

Name _____



How Does an Otter Move?

Otters are excellent movers, both on land and in the water. Their unique body design allows them to swim quickly, run efficiently, and even climb when necessary. While they don't fly, their movements are graceful and well-adapted to their environments.

Swimming

Otters are most famous for their swimming skills. They are built for life in the water, with long, sleek bodies and powerful tails. Their webbed feet act like paddles, helping them move through the water with ease. River otters can swim at speeds of up to 7 miles per hour, while sea otters tend to float and paddle rather than swim quickly. Otters can also hold their breath for several minutes, which helps them dive to hunt for food like fish and crabs.

Otters use a special swimming technique called undulation. This means they move their bodies in a wave-like motion, pushing themselves forward with their tails and feet. Their fur, which is thick and waterproof, helps them glide smoothly through the water.

Moving on Land

On land, otters may look a bit clumsy compared to their elegant swimming. However, they can still move surprisingly fast when they need to. River otters, for example, can run at speeds of up to 15 miles per hour in short bursts. They use their strong legs and sharp claws to climb over rocks or up riverbanks.

Otters also enjoy sliding on mud or snow. This playful behavior isn't just for fun—it's also an energy-efficient way for them to move downhill or get into the water quickly.

Special Features

Otters are uniquely designed for their environment. Their webbed feet and long tails make them powerful swimmers, while their sharp claws help them grip surfaces on land. Their thick fur not only keeps them warm but also reduces drag in the water, making their movements even more efficient.

Whether they're swimming gracefully underwater or sliding on a muddy hill, otters are well-adapted to their habitats. Their speed, agility, and special techniques help them stay safe and catch the food they need to survive.

