

Tips for using the Library Loaner Telescopes

- ***Does it make any difference how the telescope goes in the base mount?***

Most certainly. When you set the telescope in the mount, make sure you have the focuser on the right side when standing with the handle of the base mount immediately in front of you. Setting the telescope in the base mount incorrectly will result in the focuser angled downward, making it impossible to see through an eyepiece.

- ***Does it make any difference which handle goes in which side?***

Yes it does. Notice one handle has a couple of washers on it separated by some bearings. This is the clutch handle. You use it to lock the telescope in place when you do not want it to move. The clutch handle goes in the same side as the focuser, i.e. the right side as viewed from standing in front of the telescope with the base handle directly in front of you.

- ***What is the finder scope and how do I use it?***

The finder scope is the little telescope that sits atop of the main tube of a telescope. It is usually of 8X50 or 9X50 power, so it does not magnify much and most frequently has a set of crosshairs when you look through it.

The finder scope does as the name suggests: it helps you find things in the sky

- ***How do I set up the finder scope?***

Setting up the finder scope is called alignment. You are basically ensuring that the finder scope and the main telescope are pointed in the same direction at the same object.

Alignment is easy if you follow a few basic steps:

1 – After installing the finder scope on the main tube and securing it with the thumbscrew, insert your lowest power eyepiece (25mm) into the focuser on the main telescope.

2 – Choose a distant fixed object such as a distant treetop, a street lamp, electrical or transmission tower, chimney top or similar and turn your telescope in the general direction of the object.

3 - Looking through the eyepiece, focus and centre your object in the middle of the eyepiece. Once centred, turn the clutch handle to lock the telescope in place so it does not move.

4 – Now without touching the main telescope (as you may move it) look through the finder scope.

5 – Using the two thumbscrews on the finder scope, slowly adjust the finder until your object is on the centre of the crosshairs.

6 – Once centred in the finder, re-check the object in your eyepiece to ensure you did not move the telescope. If un-centred in the eyepiece, adjust the telescope again and repeat the process with the finder scope

7 – Some may find replacing the 25mm eyepiece with the higher power 10mm eyepiece and re-aligning improves their observing by improving accuracy.

- ***Do I have to align the finder scope to every target I want to see?***

Unless someone accidentally hits the finder scope it should stay in alignment and you will not need to repeat the alignment as long as it is attached to the main telescope. If you remove the finder scope you will need to align it again when you set up the telescope for observing.

- ***Do I have to take the telescope all apart at night?***

Not necessarily. If you stand the telescope vertically in the mount, you can carefully lift and move the telescope indoors when you are finished observing for the night. It is suggested that you put the dustcaps on the finder scope, the main telescope, the focuser and the eyepieces to ensure they remain as clean as possible.

If there is a lot of dew on the outside of the main telescope, you may tilt the telescope down and leave the dustcap off for the night. This is a practice that some use claiming that it prevents condensation from forming and dripping on the mirror.

As long as you don't hit the finder scope or severely jar the main telescope, the finder scope should be ready for use on your next observing night.

- ***How long does the telescope take to acclimatize?***

Conventional thinking has it that the Dobsonian telescope acclimatizes in about thirty minutes. Observing tonight on your patio? Put it out before supper and enjoy the evening sky after.