

Acadiana



Sky

Once you have your finder aligned, the moon is a great place to start. You'll have no doubt when you find it and you will have to learn to move the telescope to track it, a necessary skill. It's not up at a civilized hour every night, though. As its phase goes from waxing crescent to full, every night you get a different view as additional parts of the moon come into sunlight. The dividing line between the lighted and unlighted parts (called the terminator) is where the viewing is most dramatic because that's where the sun is rising on the moon, giving the longest shadows. Full moon can be painfully bright, but (unlike the sun) will not damage your eyesight; it's also the best phase for seeing dramatic rayed craters like Tycho and Copernicus. The full moon rises at sunset, but in the evenings after that the moon will rise later and later. The area near the moon's terminator will again be the most dramatic region, but now that's where the sun is setting on the moon. The link for the Lunar Top 10 for Backyard Telescopes at the Lafayette Science Museum web site can help you understand what you see.