

Transcript of Monique Guilderson, Medical Illustrator

The coolest part about my job is...I get to draw for a living!

A medical illustrator is someone who creates visuals of health and medicine and science in order to help researchers, help doctors and really to help everyone understand their own health a little better.

Whatever topic we're working with, we would research thoroughly to find out everything about it. We would speak with doctors or researchers, and then it would really be working together to come up with sketches based on the research and then I would create these visuals for them starting by hand then eventually it does go on the computer and everything is digital.

Once I have a sketch ready that I've finalized with the people I'm working for, or working with, it gets scanned into the computer and I use programs such as Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. It takes quite a bit of time; first I create many, many layers in Illustrator, I outline everything there and also add colour. And then in Adobe Photoshop that's when I would really add the finishing details and the shading and make it look three dimensional.

I've worked with surgeons in the past who have developed new surgical techniques and I go in with them, observe, do sketches, and then create illustrations for them.

Patient education is another great area that medical illustrators work in, in helping to explain a health condition to patients and also the treatments that are available to them and how they might work in the body.

Medical illustration is very helpful because it really gives people an opportunity to understand their own health better. By having a picture, having something very clear that they can look at, is always great to go along with a verbal description or a written description. It's another way for people to learn and to really understand what's going on in their own body.

To become a medical illustrator, if you are interested in this career, you would need a good grounding in the general sciences and an undergraduate degree in science; be familiar with the technology, you know, be able to use the programs to do the digital drawing; and as well, it would be very important to have math throughout, not only to get into your undergraduate degree, but also as a business person to be able to run your business properly.

My advice would be to explore all your options before you decide on a career. You can combine more than one field of study; you can do arts, you can do science and combine it into one amazing career.