

Awareness Practices

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Basic Fox Walking

1. Step without weight, test, transfer weight slowly and evenly.
2. Pause frequently (freeze)
3. Be careful about eye contact

Walking with Mindfulness—the Fox Walk

When foxes are hunting, they are going to walk very slowly and mindfully, keeping their attention on their feet and how their feet are connecting to the earth (soil, grass, ground). The idea is to be as slow and steady and quiet as you can.

Begin by taking a step with your heel and then add the side of your foot all the way up to the toes last. Then step the same way with the other foot. Pay attention to each part of your foot as it touches the ground.

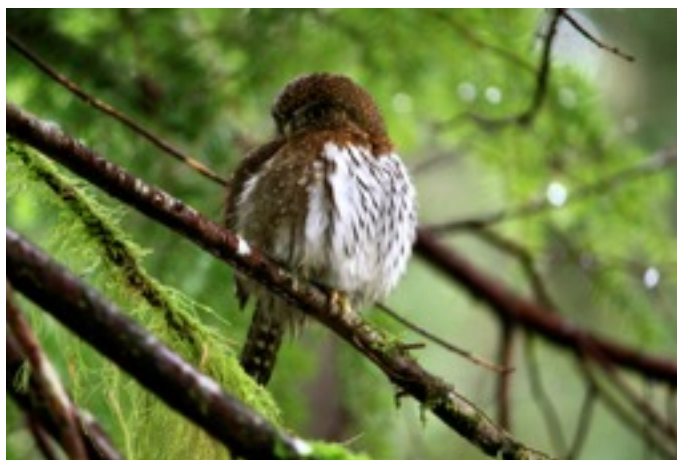
If you see a rock, a twig, dry leaf or branch that may create a crunch, then reposition your foot before stepping.

As you are walking listen deeply to the sounds around you, collecting each one of them. Listen for one sound that really stands out as you are walking.

The idea is to be able to walk with one-pointed attention and present awareness, as to not disturb the baseline, (determined sounds that the animals and birds have been accustomed to in the particular area) and startle the animals. But rather, to develop the ability to walk among the animals and even approach wild animals, and not be seen as a threat.

This exercise prepares and trains us in our communication with scared or wild animals. It develops an inner tranquility, which the animals feel, and puts them at ease.

Check in with your body to see how it feels before and after walking like a fox.



Owl Eyes: A Core Awareness Skill

Picture an owl perched on a tree branch 25ft above the ground. Sitting motionless with its owl eyes in a fixed gaze. The “form” we are gaining from the “owl” is that of wide peripheral vision. Stillness yields motion for the owl.

When the owl holds perfect stillness, all motion is very evident.

The [bird language](#) practitioner or tracker gains from this by practicing the same kind of stillness and wide-angle vision as demonstrated by the owl. To utilize this best, owl eyes should be applied in combination with [Fox Walking](#), and other moving forms, and is exceptional practice at the quiet sit.

Owls have developed eyes so big and so powerful that they have actually outgrown their eye sockets and are “frozen” in place.

Imagine that you are an owl. Look straight ahead and imagine that your eyeballs are stuck in your eye sockets and cannot move.

Now, look straight ahead toward wherever your body is facing. Pick a spot directly across from you that you can train your eyes on without moving. Hold that spot in the center of your vision as your focal point. If your eyes wander off, bring them back to your focal point again. Always return to that one spot.

While staring at that spot and without moving your eyeballs, notice that you can also see part of the ground or floor between you and that spot. And without moving your eyeballs you can see part of the sky or ceiling between you and that spot. You can see the ground, the sky, and that spot all at the same time using your peripheral vision. This is owl eyes.

Build on this peripheral vision now by adding to your awareness the farthest thing you can see to the left and the farthest thing you can see to the right, all without moving your eyeballs. You can see these five things at once: your focal point, the ground, the sky, the extreme left, and the extreme right.

How to improve/Practice- from an early age most of us have mostly utilized a narrow field vision. Reading words on a page, for instance, mandates a tunneling of our vision. Therefore, the rods and cones within the retina allowing owl eyes to work have not been physically exercised. Most likely you will repeatedly slip back into a more focused vision. Therefore a conscious effort to practice owl eyes is crucial for integrating this technique into your routines. Through practice you will watch your field of vision literally expand to encompass a larger area.

Your Journey Within

Hover at the heart center. Be in that moment, and delight in the pure joy of being alive. Happiness is appreciation—Hummingbird Spirit Wisdom
from the Spirit Wisdom Animal Oracle

Here are some grounding/connecting techniques you can practice in nature, or anywhere outdoors, even in the city.

1. Get to know the birds and animals in your backyard. Notice what they eat and where they hang out. Build a relationship with them.
2. Practice walking meditation by focusing on each step and paying attention to your breath. You can coordinate exhales with a step or simply breathe and walk slowly.
3. Focus your attention softly ahead of you and anchor your vision on a single point. Allow your eyes to go soft into peripheral vision, and notice, without moving your eyes, what you can see in all directions for 180 degrees.
4. **Sight:** Notice the twigs, pebbles, and leaves you're stepping over. Also, notice the insects crossing your path and what animals appear along the way.
5. Notice the patterns of light and shade on the ground and on the leaves and trees or buildings. Notice shadows. Notice the colors around you. See how the colors change from early morning to mid-afternoon and sunset. Colors are most vibrant on a cloudy day. Don't forget to look at the clouds. Watch the leaves and branches moving in the wind.
6. **Sound:** Incorporate the sounds in the environment as you walk, including planes flying overhead or construction in the distance. Listen to the sounds of your feet taking each step, the twigs and leaves crunching beneath your feet. Hear the wind, breeze, or rain. Listen to the birds, and buzzing of insects.
7. **Smell:** Be aware of the fragrances you smell along your walk. Go up to trees and smell the bark. After rain, smells are more prominent.
8. Focus on one sense at a time. For example, walk for five minutes just noticing sounds, and then spend five minutes just noticing smells, etc.
9. Finally, engage all your senses simultaneously. Become fully alive in your body.

These are just some things that heighten our sensitivity. By coming into the body, we become fully aware of our senses, integrate within ourselves and the environment, and merge as one. We naturally feel more relaxed and balanced when we're relieved from our mind chatter. Meditation and yoga will yield the same results. Welcome your journey within.

Five Ways To Listen To Your Animals

1. Slow The Chatter In Your Mind

When we slow our busy minds to the wavelength of our animals' minds, we are in a powerful place. Practice being present. When martial artists are about to break a slab of concrete, their minds don't wander off to what needs to be done next. We cannot hear unless we listen. And to listen requires our complete presence.

2. Believe It Is Possible

It's natural to doubt our abilities. The most convincing validations have come from wild animals, those with whom I had absolutely no egotistical expectations with or pressure to "be right." Animals respond to us when we believe in ourselves, when we mentally approach them with clear intention, and when we meet them on common ground: love.

3. Set Your Intention

Quantum physics has proven that intention sets thought in motion. Just as a golfer sees the ball falling into the hole and a cat becomes one with the prey before the capture, see yourself talking to and hearing animals. Set your intention to do so.

4. See Animals As Equal

If we think we are superior to animals in any way, we will shut down the natural flow of communication and limit our receptivity. See your animals as companions, family members, and friends. Consider their feelings, fears, and comforts. Our animals love to talk to us. When your heart is open, you make yourself available to them.

5. Trust Yourself

Often times it is not what we do, but what we don't do that brings results. Practice letting go. You are already hearing your animals, and when you drop down, get out of your head, and rest in yourself, you will feel the heart connection and you will know that you are hearing them.