sketchupschool

YOUTUBE VIDEO NOTES FOR:

Watch This Before You Get Started with SketchUp (2027 update)



These are the full notes for our video — every tip, screenshot and step, right on this page.

These notes live at www.sketchupschool.com/watch-before-you-get-started-with-sketchup-2027-notes

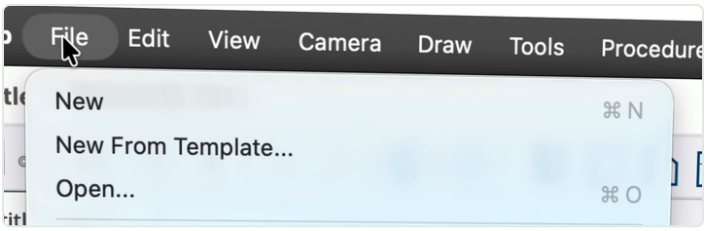
IN THESE NOTES

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Your next steps

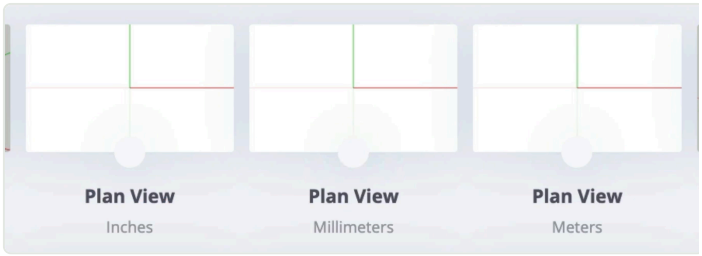
#1 Start in 2D

Starting in 3D can feel like jumping into the deep end before you know how to swim. Make it easier on yourself: develop good habits in a simple 2D environment first.

Go to **File > New From Template...**, then choose a **Plan View** template to start in a top-down view.



Open File > New From Template...



Choose a Plan View template

The habits you build here will pay off when you work on more complex 3D models later.

#2 Use the right mouse

Use a **three-button scroll wheel mouse**: left and right buttons, plus a center wheel that you can roll and press like a button.



Use a wheel that can be rolled and clicked

You can still use SketchUp with another mouse or a trackpad. The three-button scroll wheel mouse unlocks the navigation controls covered in tip #7.

#3 Draw the right way

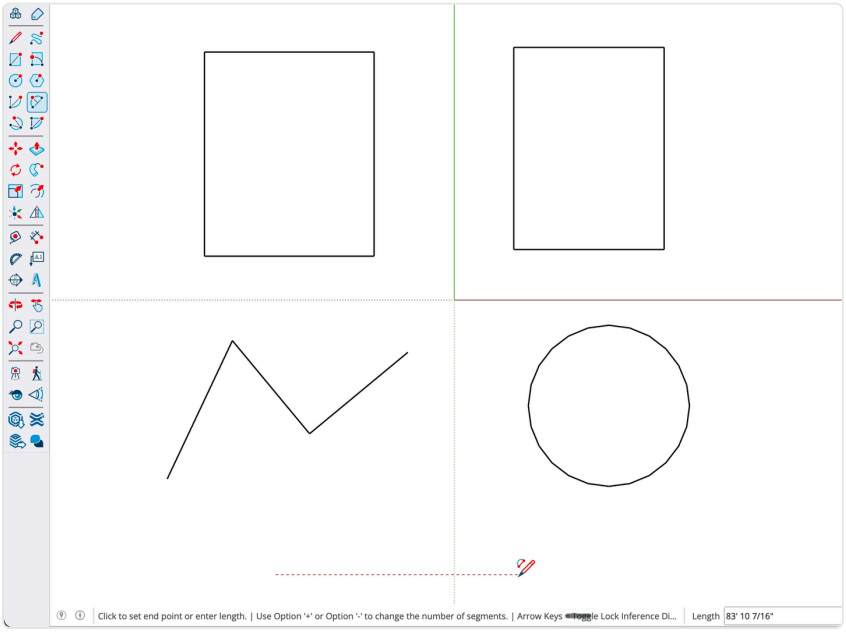
Pick the **Rectangle** tool. If you click, hold the button down, drag, and release, change that habit.

Instead:

1. **Click and release immediately** to start the rectangle.
2. Move the mouse **without holding the button down**.
3. **Click and release again** to finish it.

Click and release, move, click and release. The release after the first click is the important difference.

Try another rectangle, then experiment with the **Line** and **Circle** tools. Some drawing tools need two clicks; others need three. Keep releasing the button between clicks.

