

## Tools of the Trade

### Footstep Tracker

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In this month's Tools of the Trade, we'll examine a Footstep Tracker, and no, this is not a fancy pedometer to help you keep track of how many steps you've taken during an investigation, but rather a highly sensitive vibration detection device that is basically the same as a geophone. These types of devices are useful in helping you detect footsteps, movements, and vibrations during an investigation. One device that I personally use can easily detect a slight finger tap from 10' away.

These battery (AA, 9VDC, or rechargeable) operated devices have simple controls which normally consist of a power switch, sensitivity knob, and a series of LEDs to indicate the relative strength of the movement. Some models include a remote sensor allowing you to remove yourself from the area being detected to avoid contamination, although the cable lengths are not very long but can be extended. One common complaint about these devices is that most are visual only (LEDs light up), without any audio based buzz or beeps to get your attention, although some models are audio only without LEDs. If data gathering and validation is important, consider putting a video/audio recording device near the tracker/geophone to record the output for later cross referencing.

This type of device is commonly used for seismic research and oil exploration, and the sensors can be either analog or digital, and can range from a few dollars to thousands of dollars. For paranormal research, the cheaper ones are used but they still provide the cost effectiveness and sensitivity needed for an investigation.

References:

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