

# Stealth Guide By Urban Nokizaru

I'm this guide I'm going to go over different elements of stealth and how to maximize them in your environment. This is a guide for physical stealth, I'm not gonna cover any social stealth or anything like that, pure sneaking. The elements I'm going to go over are:

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## Gear

Gear is important, it can help or hinder you. Pick it depending on what you need to do and where you go. In this guide I'm only going to go over clothes, because there's so much to write about everything else and I don't have the time write now, I might come back and edit this to add more gear.

### Color

The color of your gear should reflect the general color of your environment, or be a color that will work in a variety of environments if that's what you're going to be dealing with. There's one thing I'd like to clear up and that's about the color black.

There's lots of controversy regarding the usage of stealth to sneak around in dark places. Well as a person experienced in stealth I can tell you that if you know what you are doing you can be better off in black in some situations and better off in navy blue or some other dark solid at others it depends. I'm going to tell you about black and how it differs from other colors in terms of stealth and you can choose to wear it or not depending on the situation. First of all black does not blend well with darkness, it will outline you on all but the darkest nights, this is both good and bad, it means you will silhouette much easier but it also means that you can easily become part of the background using a false silhouette, for example by curling up and "becoming" a rock. Black is not a color found in nature, this statement is often used as an argument to not use black but it should be noted that black is a color that is naturally seen at night. This means that it won't look out of place at night next to a tree or next to a dumpster etc. Another thing to remember is that because it doesn't look as too out of place when hit with a light when compared with dark solids like blue or red. However the main reason people argue against black is that it will not blend with darkness, which means that you will have to stick to really dark shadows and solid cover with it on.

Enough about black for now, I'm going to go over some other colors and you can choose for yourselves what to wear. The next big color is dark or navy blue. This is a good general night color for hiding in shadows. Dark blue will work on any dark night but can't stand up to light, because not much in most environments is blue, so while you have dark blue on stick to darkness and solid cover but don't try to blend in with objects unless they are also dark blue or a color close to it.

Brown, this is my personal favorite, it blends well in nature, urban environments and even the dark. Nature is abundant with brown, in the forms of earth, trees, dry plants etc. Urban areas have a lot of red, and brown (in addition to grey and black), a good thing about red is that with a bit of darkness brown will blend with it.

Other dark solids should be used according to environment, such as green in a wooded area or grey in a place with lots of concrete. Something that I don't really get is the use of red as a color for sneaking, apparently back in the day ninja used to wear dark red to hide the fact that they may be bleeding. That's really not going to help you unless you plan on getting into a bunch of fights and hiding the fact that you're hurt.

Camouflage patterns, if they match your environment use them, they work better than any solid you use. Hunting patterns are made specifically for certain types of natural settings but will work better than military camouflage if used in the right place. Military camouflage is more general and can be used in a larger array of places than hunting camouflage, but doesn't work as well in them. The only exception to using camouflage is urban camouflage patterns, they're terrible. They're too bright because they include white, you're better off in brown or grey or something. However I've seen people use urban camouflage pretty well in some snowy areas.

### Footwear

This is a large factor in how much noise you'll make. Footwear is basically a compromise between protection and stealth with some other factors you may want to consider. I'm going to categorize footwear into a few categories; heavy, medium, light and very light.

Heavy stuff is anything along the lines of boots or heavy duty sneakers. These are often the least quiet but will provide the most protection and support. Depending on how heavy they are they can slow you down a bit. If you practice with them some you can move around quietly with them on and still have all the protection benefits.

Medium stuff consists of sneakers and really light low cut boots. They're the middle ground really. More quiet than boots but with less support and protection. These won't slow you down and are generally a good choice.

Light stuff is anything lighter than sneakers, I'm talking about converse, high top tabi, moccasins etc. These are great for stealth but you better not step on any rusty nails because they'll go right through the soles. They won't support your ankles either so make sure you can handle drops or whatever it is you plan on doing that involves the lower parts of your legs.

Very light is anything lighter than the light category. Low top tabi, watershoes, socks, and bare feet. These are as quiet as it gets but in terms of protection you really only have a layer of cloth and your muscles. Great for indoors and places where the ground is very safe or when the utmost silence is required.

However the type of footwear may not be the only thing you need to think about for your sneaking. Color is of course important for hiding. You should also consider grip if you plan on climbing, if it's wet out or if you are going to a place with uneven ground. Also your treads might be an issue, in most cases it won't matter but if there is a standard type of footwear worn by the people that frequent the place you'll sneak into it might help to wear what they wear to leave no suspicious prints.

Choose footwear according to the terrain and any specific actions you plan on taking that may require special footwear.

### Pants

Pants aren't too complicated. You should follow the color guide based on the environment and what is available. You also want your pants to be quiet. There are two ways to have quiet pants, one is break them in the other is to get quiet material. Stay away from reflective pants. Mobility is a leg thing mostly so make sure you have your full range of movement within them. If your pants are too loud because the pant legs are rubbing into each other near the bottom you can do like they did back in Japan, tie your pants above your ankle and below your knee, to keep it from swishing and snagging. Durability is also a big thing, you'll be in all kinds of places and you don't want you pants tearing, get some that can handle some abuse. Besides that just keep them quiet and in colors that will help you sneak around.