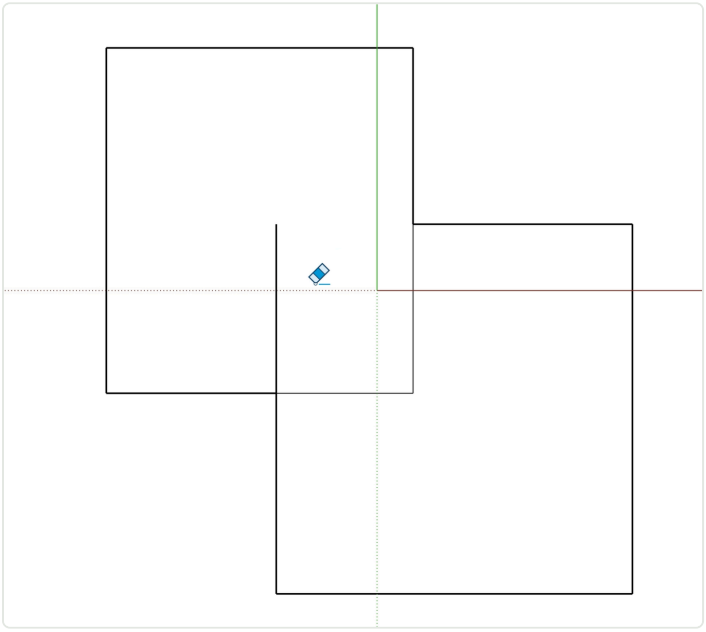


Experiment with what each drawing tool creates

Notice whether each tool creates **edges**, or **edges and faces**. Practice until releasing between clicks feels natural.

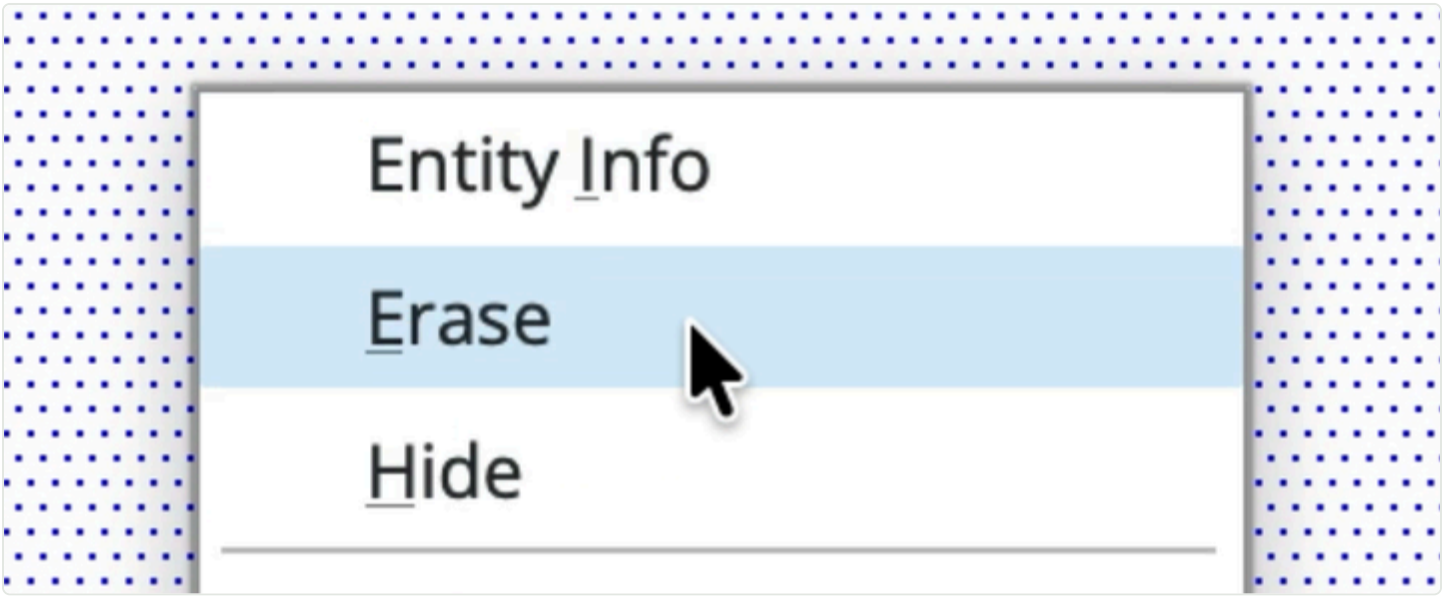
#4 Understand stickiness

In SketchUp, edges and endpoints stick to other edges and endpoints. This helps you overlap shapes and edit them to create new ones.



Touching geometry can connect

Use the **Eraser** tool to delete edges you don't need. To remove a face, **right-click the face > Erase**.



