

Detect unwelcome human traffic, deter violators of explicit visual barriers and defeat those who violate our physical boundaries.

USE TRACKING SKILLS TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

BY: FREDDY OSUNA

Visual tracking is a valuable skill. One can find this skill alive and well in our military and law enforcement agencies today.

This is because tracking is essential to environmental awareness and environmental awareness keeps warriors alive. So, if those in our society who stand ready to defend our country and communities are seeking out this skill why wouldn't you also consider its' value? I would like to make you *track aware* in order to detect unwelcome human traffic, deter violators of explicit visual barriers and defeat those who violate our physical boundaries.

The career criminal is a coyote. Of all the mammals in North America, the coyote is arguably the most successful predatory mammal. The coyote is successful because he is a highly evasive, low contrast creature. He is a hunter, scavenger, semi-nomadic omnivore. He moves in the shadows of our society preying on smaller, weaker, inhabitants and steal-

ing from the stronger ones. The coyote is not a wolf. The wolf is a functioning member of a clan, a protector of his kin and model custodian of his designated property. So when the prey that the coyote violates turns out to be a wolf, then we get a glimpse of true justice.

TRAP TRACKS IN TRACK TRAPS

The tracker is a wolf. The skill of a tracker is more than just following a trail. The tracker monitors soils within his area of interest and builds an overall picture of the life patterns of those who move through or dwell in an area. This gives a tracker the ability to seemingly be everywhere, see into the past, present and in some cases the future. This would be the first step that you would take if you wish to become track aware. Around your immediate dwelling or home you will identify

all avenues of approach. Along these avenues of approach there are large and small track traps. Track traps are any area which reveals visual evidence of a human foot print. It can be as small as a dime like a small collection of soil that has built up on concrete after rain. It can be natural or man-made substances like sand or vehicle fluids. These avenues of approach should have sufficient track traps so that if someone approaches along that path it would be highly likely that they would hit one of these track traps. You can place track traps around your home if there aren't enough already there. I like to place and monitor track traps in two specific areas in relation to my home. I monitor proximal and distal track traps to identify who enters my property. Proximal track traps are placed near entry points to a home, for example, at



SHOE SIZE CAN REVEAL HEIGHT, WEIGHT AND GENDER.

the bottom of steps, near doors or below windows. Entry points like doors are usually preceded by choke points which guide visitors in a specific direction. At these choke points would be another area to place a track trap within proximal distance. Proximal track traps are in common areas and will require a lot of maintenance, depending on your own family's frequency of travel in these areas. Proximal track traps can reveal the intent, height, gender and weight of a subject.

Intent: In which entry was the track found? Solicitors do not knock on windows or side doors. They approach the front door where they are expected. They are not snooping around looking in windows. Criminals display this type of behavior. They ride along the shadows of walls in hours of low light.

Height: A tracker can estimate height by producing a bracket based on shoe size, stride, gait and other marks and impressions. One technique is to take the length of an unknown print in inches and divide by 2. So a size 12 on the ground will generally produce a man of average height between 5 feet 10 inches and 6 feet. Be aware that the size in inches doesn't translate to shoe size on the ground, so you're going to need to practice with various types of footwear. For instance, the insulation of a winter boot gives it more mass, so a running shoe of the same size will appear dramatically smaller even when it's the same shoe size.

Gender: There are many techniques to determine gender, but the most common sense methods are determining shoe size and shoe type.

Weight: Determining weight is a very difficult task, but with much practice we can come up with an estimate within 20 lbs. We do this by looking at three main things: the length of the stride during a natural walk; the width of the straddle while walking and standing still, and the single footprint. The average stride of a human is 30 inches from left foot to right foot. It will range from 26 to 34 inches. The straddle is the distance measured from the inside portion of one foot to the inside portion of the next foot; the gap between our legs. The

Survey of 399 Males Shoe Size

Height in inches	shoe size															
	6	6 1/2	7	7 1/2	8	8 1/2	9	9 1/2	10	10 1/2	11	11 1/2	12	12 1/2	13	14
63				1												
64																
65	1	1		4	1		1									
66		1			2	1		2								
67				2	2			3		2						
68		1	1		4	9	7	7			1	1				
69				1	3	8	14	10	8	3	2					
70			1		3	4	13	15	15	10	3	1				
71			1		3	3	7	5	14	9	7			2		
72							7	11	11	21	11	4	3			
73						2	1	2	4	11	8	1	7			1
74							1	1	7	8	5	3	4		1	1
75									1	3	3	2	5	1	2	
76								1	1	1		1	3		1	1
77													4		3	
78																
79																1
80																1
81																
82																1
Totals	1	2	3	8	18	27	54	54	63	74	40	12	28	1	10	3

