

Using Your Telescope To Explore The Beauty Of The Night Sky

People who buy telescopes often have a vague idea that they would like to spend some time exploring the heavens and looking at planets and stars. You may not know exactly what you can see with your telescope until you do some research and experimentation. There are many objects in the sky you might be able to enjoy seeing. The moon has probably been an object for contemplation since the beginning of humankind. It goes through its phases, and for many, many years that was the only way people had to gauge time beyond the day. However, with a telescope, you can see much more of the moon's surface. You can focus on the dry river-like contours or the mountain ranges on the surface of the moon. You can gaze at the craters more closely. You can take a look at the terminator line where the dark and light sides of the moon meet. You might think that the Sun is difficult to observe. You cannot look at it directly without damaging your retinas, after all. The trick is to use the proper solar filter to protect your eyes. It can be fun to keep track of and chart the sunspot activity. The planets of the solar system are fascinating to view. Jupiter is easily spotted, with its great red spot which changes hourly. You can also watch the clouds and the moons that surround it. Saturn is a delight to watch with its glorious rings. Mars is interesting when you look for the polar cap to change or watch the surface of the planet. Even Uranus and Neptune can be seen with an 8" telescope. Pluto, though now not considered a planet, can also be spotted as a small disc in the sky. One type of heavenly bodies people most want to see with their telescopes is stars. There are many stars to see. You can look at individual stars in an open star cluster. These may be difficult to distinguish from the background stars. Globular star clusters are different. They are millions of stars packed in a tight group. You can see these clusters from a great distance. If you want to learn a little more about the night sky, you can find out about nebulae. These glowing clouds of gas can be seen through a telescope under certain conditions. Some are small and shaped like a ball. Others are much larger, and they are irregularly shaped. You may even be able to see the outlines of other galaxies. The Milky Way Galaxy that you live in is just one of uncountable galaxies in the universe. It is exciting if you can get a glimpse of something beyond your known world. Comets, of course, are popular astronomical sights for many people. You can get a listing of comets that are due to come around by visiting websites such as the NASA site. You have a limited time to view them, but this also means that you know when the best time for viewing is. Depending upon your particular telescope, you may or may not be able to see all these things. With some experience, you will come to understand just what your telescope can do.

About the Author

Gregg Hall is an author living with his 18 year old son in Jensen Beach, Florida. Find more astronomy as well as telescopes at <http://www.nsearch.com>

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