### Jackets and Shirt

Jackets should be light, durable, quiet and appropriately colored. You're doing to be running, climbing, crouching in under brush all that so get something that will last. Like footwear you have to choose between durability/protection and stealth/light weight. A jacket is a good place to store your stuff if it has pockets but make sure they have pockets that will close so you don't lose anything. Shirts are for when it's nicer out. You should wear long sleeve regardless of the weather however, because no matter how dark your skin is a bit of sweat will make it as shiny as a new bike. Tightness will affect stealth in terms of both visibility and noise; a tighter shirt or jacket is the quieter it will probably be. However baggier garments will break up your silhouette making you harder to identify as human while hiding. It's your choice how much you want to be invisible and how much you want to be silent. Something I do is wear a jacket on top of a shirt, the jacket is big but the shirt is tight, I switch between the two, and I can take the jacket off if I need to go through a small hole.

### Headgear

This isn't an essential but it'll help a lot. If you have blond hair and you aren't sneaking through a wheat field or a desert than you should probably throw on a hat. Head gear should either hold back hair or somehow increase stealth if not both. There are all kinds of things to put on your head, just make sure it will break up your outline, is a color that will help you stay invisible or serves some other purpose. If you have dark short hair you probably don't need a hat.

## Movement

There are so many ways to move stealthily it's ridiculous, every culture has some form of stealth movement. I'm going to go over some walking from Japan and some movement that's common in western society. I'm covering some walking techniques which aim for quiet movement and some crawling which are used to move unseen. Like so many other aspects of stealth movement is a compromise between being unseen and unheard, choose wisely depending on the situation.

### Walking

Walking is usually about being quiet. You use this to sneak around in places where invisibility might not be too important or when there is enough general cover to move upright with out much risk.

Walking is also usually faster than crawling so if time is important walking may be the way to go.

When walking avoid bobbing, stay on the same height level throughout. I'll begin with the ninjutsu techniques.

#### Yoko Aruki

This is a Japanese ninja walking method. It is for moving alongside walls and going through narrow areas quickly. To perform this align the hips with the intended direction of travel. Keeping both legs slightly bent lift the back leg and bring it over and in front of your front leg. Place the outside of the ball of the foot down first then the rest. Shift the weight on the the crossed over back leg. Lift your other leg and put it to the outside of the back leg placing the foot the same way as before. You should be standing normally again. Repeat this. This method should seem similar to a crab moving sideways.

#### Ko Ashi

Ninja used this technique to walk through places with lots of underbrush, it can also be used anywhere that has lots of loud things on the ground or where you need to watch your feet. It's based on the movement of a crane as it picks it's way along. Stand with the weight on one leg. Lift the other leg straight up, with the toes coming up last. Move it forward and place it down in a quiet spot, let the ball of the foot touch first then flatten out the foot and repeat the process.

#### Nuki Ashi

This ninja technique is good for walking in low visibility and need to feel around or go very quietly while sacrificing speed. Stand in a low crouch. Put all the weight on one leg and move the other leg straight past it, passing the ankle with the heel then moving the leg out sideways to place the foot on the ground. Like the two previous walking methods place the ball of the foot and then the rest of the foot. However before placing the foot use it to feel around and make sure that nothing that will make noise. Shift the weight forward slowly keeping wary of creaking floors and snapping twigs etc. Once a step is complete do the same with the rear leg. This technique should resemble an octopus feeling its way around with its tentacles.

#### Crouch Walk

The crouch walk is a high speed, low walking method to get places quickly, its louder but also faster. Assume a low forward crouching position. Keep the knees slightly bend and move from the hip with the knee remaining loose to avoid rigidity. Walk from this position landing heel first and rolling onto the entire foot and then fluidly continue into the next step forward. The weight should be on both legs and constantly moving forward.

### Crawling

Crawling is often overlooked. It shouldn't be, it's very useful and should be in any sneaky persons bag of tricks. Crawling creates almost no silhouette, is hard to see from even a few meters away and can even be done quietly if the situation and time allows. I'm going to cover crawling methods from various sources including western military, parkour, and Native American scouting.

### Quadrupedal Movement (QM)

QM is a method of movement commonly seen put to use by traceurs and traceuse (people who do parkour). It is quick and easy to do. Get into a push up position and move alternate arms and legs forward at the same time. The balls of the feet are used to push as the palms to pull. The movement is quick and fluid. Watching a few parkour videos will usually turn up a few good examples just search "parkour quadrupedal movement" and you're bound to find something.

### High Crawl

The high crawl is your standard hands and knees crawl from when you were a kid. It's that simple, be sure to stay level. Crawling this way is relatively fast and allows you to move loud debris and obstacles out of the way with your hands.