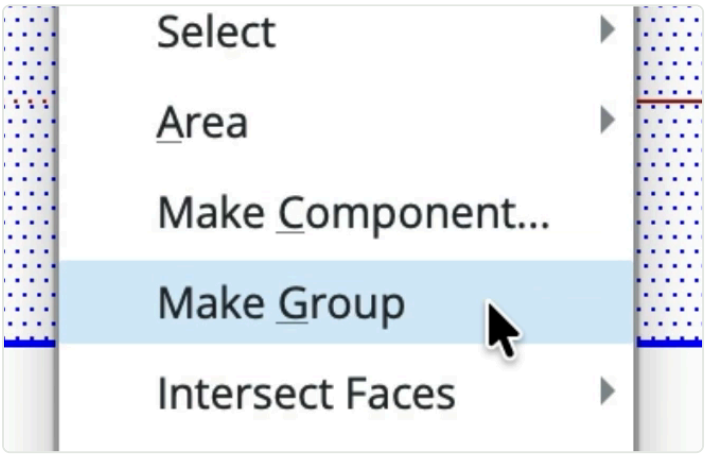
Right-click the face and choose Erase

Stickiness is useful for modeling, but it also causes headaches when things that should stay separate get connected. That's why the next habit matters.

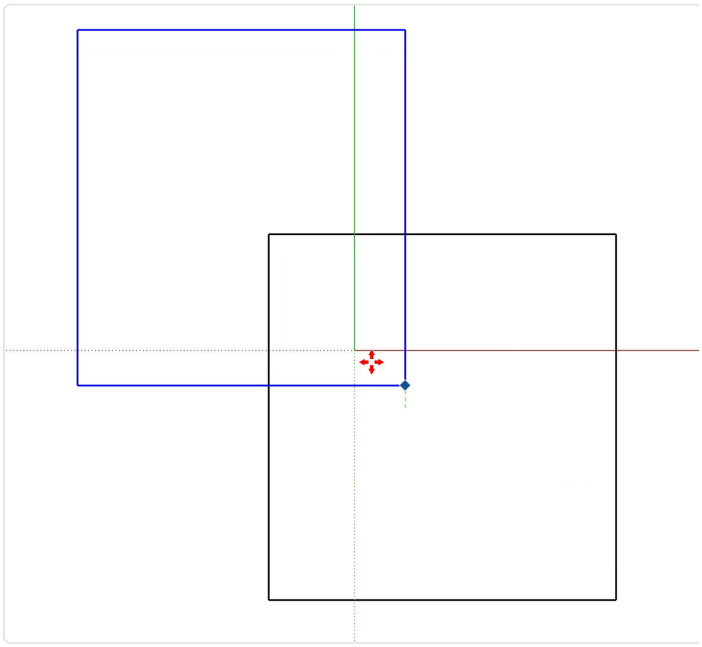
#5 Group almost everything

Whenever you draw something that needs to stay separate, turn it into a **Group before it touches other geometry**.

1. Choose the **Select** tool.
2. **Triple-click** the shape to select its connected edges and faces.
3. **Right-click the selection > Make Group**.



Select the connected geometry, then choose Make Group



Grouping keeps the objects separate

Now you can place other objects against it without their geometry sticking together. Skip this habit, and a simple change later can become a frustrating cleanup job.

Group early and group often. Your future self will thank you.

#6 Master the Move tool

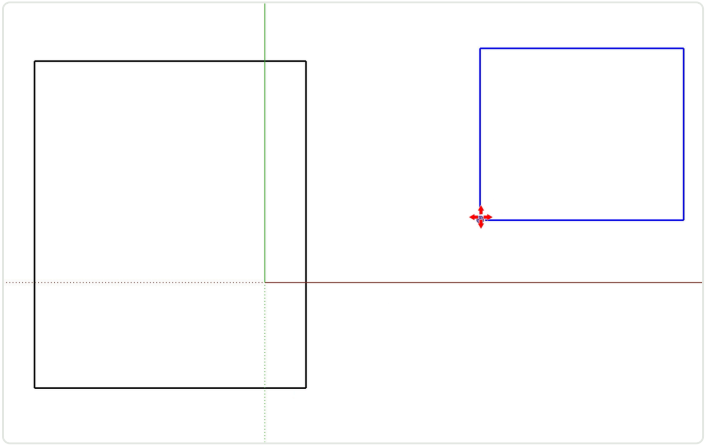
To avoid distorting an object or sinking it into something else, understand **what you're moving** and **where you're moving it**.

With ungrouped geometry, moving individual endpoints, edges, or faces changes the shape. You can also use **Select** to pre-select multiple elements and move them together.

