
USING A COMPASS TO SET THE MAP

The magnetic needle on our compass always **points North/South (usually red to North)**

The map is orientated when the needle and the magnetic North lines on our maps are pointing the same way.

Orienteers use a compass to help:

- Set the map to the surroundings
- Find the direction, or bearing in which you wish to travel
- Check the direction of linear features such as tracks, fences, ridges and watercourses.

Set the map to the surroundings:

1. Hold the map and compass together in front of you, usually in the left hand.
2. Use the other hand to steady them at first if you wish.
3. Notice that you can turn the map around so that the magnetic needle and the magnetic North lines are pointing in the same direction.
4. The map is now orientated.
5. You can place it on the ground in front of you and step around the map. If you know where you are on the map, the features on the map will match those on the ground in any direction you choose to look.

Find the direction of travel:

1. Fold the map about 5cm parallel to the line of direction you wish to take. This makes it easy to hold the map and compass together in one hand. Place the edge of the compass along the line of travel on the map.
2. Hold them firmly together in front of you at waist height, parallel to the ground. Make sure the compass edge, or line of travel, is pointing straight in front of you, at a 90% angle to your waist.
3. Use your feet to turn your body around until the magnetic North needle and lines are parallel. You should now be facing the direction in which you wish to travel.
4. Lift your arm and point out an object in front of you and move towards it. You can recheck the bearing every 1-200 metres.

Check the direction of linear features:

- As it is difficult to follow a bearing with 100% accuracy over any distance with a hand held compass, orienteers use linear features such as tracks, fences or terrain features, to find their route from one control to the next.
- Face the direction that the track or other linear feature is going on the ground. Hold your map and compass together as above, with the edge of the compass along the line on the map that you are checking. If you are on the correct linear feature, the magnetic needle and North arrows will line up.