

## A QUICK DARK-ADAPT TECHNIQUE

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### Abstract

A simple and quick technique for adapting one's eyes to the dark is described.

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I would like to share a unique, very useful, quick dark-adapting technique for astronomical observers and movie goers...

I learned of and have used this unique technique since 1969, when I was a planetarium and observatory director and was participating as an undergraduate guinea pig in a visual perceptual psychologist's project at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. I have found this very quick dark-adapting technique to be extremely useful for my own dark-adapting needs as well as for dark-adapting planetarium visitors. Its value was apparent also to the approximately 3000 visitors who by using this technique had a better view of Comet Halley through the 24-inch telescope of the Northern Arizona University "Campus Observatory," where I was an astronomy lab instructor.

The technique itself is as follows: While standing up, look down at your feet and blink your eyes as hard and as rapidly as you can for a count of fifteen seconds. If there is no stray white-light contamination about, you will become totally dark-adapted in this time, and will be ready for your night's observing, to say nothing of being able to find a good seat in a dark theater!

Note that this technique works for approximately 40% to 60% of those who try it, and in some cases the level of dark-adaptation can improve with practice. A word of caution to contact lens wearers: be careful not to dislodge your lenses while using this quick dark-adapt technique.