

Blindfolded Walk

Close your eyes—and open your ears.

People who are blind, like Dean Hudson, are often skilled listeners. They may notice sounds that many of us miss because we're so focused on visual information.

One way to heighten awareness of our sonic environment is to use a blindfold to temporarily block out the visual “noise” all around us. Give it a try!

What you need:

- A short rope
- Bandannas or strips of cloth to use as blindfolds

What to do:

- Find a friend and decide who will be the **guide** and who will be the **walker**.
- **Guide:** help the **walker** put on the blindfold. Hold one end of the rope and place the other end in the **walker's** hand. Now lead your blindfolded partner around and about. Go outside if possible.
- The guide should:
 - make sure the walker is safe at all times
 - walk very slowly and turn gently
 - let the walker know when to start and stop by tugging twice on the rope
 - find a path that seems sonically interesting
- The walker should:
 - keep your eyes closed—don't peek!
 - keep the rope taut (so you don't crash into the leader!)
 - allow yourself to be pulled along; don't try to help the leader
 - start/stop when you feel two tugs

Talking will lessen the “pure listening” aspect of the experience.

Both the guide and the walker should try not to speak to each other during the walk.

Things to notice and think about:

- How did the experience of not seeing affect the way you listen?
- How did you feel during the walk? Were you nervous or uncomfortable?
- What types of sounds do you remember? Did some sounds surprise you?
- Challenge yourself to retrace your steps. What auditory clues can you use to guide you?
- What other sensory information did you notice?

When you're finished with your blindfolded walk, talk to your partner about it.
Then switch roles and do it again!