

Chiltern 20 Navigation top tips

- **Switch on!**

Navigation is all about gathering evidence to prove where you are and having a strategy for getting to where you want to go. Being 'switched on' means checking your position regularly and is the most important tool in navigation.

- **Have the right kit**

A compass with a long baseplate and a romer is best. Silva type 4 is a good example, although cheaper versions are ok. If possible use a laminated map with a permanent marker – this saves having to fold the map into the confines of a mapcase.

- **Practice plotting grid references**

At the start of the event you get two minutes to plot the checkpoints using six figure grid references. Practice this with your groups beforehand; making it into a competition can help create some pressure, which you will definitely feel on the day of the event!

- **Know how to take a compass bearing**

Keep checking you're going in the right direction with a quick bearing. It only takes 10 seconds and is good evidence that you're on the right track. County Mountaineering team events are a great place to learn how to do this.

- **Use tick off features**

As you go along, keep asking yourself 'what will I pass next?' For example, if you think you should be in a wood and you're not- **stop and recheck!**

- **Have a method of measuring distances**

There are various methods of doing this. A simple one is to work out roughly how fast you walk (a practice hike is a good time to do this). For example, if you walk at 4km an hour and you need to go 1km until a checkpoint, then if you can't see the checkpoint after 15 minutes-**stop and recheck**.

- **Have a reliable Timing Device**

This could be a phone – so long as its battery will last the whole day – better still a watch. Keep checking on time – because it's no good knowing what speed you walk at if you don't know when you started.

- **Know what map symbols mean**

This is easy to do as they are shown in the key on OS maps. The OS website is also a good resource for all things to do with navigation.

- **Don't spend ages at checkpoints**

This is a simple way to really cut your finish time. Spending ten minutes at six checkpoints will add an extra **hour to your time**. That could be the difference between coming 1st or 21st!!

- **Summary**

From the above think about each navigational 'leg' in terms of **The 3 D's: Description** (What are you going to see), **Distance** (How long will it take) **Direction** (What is the basic direction of travel).

The County Activities Team run navigation events specifically designed for the Chiltern 20/ Southern 50. Contact us at asa.kitchiner@gmail.com or see our ads in North Circular.