

I am writing this after returning home from the first Coaching day for this year. A small number of participants allowed for some one-on-one instruction.

Early in the year is the time to focus clearly on correct navigation technique. The really competitive orienteers amongst us will be gearing up for the Australian 3 Day Event. Remember to not only work on improving fitness, but also to practice navigational techniques.

Techniques Revisited

Leg Analysis

Look at the leg to be attempted, the first thing to look for should be the 'attack point' to lead you to the control. Then you decide on your route choice, and use your navigational skills to get you there, remembering that you may need to use a combination of skills as you progress through the leg.

Attack Points.

Moderate or hard navigational courses rarely have controls on or near linear features. Orienteers can use major features near the control to simplify the navigation.

Thumbing the Map

Helps the orienteer keep in contact with where they are on the map. Remember to keep the map oriented.

Contouring.

To save energy always try to avoid route choices that take you uphill, and then downhill, when you could have remained on the same altitude.

Aiming Off

Aiming off can be used when navigating towards a linear feature at right angles to the direction of travel. If there is a control point or attack point on the feature, the orienteer can take a bearing to either the right or left of the control so that when the linear feature is reached the orienteer knows which way to turn.

Use of Catching features

Catching features can also be used during the course, rough navigating quickly to a large linear feature that will be passed on the way to the control.

Distance estimation.

It is often important to know how far you have gone. Some people do it by judging the distance as they go; others by counting the number of paces taken.

Route Choice.

Route Choice is deciding which is the fastest way for you to get from one control to another.

This can be simple—around the paths or straight, over the hills or round; but is often complicated by the variety in terrain. The secret is to choose a route that allows you to navigate to the attack point, and but to stay in contact with the map.

The important thing is to make a calm decision and then to execute the route well.

— Geoff Todkill

On this page is some 'armchair orienteering' to help practice your technique. (Map borrowed from Orienteering Techniques— Bertil Norman and Arne Yngstrom.)

Draw in the your route choice, and write in what skills you will be using at certain points along each leg.

