WORK SMARTER CLUB

Clubby Process Workbook

Hands remake · Logo roadblock · Real mistakes

A beginner companion to the YouTube process video



by Dennis

Learn in public · Wins and fails both count

1. Welcome / How to use this booklet

Hi, I'm Dennis from Work Smarter Club (WSC).

This booklet goes with our process video, where I rebuild the hands on **Clubby**, our 3D robot mascot. Clubby wears a navy hoodie with orange accents and has a cute chibi style.

Our promise: we learn in public. That means you see the wins *and* the fails. Some things in this booklet did not work. I kept them in on purpose, because the fails taught me the most.

How to use this booklet

- Read one stage at a time. Each stage matches a part of the video.
- Look for these boxes:

> **Tip:** A shortcut or idea that saved me time.

> **Common mistake:** Something I did wrong (or almost did) so you can skip it.

- **Checklists** (- [ ]) — tick them off as you go.
- **Try it yourself** — a small exercise with blank lines. Grab a pencil. Yes, really.

You don't need to be good at 3D. I'm a beginner too.

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2. What you'll need

Tools

- **Tripo AI account** (studio.tripo3d.ai) — turns text or images into 3D models. We used Generate (AI Model H3.1 Best Quality), Segment, Retopology, Auto Rig, Export, Magic Brush, and Private mode.
- **Blender** (free) — for precise edits. We rebuilt the hands here.
- **ElevenLabs** (optional) — for AI voice. The video narration is an AI clone of my own voice. Note: the free plan is not allowed for commercial videos, so check your plan if you'll monetize.
- **A notebook and pencil** — for sketches, color picks, and the exercises in this booklet.

Quick honesty note

Tripo gave Work Smarter Club a free Pro account. Tripo did **not** review or approve this booklet or the video. Some links at the end are affiliate links. Full disclosure is on the last page.

Before you start in Tripo (beginner gotchas)

- The Home "Generate" box is **image-only**. For text prompts, go to **3D Workspace > Generate Model > pencil icon**.
- Pick **AI Model: H3.1 Best Quality**.
- If you plan to rig, set polycount around **20k up front**. It can save you an extra retopology step later.
- Privacy defaults to **"Sharing Only."** Check it before you record or post.
- Pop-up guides can block your clicks. Close them first.

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3. Stage 1 — Remove a prop in Tripo (the laptop)

📺 *Video: 0:18 Removing the laptop in Tripo*

The problem: My early prompt was:

> "a friendly cartoon robot mascot wearing a navy blue hoodie, holding a laptop, orange accents, chibi style"

Clubby came out great — but holding a laptop. For the redesign I wanted to keep the **original robot** and just take the laptop away. Not make a brand-new Clubby.

Steps we followed

1. **Segment** — Tripo splits the model into parts.
2. **Delete the laptop part** — select it and remove it.
3. **Retopology** — clean up the mesh.
4. **Auto Rig** — add a skeleton so Clubby can pose and move.
5. **Export** — save the file (GLB, etc.).

In the video these are real screen clicks, sped up in the edit.

Result: No laptop! But now Clubby had empty, mitten-style hands. That's why Stage 2 exists.



Before: laptop in the prompt



After: laptop removed in Tripo

> **Tip:** Retopology replaces your model. Do it *before* rigging, and always re-export *after* rigging so you keep the rigged version.

> **Common mistake:** Putting a prop in your first prompt ("holding a laptop") when you might not want it later. The prop gets baked into the hands.

Mini checklist

- ☐ Privacy mode checked
- ☐ Model segmented
- ☐ Prop part deleted
- ☐ Retopology done
- ☐ Auto Rig done
- ☐ Exported after rigging

Try it yourself

Generate a simple character holding one object (a cup, a book, a phone). Use Segment to remove the object.

What object did you remove? _____

What did the hands look like after? _____

Would you prompt it differently next time? _____

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4. Stage 2 — Redesign the hands in Blender (v3 → v6)

📺 *Video: 7:43 Hands redesign starts → 9:21 Hands locked DRAFT-v6*

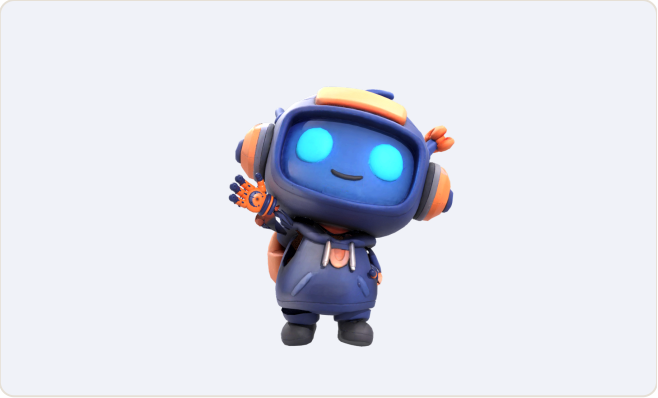
The goal: Turn mitten hands into anime-style, four-finger robotic hands. I built them in Blender using scripted mesh builds, then tested lots of versions fast.

