

Map & Compass

Practical skills

Taking a bearing and following it, in the order the steps actually happen.

The one skill that works with no battery and no signal.

1

Orient the map

Turn it until its north lines match the compass needle. The map now matches the ground.

2

Take a bearing

Edge of the compass from where you are to where you are going, direction-of-travel arrow forward.

3

Set the housing

Rotate until the housing's north lines sit parallel with the map's grid north.

4

Adjust for declination

Grid north and magnetic north differ; the map margin gives the local value and the year.

5

Walk it

Hold the compass level, turn your body until the needle sits in the arrow, walk toward a landmark on that line.

TWO RULES THAT PREVENT MOST ERRORS

Red in the shed — the red needle inside the orienting arrow
Aim for a visible landmark, walk to it, re-take the bearing

Metal and phones deflect the needle. Take the reading away from both.