

Acadiana



Sky

Pointing a telescope takes practice. Take the time to do it! For instance, being very careful not to point your telescope at the sun, point your telescope at a variety of objects on Earth at least a quarter mile away. This will give you practice while you can see what you are doing in such basics as aiming, practicing the telescope motions, and focusing. It will also allow you to see if your finder is really aligned with the main telescope (and if it is not, it will allow you to make the needed adjustments). Do this repeatedly even if you have to use the same object over and over—the idea is to get used to handling the telescope, not to see cool things. Don't be surprised if the image is upside-down, backward, or both. There are good reasons for that to happen and working in daylight again helps you get used to that. Once you've done that, practice at night aiming at bright stars, focusing the telescope to make the stars look like the tiniest points possible. Practice tracking them as Earth rotates. Do all this until you are very good at it—most objects in a telescope are faint and small, and if you can't find easy stuff like bright stars, you have no chance of finding more interesting objects. And be patient with yourself as you learn.