The iteration path

1. **DRAFT-v3** — first robotic four-finger pass.
2. **DRAFT-v4** — used a CAD reference; tried a two-tone look.
3. **DRAFT-v5** — smooth joints. No ring or bolt look.
4. **DRAFT-v5b** — near-black / darker navy insides.
5. **DRAFT-v5c** — pure black insides.
6. **DRAFT-v5d** — tried chrome fingertips.
7. **DRAFT-v6 LOCKED** ✅ — orange + dark blue **#1E285F** two-tone, smooth joints, no rings.



DRAFT-v6 hands (locked)



Full front — orange + #1E285F

Why v6 won

- **Colors match the brand.** Orange + #1E285F fits Clubby's hoodie and accents.
- **Smooth joints feel friendly.** Rings and bolts looked too mechanical for a cute chibi mascot.
- **It reads clean.** Even small on screen, you can tell what the hand is.

> **Tip:** Change *one thing* per version (color, OR joint style, OR finish). Name each file (v5, v5b, v5c...). Then you can always go back.

> **Common mistake:** Adding "cool robot details" like bolts and rings just because it's a robot. Ask: does this fit *my* character's style?

Checklist

- ☐ Starting hands exported from Tripo
- ☐ Reference image picked
- ☐ Each version saved with its own name
- ☐ Colors tested against the rest of the character
- ☐ One version "locked" before moving on

Try it yourself

Pick two colors for a two-tone hand. Sketch the hand on paper *before* you model anything.

Color 1 (main): _____

Color 2 (inside / joints): _____

Smooth joints or mechanical joints? Why? _____

Sketch box:

_____

_____

_____

5. Stage 3 — Logo on clothes (six fails)

📺 *Video: 9:45 Every chest logo fail → 11:38 We scrap the chest logo*

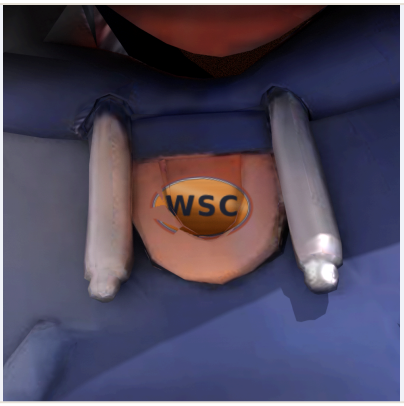
The goal: Put "WSC" on Clubby's chest so it looked like part of the hoodie — not stuck on.

What we tried (in order) and why it failed

1. **Raised 3D letters** — looked weird and separate from the hoodie.
2. **Flat fabric paint / print** — letters looked soft, not like a badge.
3. **Separate badge decal** — floated off the hoodie.
4. **Flush badge** (painted into the fabric, more contrast, soft blue outline) — still not right.
5. **Metal nameplate / tool badge** (mesh, then a texture bake that came out jagged, then a sharper bake) — readable, but still looked like a sticker.
6. **Soft print** (centered, then orange letters on the left chest over the blue) — still didn't look good.



Fail: raised 3D letters



Fail: metal tool badge

Decision: SCRAPPED. Clubby's hoodie stays plain for now.

This is a real roadblock. I don't have the answer yet — and that's okay to say out loud.

> **Tip:** Before you model a logo, look at how real clothes do it. Is it printed? Embroidered? A patch? Start from real life.

> **Common mistake:** Forcing a logo onto clothes over and over when it keeps looking stuck-on. Sometimes a plain design is the better design.

Checklist

- ☐ Real-world reference found
- ☐ Logo style picked (print / embroidery / patch / badge)
- ☐ Checked from the front AND the side
- ☐ Asked: does it look like part of the fabric?
- ☐ Okay to scrap it if it doesn't work

Try it yourself

Find a real hoodie or shirt with a logo. Take a photo. Then answer:

Is the logo raised, printed, embroidered, or a badge? _____

Where is it placed? _____

What makes it look like part of the clothing? _____

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6. Stage 4 — Tripo rematch

📺 *Video: 11:53 Tripo rematch vs Blender*

The idea: Could Tripo beat my Blender hands? I gave it the locked v6 look as a reference. Then I used a **Private** H3.1 generate and **Magic Brush**.

