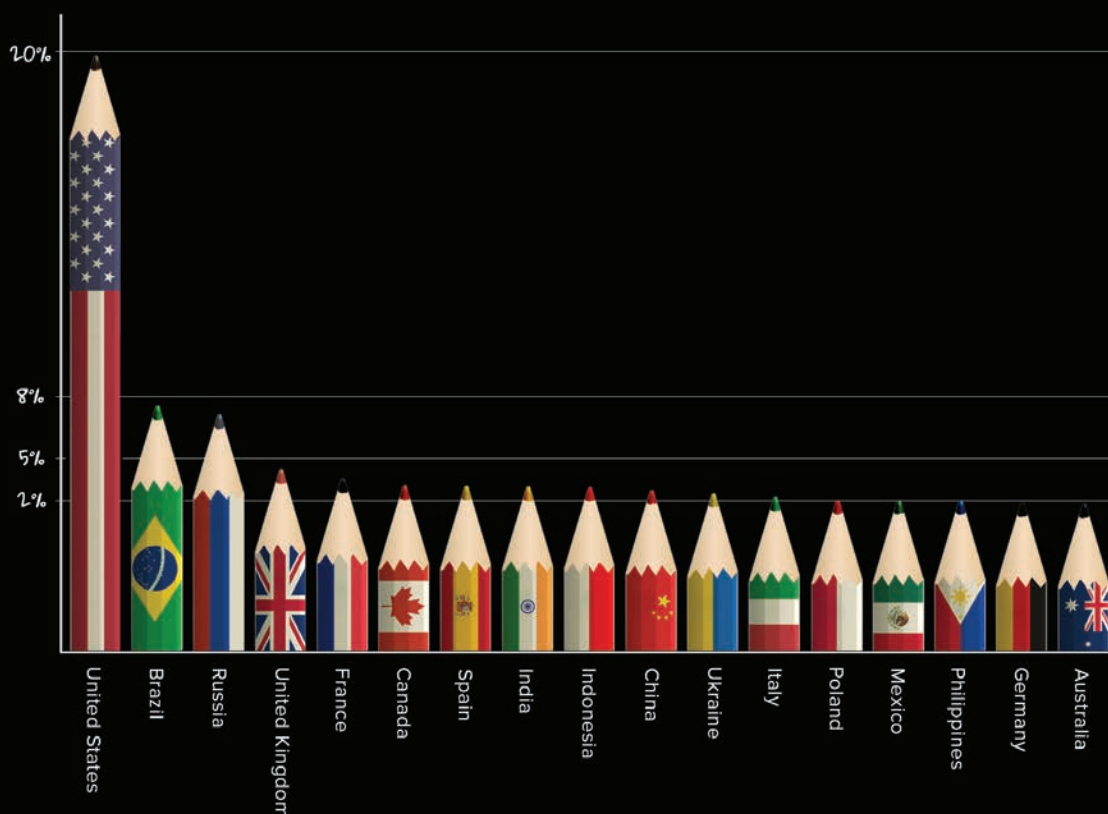
Chapter 7

Tips and Tricks from the Pros

The amazing freelancers that helped ArtStation put together this guide were loaded with advice for budding freelancers. Not all of their advice fell within the nice little categories or chapters we put together. In order to provide the reader with as much helpful information as possible, we put together this fun chapter of tips.

Tips from Michael Kinsey

Scheduling

Time management isn't easy. Time management and working from home is even harder. But once you've been working for yourself for a while you'll gain the ability to know when you need a break, and how to avoid overworking yourself.

A schedule helps with this, but if you're anything like me, you will fall off the schedule quickly. When this happens, realize you are swaying off course and get it back on track. Start a new schedule if you completely fall off. Just don't give up. Being organized is a skill, and skills are built up over time.

Tips from Hannah Amy Watts

Boundaries

Freelancing can sometimes be all-consuming—especially if you're working from your home. There can be weeks where it gets to Friday and I realise that I haven't been to my yoga class all week because I've been working non-stop. That's where having good time management, learning to say no, and setting clear boundaries with your work is imperative.

Taxes

There's a lot of confusing information (or lack of) when it comes to doing your own taxes, so I would absolutely recommend either going to tax workshops or getting a good accountant. Make sure you keep records of everything, too!

Tips from Clinton Crumpler

Confidence

When working with clients, artists are often shy to reveal their rates and availability up-front in fear of chasing away potential work. However, this will help you cut through companies or individuals who might be stringing you along without intending to hire.

Taxes

Your home is not only where you live, sleep, and spend your leisure time. It's also where you work, so finding ways to divide the day into separate chunks can help to make the transition a bit easier. I take at least an hour to do some sort of physical exercise or activity every day. This keeps me healthy and happy and also gives my mind some time to recoup so I can come back to work and feel refreshed and ready for work. Keeping a fresh and clear mind can be tough sometimes when working from home.

Tips from Finnian MacManus

Humble Beginnings

When I was starting out, I was working in-studio for a fair amount of time, and while working I was building up a large portfolio of personal work. When I eventually did decide to go the freelance route, I had already established many connections during my time working in-house, so I didn't need to search for work. As better and more flexible projects came in, I would cycle contracts to work with clients that I preferred to work with. I recommend people start at a studio first so that they have an 'umbrella' of sorts while they build up their network. After you have some clients under your belt, they know they can rely on you, and the jobs become much more stable.

Tips from Taylor Brandenburger

Stay Social

I'm a social person so to be isolated for 8 hours a day plus after work hours feels very isolating. To combat this I've set up voice chats in Dekogon where freelancers can come together and talk while working on Dekogon projects. If there wasn't a Dekogon-sponsored group you'd probably find me in another 3D Discord community or listening to podcasts to help fill that gap that you'd otherwise get at an onsite gig.

Special Thanks

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ArtStation - 3D Learning Manager
Senior Environment Artist at
Counterplay Games

Randall Mackey
Art Director, Senior Concept Artist,
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Michael Kinsey
24 | Lead Environment Artist
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Hannah Amy Watts
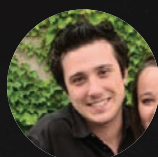Multi-disciplinary Artist
3D Environment/Prop Artist

Clinton Crumpler
Owner @ Dekogon | Principal
Artist at Midwinter Entertainment

Finnian MacManus
Freelance Concept Artist

Taylor Brandenburger
Art Director & Lead 3D Artist
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