

# WELLNESS CONNECTION

LIVE WELL. WORK WELL.

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## INSPIRE TO MOVE - Stargazing



Photo Credit: Matt Dieterich

*By Lydia Schillinger*

Saturday, June 20 was the first official day of summer. Due to social distancing, it may not be as easy to venture out of your home to do your usual, fun summertime activities. Some outdoor activities are limited, but simply looking at the stars in the night sky is a nice way to get out of the house to spend a relaxing evening. My family enjoys bonfires and stargazing in our own backyard. On a clear night, we grab lawn chairs, hotdogs and the makings for s'mores and wait until it gets dark to enjoy spotting our favorite constellations. Just give your eyes about 15 minutes to adjust to the darkness and a clear night sky will

come alive. If you live in the city, throw a few lawn chairs in the trunk, and drive to a location where city lights are minimal. Look up and enjoy our beautiful universe! If you have a telescope, even better, but you do not need the Hubble Space Telescope to enjoy stargazing. You can see stars, planets, satellites, the International Space Station and even catch a glimpse of a shooting star, all with the naked eye. When observing the night sky, be sure to dress accordingly or bring a blanket because even summer nights can get a bit chilly.

Stargazing is always enjoyable for my family. Have you ever looked up and saw a bright star and wondered what that was? Have you ever searched for the big dipper or the planet Venus, but were not sure if you spotted them? Maybe you saw something bright moving quickly across the sky. Before you call NASA to report a UFO, your questions may be answered, and your experience may now be amplified, by using the latest [star app technologies](#). I enjoy using the free versions of the Skyview Lite app and the Star Tracker Lite app found on Android and Apple devices. They both allow you to view constellations wherever you point your phone. It does not have to be nighttime for

these apps to work. I can view the sky from my makeshift office in my dining room any time of the day.

Depending on where you are located on the globe, you will be able to [view different constellations](#). The largest northern constellations that should be visible from Illinois are [Ursa Major](#), [Hercules](#), [Pegasus](#), [Draco](#), [Leo](#), [Boötes](#) and [Pisces](#). The [smallest constellations](#) in the northern sky are [Equuleus](#), [Sagitta](#), [Triangulum](#), [Corona Borealis](#), and [Canis Minor](#). Watch the [Perseids Meteor shower](#) from July 17-Aug 24, with peak dates on Aug 11 and 12. If you have not witnessed it, you really should check it out!

To learn more about these constellations, meteor showers and 30 years of discovery, check out the [Hubble Space Telescope](#) or visit [NASA](#). Two of our very own Universities have great astronomy programs for you to learn more about the universe! Check out the [UIS Astronomy-Physics department](#) to learn more about the Observatory that keeps tabs on massive stars that may become supernova in the nearby M33 galaxy. You may also join a [star party](#). [UIUC Astronomy](#) researchers contribute to paradigm-shifting observations of the gargantuan black hole at the heart of distant galaxy Messier 87.

Get out of the house tonight and look up; you may just see something amazing!

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