Honest results

	Tripo rematch	Blender DRAFT-v6
Four fingers	✅ Yes	✅ Yes
Orange + dark blue	✅ Yes	✅ Yes
Smooth joints	❌ Kept ring/bolt joints	✅ Yes
Chest "WSC" letters	❌ Magic Brush made an orange ring	— (scrapped)

Winner: Blender v6. The logo roadblock still stands.

> **Tip:** Use AI as a *rematch*, not a final judge. Let it try — then compare it honestly with what you already have.

> **Common mistake:** Assuming the AI result is better just because it's newer or faster.

Try it yourself

Take something you already made (a model, a drawing, a design). Ask an AI tool to make its own version.

What did the AI do better? _____

What did yours do better? _____

Which one would you keep? _____

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7. Tripo pros and cons — and when to switch to Blender

📺 *Video: 14:12 Tripo vs Blender: honest pros and cons*

Tripo and Blender are not rivals. They are teammates. In this part of the video, I took Tripo's v7 Clubby into Blender to see how far a little hand-finishing could go.

Tripo is great at	Tripo struggled with
Making the base character fast from a prompt or image	AI edits (regenerate, Magic Brush) kept bringing back ring- and bolt-looking finger joints
Segment cut the laptop out of Clubby's hands cleanly	Magic Brush turned the chest "WSC" letters into an orange ring
Rig + animate + GLB export in a few clicks	Every try costs credits. Our rematch used 75 credits (2870 to 2795).
—	Very heavy exports. Our v7 had about 1.9 million triangles (1,004,477 vertices) in many loose pieces.

When to switch to Blender

- Your **third AI retry** is still wrong.
- You need **exact brand colors**, like a hex code.
- The problem is a **small detail**: finger joints, letters, or a logo.
- The file is **too heavy** for your computer to handle.
- You're **burning credits** on the same fix.

Blender finishing steps we used

- ☐ **1.** Import Tripo's v7 file.
- ☐ **2.** Decimate to about 289,000 triangles so the computer can keep up.
- ☐ **3.** Select only the hand pieces.
- ☐ **4.** Use **Merge by Distance** to weld the loose shells together.
- ☐ **5.** Delete the tiny floating bolt bits.
- ☐ **6.** Run six gentle **Smooth Vertices** passes.
- ☐ **7.** Recolor with two flat colors: WSC orange and dark blue **#1E285F**. Then compare side by side with DRAFT-v6.



Tripo v7 after Blender cleanup — closer, but the ridges remain.



Our scratch-built DRAFT-v6 — still the cleanest.

Honest result: Blender got Tripo's hands closer. But the ridges are baked into Tripo's shape, so our scratch-built v6 still wins.

> **Tip:** Use Tripo for the base shape. Use Blender for fine finishing: fingers, joints, exact brand colors, and logos.

> **Common mistake:** Trying to smooth away ridges that are baked into the shape. Gentle passes help, but no amount of smoothing makes a new shape.

Try it yourself

Think of a project where an AI tool got you most of the way there.

What was the AI great at?

_____

What small detail needed finishing by hand?

_____

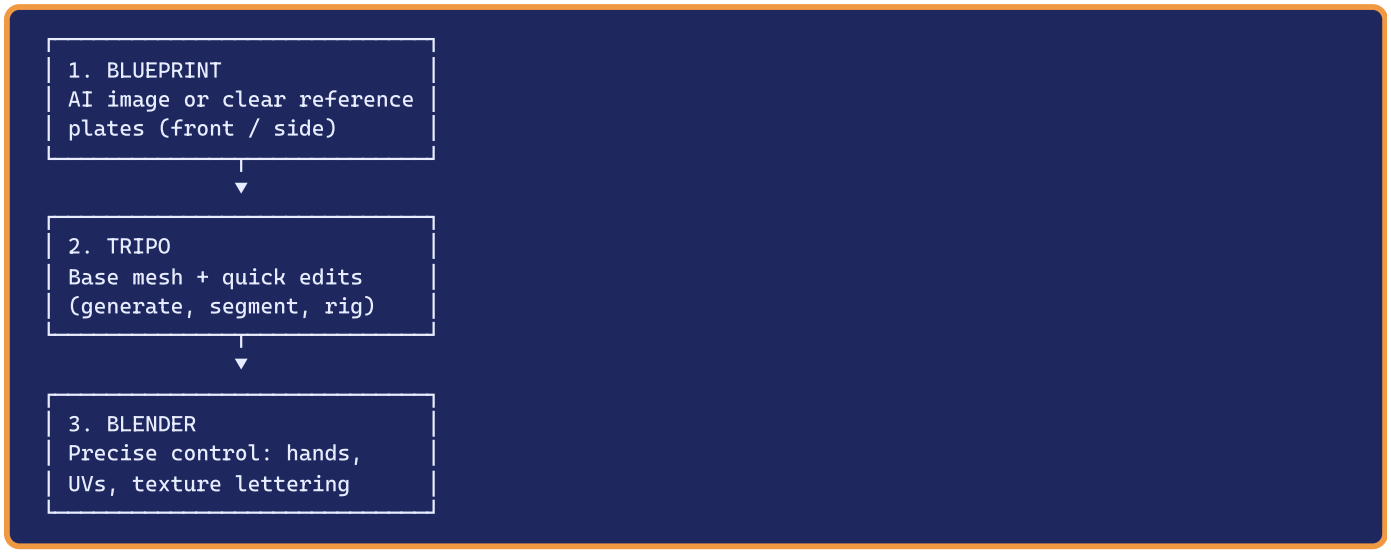
What will be your signal to switch tools next time?

