What telescope is best for me?

1. Consider trying binoculars first.
   - Easy to use, easy to store, ultra-portable.
   - Can see large sections of the sky at once.
   - Can use them for daytime activities.

2. Before you buy a telescope, ask yourself these questions...
   - How well do you know the night sky? Finding objects is not easy without practice. A quality "go-to" computerized telescope is costly and its operation must be mastered.
   - How hard is the scope to assemble? If it is too complicated, you won't use it.
   - Where will you do most of your observing? A city resident will likely need to cart it to a dark site.
   - Where do you think you'll be in the hobby in three years? If you really like astronomy, you'll outgrow a small scope in six months.
   - Will you eventually pursue astrophotography? You'll need a sturdy, motor driven mount that tracks accurately.

3. Telescope Diameter Dilemma
   Since most sky objects are relatively dim, a telescope needs to gather large amounts of light. Therefore, larger diameter telescopes are better than smaller ones. However, they are also bulkier – and less likely to make it outside in cold weather!

4. Telescope and observing tips:
   - Magnification – low power is used for most objects.
   - Finder scope – a small one is nearly useless.
   - The larger the telescope's diameter, the better views it gives, but the less portable it is.
   - If the scope has poor optics or a wobbly mount, it will be frustrating to use. Hence, it won't be used.
   - Finding celestial objects requires practice and patience.
   - Never point the telescope at the sun without the proper filter installed ON THE FRONT of the scope.
   - Don't expect what you see in the eyepiece to closely resemble what you see in photographs.

5. Visit your local amateur astronomy club!
   - You can see and try the various sizes and types of telescopes.
   - Some clubs have programs for lending telescopes.
   - Members will be happy to guide you through the scope selection process.

An excellent size is 10 x 50:
10 = magnification
50 = the diameter in millimeters of the front lens.

Common Telescope Designs

**Reflector**
- Easy to use
- Least expensive scope design
- Great for clusters, nebulae, and galaxies
- Can be bulky
- Generally not suitable for astroimaging

**Refractor**
- Easy to use
- Tend to be costly
- Not suitable for dim objects
- Can be used for astroimaging
- Great for the moon and planets

**Schmidt-Cassegrain**
- Portable, but heavy
- Tend to be costly
- Suitable for astroimaging
- All purpose scope

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