### Low Crawl

This is the standard infantry soldiers low crawl, snipers use a different type (if I'm not mistaken). This crawl takes you closer to the ground than the high crawl and is slower. The body is held up on the elbows and the insides of the knees. Use alternate knees and elbows to move. This low crawling is great for places with little cover.

### Scout Crawl

This Native American method of movement is the slowest of the crawls shown in this guide but it is definitely the quietest and the lowest to the ground. Lay completely flat on the ground on your stomach. Using the hands and the toes and balls of the feet lift the body just high enough that it won't drag and scrape on the ground, pushing with the toes and hands move the body a few inches forward and return to the ground, rinse repeat. This is ideal for crawling with very little or no cover as it silhouettes the least.

## Hiding

Hiding is an important skill to anyone whose aim is to remain undetected. Hiding effectively is based on many factors and can be achieved in a variety of ways. Ninja divided hiding and distraction techniques into five categories each one an element from the Chinese element system. However before I go over the five styles of hiding I'm going to cover general hiding concepts in general.

### General Concepts

Hiding usually works best when you follow as many conceptual guidelines as possible. Here's some concepts to keep in mind when trying to vanish.

#### Shape

The human shape is very recognizable, the head and shoulders and the "Vs" of the body (elbows, armpits, crotch etc) especially. Why do soldiers attach leaves to themselves, it's not just to blend in it also helps distort their shape, making them harder to recognize as people.

#### Silhouette

This has a lot to do with shape. Silhouetting is when you outline yourself against a background. An example is walking in from of a light source. Silhouetting should be prevented by making sure you can match the background or move above or below it. Wearing colors that are too dark or light will make you silhouette so dress for the occasion.

#### Size

This one is easy, the bigger something is the easier it is to see and vice versa.

#### Spacing

This is for groups, make sure there's room between people. This is helpful for a few reasons, in war

zones is makes ambushes more difficult, in general if one person is seen and the others are close by they are more likely to be spotted, also moving as a compact group is louder and easier to spot.

### Shine

Avoid shiny things really. They reflect light and often things that shine also clink and that's not good. Not just jewelry and watches though, skin shines (especially oily or sweaty skin), some clothes shine, shoes at times. Make sure you're not shiny and the things with aren't shiny.

### Speed

Ever see movement out of the corner of your eye, it probably wasn't a slow moving turtle. Fast movement draws attention, moving slowly is more stealthy and less likely to be noticed. When you can afford to slow down your movement when at risk of being seen.

### Five Elements

The five elements are; earth, water, fire, wood, and metal. Each has it's own ups and downs in terms of techniques. Practice and you'll know when to use which element when it's appropriate.

### Earth

This includes all hiding that involves the ground; foxholes tunnels, and just going prone. It's all ground related, any type of ground blending also counts as earth. Earth methods are great to prevent silhouetting because they're usually low and simple.

### Water

This one is tricky, often it's best not to hide in water, here's why: it's cold, it's transparent and it ripples when still. Water is great as a means of stealthy movement however. An easy way to hide with water is to grab some dead plants and float beneath the surface with the plants floating above you. A ninja classic is to stay under water with a reed or camouflaged breathing tube.

### Fire

Fire is great as a distraction. Other than distraction fire is strange in terms of hiding, it's best to use the light of fire to help you more than the fire itself in terms of stealth. Draw attention to fire to break down someone's night vision for example.

### Wood

This category is all about plants. It's often the most common in rural settings. Attaching branches to yourself, laying in bushes or tall grass and climbing trees all fall under the wood style of hiding. It's pretty easy as long as there are plants around. Camouflage really helps with wood hiding.

### Metal

Metal is often dealt with in urban settings such as using the cover of cars, and buildings. It can really useful to contort the body for metal hiding, some examples could be imitating a human statue or fitting into ventilation.

### Miscellaneous Concepts

Below are a few concepts that will help with situational or general hiding.

Height: Staying away from eye level spots will help you out a lot. Hide up high or down low if you can, people don't really look up or down unless their attention is drawn there.

Cornering yourself: Don't hide in a dead end alley, on top of an unattached roof or in a tree unless you are relatively sure you won't be found or you have a good escape route (or you're prepared to confront people).

Stillness: Stay still until you are sure you have been seen and noticed. Moving prematurely will give you away even if you haven't been seen but freezing and waiting will often keep you invisible.

Shadows and Mirrors: These can betray you around corners and in positions where you would otherwise be concealed. Be aware of your shadow and surroundings.

Windows and Light: Windows to lit rooms will be very hard to see out of for anyone in the room if it's darker outside than it is inside.

Bright Lights: Hiding behind or just outside the range of a bright light is a great idea because the light will hamper night vision making the nearby shadows seem deeper.

Unconventionality: Being in places where people don't even think of looking is one of the best places to hide, it's risky at times (hiding on an open field) but usually works if done right.

Spotlights: Be still when they move and move while they are still (as long as you aren't in the beam).