

Regardless of the difficulty of the course you are completing, you should always have a plan. I've found that my navigation is far more consistent and with minimal mistakes, if I use the same system on every course that I complete.

The Coaching Page has been in recess for a little while because I've been away, so I thought that I would take the opportunity to go right back to basics for navigation and put the list in a vague order getting progressively more difficult.

Section 1 Basics

1. Map Orientation.

Make sure you are holding the map the same way as the ground features. This means if there is a large hill to your left and a paddock to your right on the ground, then the corresponding hill and paddock are on the left and right of where you are on the map.

You can do this using the ground features as described above, or by using the compass. All you need to do when using the compass is to turn the map so that the magnetic north lines on the map run the same way as the floating north needle in the compass and that the red end of the needle matches the magnetic north arrows on the map. Holding the map and compass in same hand is recommended.

2. Map Folding.

This is often over looked by people but is essential for a smooth run. It is good to have your map folded so that you can get your thumb on to the place that you are located. Try to devise a system that complements the way you hold the map and compass

3. Thumb on the Map

Have some means of keeping your location in view on the map...compass edge, thumb etc.

4. Relating the Map to the Ground

This means looking at all the features around you and seeing if you can pick them up on the map and vice versa. Try to do this as often as you can without wasting time. Beware of relating parallel features, which look like the ones on the map but are actually somewhere else.

5. Have a System

Have a system that you apply to every leg.

- Control
- Attack Point
- Route choice to get there
- Exit direction

6. Handrails

These are an essential part of any route. It is worth going a bit out of your way to follow them for basic and intermediate level orienteering. They can be tracks, edge of vegetation, mapped fences, streams, clearings etc. You can also link point features together to make a line.

- easy line features to lead you on your route (A)
- can be lines (eg track) or points linked together (B)

