

Leave No Trace

Imagine being able to travel silently and invisibly through the woods, unnoticed by the animals and leaving no trace of your passing.

Here is your chance to give it a try. You can also help others in your family or group to learn these nature skills.

owl eyes

Picture an owl sitting on a tree branch above your head, perfectly still, gaze fixed..... Now imagine that you are that owl. Your eyes are big and powerful, but they don't rotate around inside your eye sockets. To change your point of focus, you have to turn your head. How do you see what is going on all around you while staying as quiet as you can?

Pick a spot straight ahead to train your eyes on. Notice that without moving your eyeballs, you can see some ground below that spot, and some space above it, as well as on both sides. You see this with your peripheral vision. This is what owls use to catch the smallest motions in the woods.

Try this experiment: while focusing on your spot straight ahead, stretch your arms out to the sides and wiggle your fingers.

Practice seeing the world like this and as your field of vision expands, so will your awareness of your surroundings.

fox walk

Have you ever heard a fox crashing through the forest? Probably not! You can walk as quietly as a fox like this: step forward with one foot, touch the outside of your foot to the ground and roll it inwards until it is flat. You can feel if there are any sticks, leaves or stones underneath it that might cause noise. Reposition your foot if needed and then slowly put weight on it.

In combination with owl eyes, fox walking helps your mind to focus: distracting thoughts melt away and you begin to notice the tiny details - sights, sounds and smells - of your surroundings. You may even come upon animals before they notice you!

