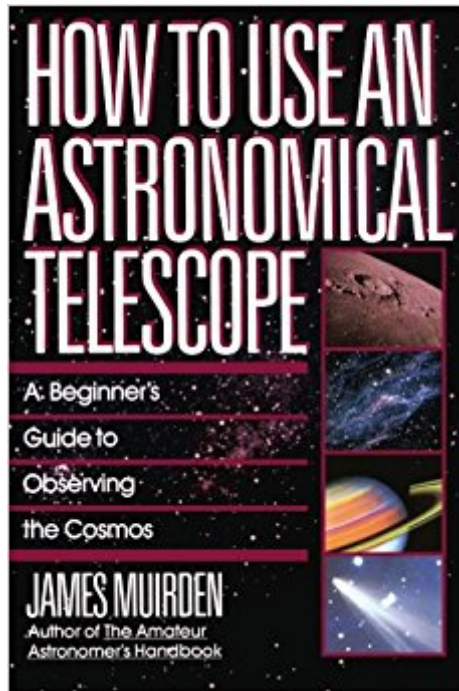




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How To Use An Astronomical Telescope



Synopsis

Astronomy has never been a more popular pastime than it is today. The increased availability of less expensive, more powerful, and more sophisticated telescopes has given rise to a new generation of stargazers. And for these beginning astronomers here is the comprehensive book covering everything from the difficult task of selecting an instrument to the equally daunting choices that arise when a telescope is turned to the heavens. Renowned British astronomer and author James Muirden takes the fledgling astronomer by the hand in his new book, offering tips on: * the purchase, assembly, and orientation of your new telescope * how to observe and chart the Sun, Moon, planets, stars and comets * how to investigate the deep-sky objects -- clusters, nebulae, and other galaxies beyond the Milky Way The final chapter, "Windows into Space," explores ten carefully selected regions featuring noteworthy examples of double stars, galaxies, and nebulae, as well as more obscure objects seldom examined by astronomers. How to Use an Astronomical Telescope offers completely revised and updated location charts with detailed coordinates, tables, appendixes, and numerous illustrations and photographs, making it the essential volume for one's first exploration of the cosmos.

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Customer Reviews

For the beginning astronomer here is a comprehensive book covering everything from the difficult task of selecting an instrument to the equally daunting choices that arise when a telescope is turned to the heavens.

James Muirden is the author of eleven books on astronomy, including *The Amateur Astronomer's Handbook*. He spent nine years working as an astronomical optician making telescopes before receiving a teaching degree at Exeter University, and is now Project Publications Officer for the Schools Health Education Unit at Exeter. He lives with his wife and two children in Exeter, England.

A useful, practical book---a bit verbose as most British authors' books are. Lot of useful astronomical data to get started...may be a bit advanced for a beginner---good for intermediate level amateurs.

Basic stuff - telescopes haven't changed in decades (but for Dobsons). Good book for returning novices or neophytes to the greatness that is astronomy. Worth the money.

Excellent!

was not what I really wanted but will keep it

The previous reviewers got it right when they wrote that this book is more than a beginner's introduction into the hobby of astronomy. I don't think that I've ever come across another that contained such a wealth of information about what to observe and written in a manner which has me eager to go out observing the sky (both day and night). One reviewer detailed the section on double stars, and that chapter truly is worth the price by itself. Beginners may feel overwhelmed at the amount of information here, but by first reading the written chapter before tackling the list of double/multiple stars everything will be much easier to understand and use. The chapter on white light solar observing (this book was written before hobbyist H-alpha telescopes became available) is a must for beginners, and even those a bit more seasoned will find something to use here. I still find that this part of the book is indispensable. It's difficult to find a good reference on how to observe the planets, even though they are among the easiest objects to see through a telescope, because rarely does an author go beyond the more prominent bands and Great Spot of Jupiter or the rings of Saturn. This author goes beyond the obvious and provides a reason to keep going back to them after you've been there numerous times before. Of course, every book on astronomy will detail observing the moon with maps at the quarters, and the names of so many craters pointed out. Usually that would be the extent of the observing advice, but not so in this volume. Just as in all the other chapters, you will find that what you see through your first look is only the initial step to a

wealth of observing highlights. Mr. Muirden's love for observing the skies is evident in every sentence he has written, and his wonderful, truly "British" style of writing makes this book a delight to read even when you're not going to be going out and observing. In fact, I bought this book almost ten years and read it literally a hundred times before I could afford my first telescope! Naturally, I was well prepared to use it by then.

The subtitle "A Beginner's Guide to Observing the Cosmos" could have omitted the word "beginner's." This book packs a lot of information for the experienced amateur. The text goes much deeper than the little techniques we have seen in other observing guides, like averted vision and proper dark adaptation. It provides specific recommendations for most types of celestial targets suitable for amateur telescopes. The book reveals its age and could stand an updated edition. Technology moves quickly, and many of today's computer capabilities and newer telescope and eyepiece designs are not covered in the chapter on Astronomical Telescopes. Also, the Appendix lists the planet locations starting in Jan 1988 and ending in Dec 2000. This is forgivable, since the main thrust is not on the equipment, but how best to use it. The author stresses training the eye and a systematic thoroughness when at the eyepiece, and one starts to feel that the concept of "fun observing" would seem an oxymoron in this volume. Pardon my saying, but this does not seem inconsistent with his being English. On the other hand, he reveals his own romantic enthusiasm when describing celestial objects such as certain double stars. "A most beautiful double, clear white and pale blue, in a low-power field that includes several faint pairs. The whole effect is superb." Speaking of double stars, the book is worth the price if these are your only interest. At 59 pages, Observing Double and Multiple Stars is the book's longest chapter, and provides an excellent list with descriptions. The list and descriptions in the chapter on Clusters, Nebulae, and Galaxies is also well suited for amateurs, most visible with scopes of 200mm aperture or less and many with higher quality scopes of 75mm or less. There is also a chapter called Windows into space, which includes ten sample star charts to the 7th magnitude and lists of double stars, Clusters, and Nebulae (heavy on the double stars). In the end I must admit that the often-wearisome training to becoming proficient with observing techniques does allow one to see beauty where others only see "faint fuzzies."

As a beginner in astronomy I hoped for a book to hold my hand each step of the way, but I got more than I bargained for. This is not a true beginner's book, however the more I read the book the more I liked it. The fundamental information is there, you just have to read some paragraphs over a time or

two to absorb the knowledge, and then it begins to make more sense. Maybe good astronomy is like that anyway - not easy at first, but the more you learn the more it draws you deeper into the study. The author is not afraid to be complete and provides an easy reading of the subject. Great information on different types of telescopes. Excellent information for a beginner on major objects in the sky, cataloged nicely. I found some of the objects my first night out with my new telescope - knew then I was hooked on this hobby! Highly recommend this book to someone who wants more than just a beginner's book, but is willing to take the time to absorb the excellent information found within. If you are serious about astronomy as a hobby this is a great book to own.

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