“To the eye,[the 60 satellites appear as a "moving train"](https://youtu.be/ytUygPqjXEc) of moderately faint stars … generally in the magnitude +4 to +5 range, although some observers have reported that a few of the satellites in the train have appeared brighter than this. A magnitude of +6 is generally considered to be the threshold of naked eye visibility under a dark, clear sky.

**“Related:**[**Magnitude: The Sky Brightness Scale Explained**](https://www.space.com/21640-star-luminosity-and-magnitude.html)

“Initially, the satellites were seen to be stretched out in a straight line measuring roughly 5 to 8 degrees in apparent length. Your clenched fist held at arm's length is roughly equivalent to 10 degrees, so the satellite train currently measures roughly just less than a fist in length as it moves across the sky.

“With time, however, as the satellites revolve around Earth at 90 minute intervals, they should appear less "bunched" together and may actually get a bit fainter as they are slowly raised to their operational orbits of 342 miles (550 km).”

# Source: Rao, Joe, “How to See SpaceX's Starlink Satellite 'Train' in the Night Sky,” Space.com, 26 May 2019.

In any case, the Starlink satellites shouldn’t be bunched up for long. SpaceX’s plan calls for each satellite to raise its orbit from the deployment altitude of 440 kilometers (273 miles) to the operational altitude of 550 kilometers (342 miles). That happens on a timed basis, every 90 minutes. The idea is that as each satellite raises its orbit,[it lags behind the rest of the chain](https://twitter.com/John_Gardi/status/1132325776081207296).

Within just a few days, the tightly spaced “train” will turn into a dispersed chain that girdles the globe. And once that happens, chances are that skywatchers and sky-worriers alike will turn their attention to the next batch of Starlink satellites…

As the satellites disperse and reorient their solar arrays, they become less visible. I finally got a chance to see the remnants of the Starlink train on Monday morning, thanks to clearing skies over the Seattle area. Through a binoculars, I could make out four bright points of light and a smattering of lesser lights, proceeding eastward as predicted by the [Calsky](https://www.calsky.com/csephem.cgi?&object=Satellite&number=99201), [N2YO](https://www.n2yo.com/passes/?s=74001) and [CMDR2](http://me.cmdr2.org/starlink/) websites. Keep checking these and other satellite-tracking sites for future sighting opportunities.

# Source: Boyle, Alan, “Sightings of SpaceX’s Starlink satellites spark awe – and astronomical angst,” GeekWire, 25 May 2019.