Survey of 101 Females Shoe Size

Height in inches	shoe size													
	4 1/2	5	5 1/2	6	6 1/2	7	7 1/2	8	8 1/2	9	9 1/2	10	10 1/2	11
50											1			
60	1			2	3	2								
61		1	1	3	2	2	1							
62		2		1	2						1			
63	1		1	1			1	2						
64							6	2	1	1				
65							1	2	3	3	1			
66					1	1	4	3	4	2	1	1		
67					1	1	2	2	2					1
68								3	4	2			2	
69								1	2	1	1			
70										1	1	2		
71									1	2				
72														
73														
74														
Totals	1	4	3	8	9	11	12	15	17	11	6	6	0	1

single foot reveals weight in two areas; the floor or bottom of the track and the wall. The floor displays how pressure is transferred and a person of natural weight will transfer this pressure from heel to toe in a common way. First, the heel strikes during the stance phase of a walk. The weight is transferred along the outside 1/3rd of the foot with the ankle displaying pressure to the outside (pronated). Then the weight is transferred past the arch to the ball. At the ball the ankle then rolls to a supinated position (inside) and then the weight is transferred or rolled to the inside at the ball behind the big toe. At the toe the stance phase is terminated and the foot pushes back to propel the body forward.

Distal Track traps are traps that are located at the edges of a property. You will find less traffic here and this traffic will usually be vehicle and foot traffic moving mostly in two directions (in and out). Distal track traps are larger in surface area and for this reason can yield more profiling information. The goal is to link those who enter with an entry or view point into the house. If your property is surrounded by dirt, then you have a 360 degree trap you can monitor. Most people do not have that, so this is how I suggest going about choosing which track trap areas to monitor. First, consider that most burglaries occur during hours of daylight. If you want to move across a populated area during the day without being conspicuous, how would you move? You would walk on sidewalks, cross at cross walks and carry yourself in a manner that reflects the rest of the pedestrian traffic. If you wanted to move across a populated area without being noticed at all, then you would move at night. You would move along buildings concealed by the shadows, walk through alleys or easements, hop walls and jump fences, crawl through culverts or sewers and avoid light and areas where most people are expected to be seen.

So with that in mind, you must assess your perimeter security for entry during the day and night. I monitor distal track traps located at my driveway and paths of least resistance coming onto the property. I “drag” these areas with a rake in order to erase old marks and impressions and collect new ones. This allows me to know exactly how long tracks have been laid. If you have a large property to drag you can use a vehicle like an ATV or truck to drag something like a tree branch to create a trap. If someone is going to approach during the day to test your security they are



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most likely to approach just like any solicitor would. If they are going to approach during hours of low light then they have more options. So assess your security just as your adversaries do; in the cover of darkness. When it gets dark, leave home in its normal evening state, i.e. indoor and outdoor lighting on or off as usual, blind's, curtains up or down, pets inside or outside as usual. Have all inhabitants doing what they would normally be doing as well. Now seek traps that would cover an approach or observational viewing point to your home. Create an overhead sketch of the whole property indicating the areas to monitor.

TRACKER FOOT PRINT LOG

Once you are comfortable that you have established an effective track trap plan you are ready to put it to use. Create a log that has all prints of family members and associates who frequent your home. You can do this by sketching, photographing and stamping their footprints to be kept on file. Make sure to have their names and foot print makes and model noted in your catalog. One fast and easy method of collecting a foot print is to use tin foil. Just place a piece of foil on the carpet and have a visitor step on it. When

you have your catalog, you can update it as new people visit, new shoes are purchased and children grow. This catalog will help you track who's who in your zoo. When an unfamiliar pattern is found you can reference the catalog and then take appropriate action.

With a little practice, you will be able to identify a lot of information from even partial prints and other sign. Tracking skills can help you find help in an emergency. They can help you find food, water and shelter in a survival situation and they can help you find or evade adversaries as you may need. You will find that the awareness that must be practiced for tracking provides benefits in many areas of your life. Putting these skills to use around your home can add a layer to your security precautions. It is also an opportunity to practice a complex, perishable skill and to share that skill with family members. ✓

BIO

Freddy Osuna has taught combat tracking and visual tracking skills to U.S. and allied militaries as well as federal, state and municipal law enforcement agencies (www.greensidetraining.com). He is the author of Index Tracking- Essential Guide to Trailing Man and Beast (Amethyst Moon, 2012).