

Active Animals: Penguin Play

Penguins move in all sorts of ways! They swim, hop, jump, waddle, and more. Find an open space indoors or outdoors and play like a penguin with the active animal exercises below.

How does a penguin swim?

Penguins may be birds that don't fly on land, but they can definitely fly underwater! To steer in the water while swimming, penguins have to bend their tail and flippers. Gentoo penguins can swim at speeds up to 22 miles per hour and they can stay underwater for up to seven minutes! When they are ready to jump out of the water, penguins swim very fast and then launch out of the water and onto the ice.

Now You Try!

Try moving your arms like they are penguin flippers and move them up and down and try swimming around and steering. Once you've got that mastered practice jumping up like you would if you were a penguin jumping onto some ice!



How does a penguin walk?

Once penguins jump ashore, they have to walk on land, but a penguin's skeleton is very different from humans. Penguins do have knees, but unlike our knees, theirs are higher than their hips (like when we crouch or squat). This skeletal system causes them to then waddle as they walk, but each penguin has a different style. Emperor penguins have short legs and take small steps as they walk slowly. They may even point their beaks and eyes downward slightly as they walk. Other penguins, like Gentoos, can walk much faster. Their legs may also be short, but they can run almost as fast as a person! They hold their wings out for balance and run back and forth from their nests. Rockhopper penguins hold both feet together and hop from rock to rock up steep hills.

Now You Try!

Walking like a penguin means your knees must be above your hips so they best way to demonstrate this is to try walking while in a squat! Watch [this video](#) from when our friend, Michelle visited Fox 13 to see a demonstration!

Challenge! Try to pass an object from one person's feet to another's without dropping it to see what it's like as penguins take turns to exchange roles while caring for an egg.

Discussion: As you try different styles of moving like a penguin, are there styles that make you more tired than others?



How does a penguin talk?

Penguins are very vocal species, and if they are wanting to communicate, they can make an “Ecstatic Call”. The penguin will raise up, pump their chest, point their bill with a stretched neck to the air, move their flippers up and down, and then call. Each single penguin has a specific voice so they are able to recognize and locate their partner or chick, even among thousands of others birds in the colony. To hear this call for yourself, check out [this video](#) of one of our Gentoo penguins making an Ecstatic Call!

Now You Try!

It’s been described as a combination of a trill and a honk. The best way to replicate it as humans is to make a bray-ing sound like a donkey and combine it with a honk from a goose. If you have someone to try this with, take turns trying each noise at the same time!

Did you know? The aquarium attempted to break a world record with as many people in one area to make a penguin sound back in 2017! See our [video here](#).

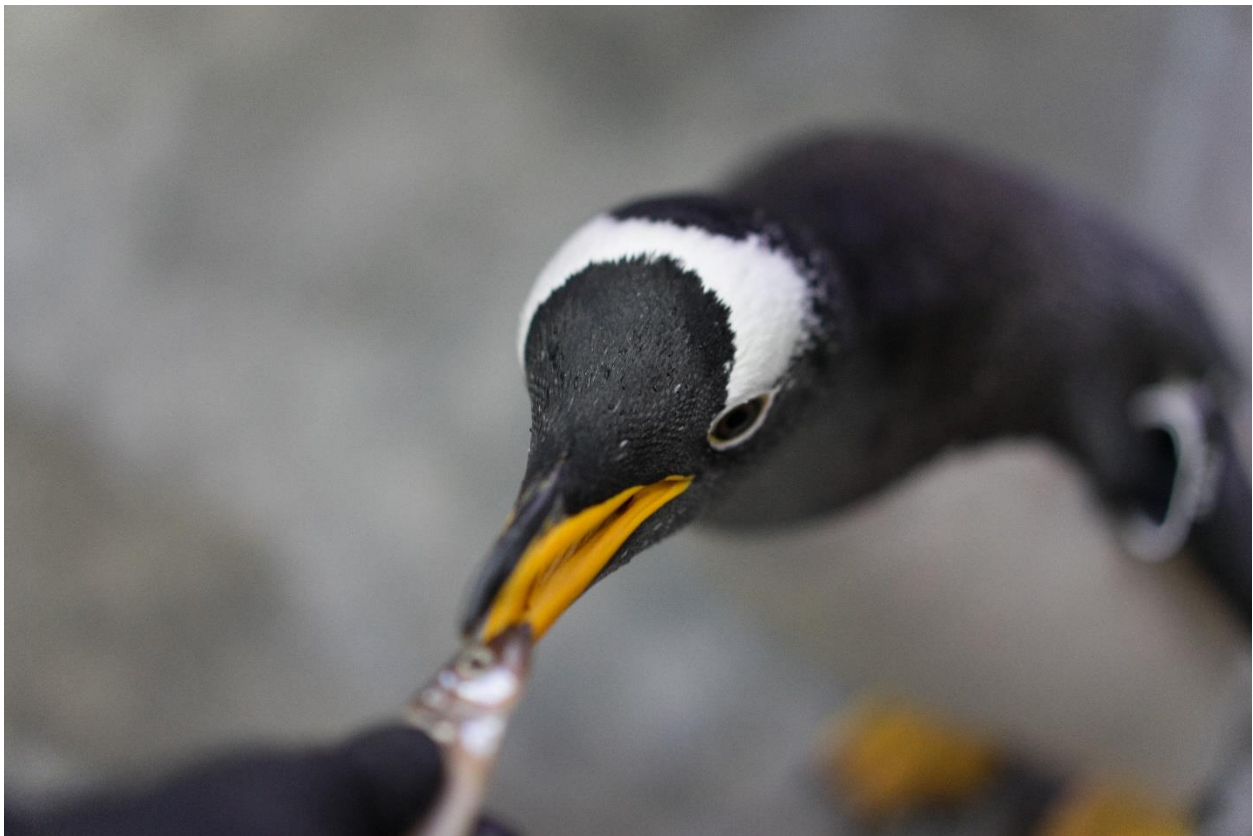


What does a penguin eat?

Penguins can eat up to 10% of their body weight every single day. (That's equivalent to an adult human eating 85 hamburgers every day!) When penguins are molting or feeding chicks, their food intake will increase up to 40% of their body weight! While avoiding predators like killer whales, penguins hunt for multiple types of fish, squid, and krill to keep them full.

Now you try!

Killer whales move their tails up and down so hook your thumbs together so your hands look like a whale tail and move them up and down. Now, move your hands side to side like a fish! Lastly, to move like krill lie on your back and kick your legs and wave your arms in the air.



Reflection:

- Do you have a favorite animal that you moved like during this activity?
- Do you know of any other animals that might interact with penguins and how they would move?