_____

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8. Blueprint workflow

The biggest lesson: **mix tools. Don't force one tool to do everything.**



1. **Blueprint first.** Know what you want before you generate.
2. **Tripo for speed.** Get a base model and make big edits fast.
3. **Blender for details.** Hands, UVs, and lettering need careful control.

Try it yourself

Plan your own project using the three steps.

My blueprint will be: _____

What I'll do in Tripo: _____

What I'll do in Blender: _____

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9. What went wrong and why

Here are the real mistakes from this project — all in one place.

1. The laptop in the prompt

I asked for "holding a laptop." It got built into the hands. Removing it left mitten hands I had to redo.

2. Ring and bolt joints

They looked "robot-y," but too mechanical for chibi Clubby. Smooth joints fit better. Tripo's rematch brought the rings right back.

3. Stuck-on logos

Six tries. Every one looked separate from the hoodie — raised, floating, soft, or sticker-like.

4. Magic Brush made a ring, not letters

I asked for chest lettering. I got an orange ring. AI edits can miss small, exact details like text.

Lessons learned

- Only put props in a prompt if you want them *forever*.
- Match details to your character's style, not to a generic idea.
- Small iterations with clear names beat one big guess.
- Text and logos need precise tools — or a better plan.
- It's okay to scrap something. Plain can be good.
- Share roadblocks. Someone out there knows the answer.

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10. Mini checklists at a glance

Before you generate (Tripo)

- [ ] Text mode via 3D Workspace > Generate Model > pencil
- [ ] AI Model H3.1 Best Quality
- [ ] ~20k polycount if you'll rig
- [ ] Privacy checked
- [ ] Pop-ups closed

Removing a prop

- [ ] Segment
- [ ] Delete part
- [ ] Retopology
- [ ] Auto Rig
- [ ] Export (after rigging)

Hand redesign

- [ ] Sketch + 2 colors chosen
- [ ] One change per version
- [ ] Versions named
- [ ] One version locked

Logo on clothes

- [ ] Real-world reference
- [ ] Style picked
- [ ] Looks like fabric, not a sticker
- [ ] Okay to scrap

My notes

_____

_____

11. Watch the full video + links

📺 Watch the full process video (~17 min):

[YOUTUBE LINK — to fill when published]

Chapters

- 0:00 Roadblock hook
- 0:18 Removing the laptop in Tripo
- 7:43 Hands redesign starts
- 8:01 DRAFT-v3 robotic hands
- 8:30 CAD reference and DRAFT-v4
- 8:52 Fast iterations (v5)
- 9:21 Hands locked DRAFT-v6
- 9:45 Every chest logo fail
- 11:38 We scrap the chest logo
- 11:53 Tripo rematch vs Blender
- 14:12 Tripo vs Blender: honest pros and cons
- 16:34 Need your help

Links

- **Tripo AI:** https://tripo.pxf.io/jR0Ojb

Promo code **TRIPOSPARK** — per Tripo's partner team, 60% off Pro or Max for new users through Dec 31, 2026. Confirm the discount at checkout.

- **ElevenLabs:** https://try.elevenlabs.io/oh1g77bpg31x
- **Work Smarter Club:** https://worksmarterclub.com

🙋 We need your help!

How would **YOU** put a logo on character clothes? Tell us in the video comments or email **clubby@worksmarterclub.com**.

Disclosure

Some links are affiliate links. If you sign up through them, Work Smarter Club may earn a commission at no extra cost to you. Tripo gave a free Pro account; they did not review or approve this booklet or the video. Narration in the video is an AI voice made in ElevenLabs from Dennis's own voice.

Thanks for building along with me. Keep your fails — they're your best teachers.

See you in the next one,

Dennis

Work Smarter Club