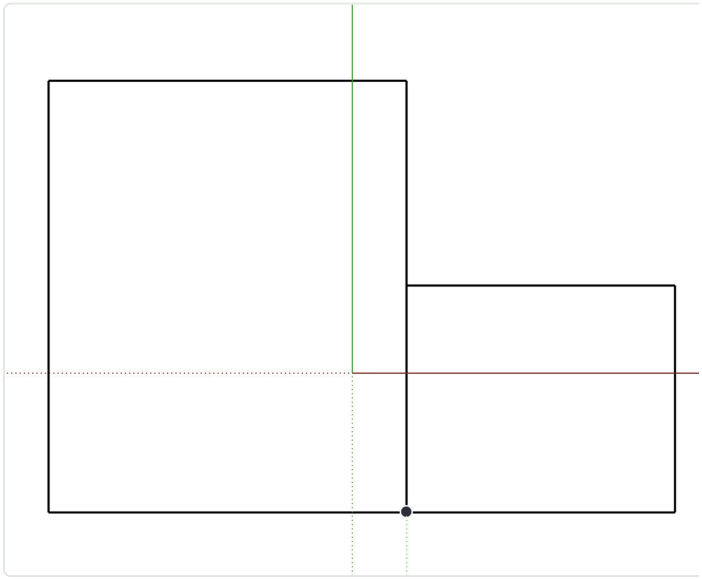
To move a whole object without distorting it, **make it a Group first**.

For precise placement, think of **Move** as taking a point from **click 1 to click 2**:

1. Decide which point on your object needs to line up with which destination point.
2. **Click and release** on the first point to pick the object up.
3. Move the mouse until the cursor **snaps to the destination point**.
4. **Click and release** again to place it.



Click 1: pick a specific point



Click 2: snap that point to the destination

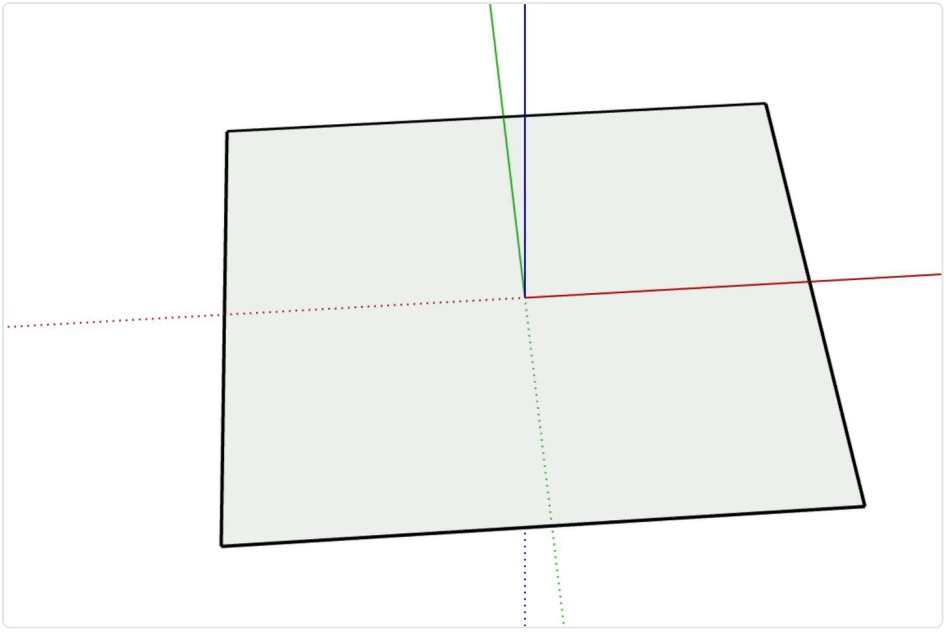
Picking an object up from somewhere random makes precise alignment harder. Practice in 2D first. You'll use the same idea in 3D to place objects against a wall or floor without sinking them into either one.

#7 Navigate like a pro

Your three-button scroll wheel mouse gives you the navigation controls without reaching for the toolbar:

- **Zoom:** roll the wheel forward or backward. Where you point the cursor matters—that's where you zoom toward or away from.
- **Orbit:** press and hold the wheel like a button, then move the mouse.
- **Pan:** keep the wheel pressed and hold **Shift**. The cursor becomes a hand; move the mouse to pan.

Now try the challenge from the video: **orbit all the way around one of your rectangles**. One long orbit can run out of screen or leave you somewhere you didn't intend.



Practice navigating around a simple rectangle

Build the habit of navigating in small steps:

1. Start with the cursor near the center of the screen.
2. Press the wheel and orbit upward a little.
3. **Release the wheel**.
4. Bring the cursor back to the center and repeat until you've orbited all the way around.

It may feel clunky at first. With practice, you'll combine small orbits, zooms, and pans smoothly to get the view you need.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

We hope this video and these notes have gotten you started down the right path.

For the full, step-by-step path, our **Complete Intro to SketchUp** course takes the same approach, with exercises and guidance from instructors to help you put what you learn into practice.

You can try the course free through our **Video Course Library**. If you're not ready for the course, use these notes to practice the seven habits covered in the video.

Try the Complete Intro to SketchUp course for free



Complete Intro to SketchUp