

Name _____



How Koalas Move: Climbing Masters

Koalas are excellent climbers, but they do not fly, swim, or run fast like some other animals. These marsupials move mainly by climbing trees and slowly walking on the ground when necessary. Their strong legs, sharp claws, and padded paws make them well-suited for life in the trees.

Koalas spend most of their time high up in eucalyptus trees, which provide both food and shelter. To move between branches, they use their sharp claws to grip the bark and their strong limbs to pull themselves up. Koalas have two thumbs on each front paw, which helps them hold onto branches securely. Their hind legs also have rough pads and sharp claws for better climbing grip.

On the ground, koalas move much slower. They can walk with a wobbly gait and, when needed, can run in short bursts of up to 10 miles per hour. However, koalas prefer to stay in the safety of the trees where they feel most comfortable and protected from predators.

One special technique koalas use when moving is "bridging." Bridging is when a koala reaches across a gap between trees, using their body and limbs to span the distance. If the gap is too wide, koalas will carefully climb down one tree and walk across the ground to the next.

Koalas conserve energy by moving slowly and resting for up to 18-20 hours a day. Since eucalyptus leaves provide little energy, their movement remains limited and deliberate. These calm climbers have adapted perfectly to life in the treetops of Australia's forests.

