

Compass Basics

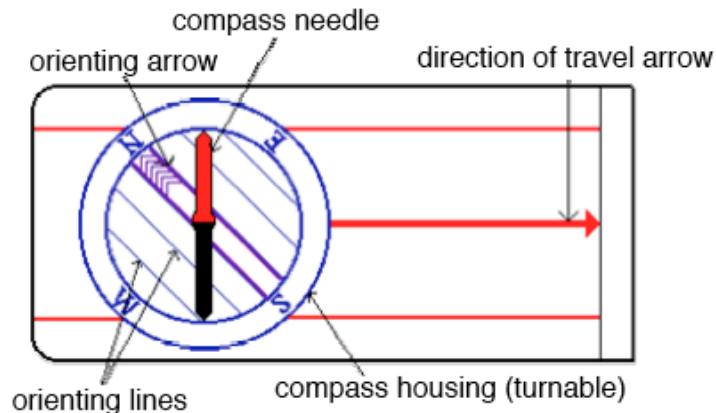


Figure 1: A basic Orienteering Compass

Finding North

1. The RED end of the compass needle always points north.
2. Turn the compass housing until the "N" lines up with the direction of travel arrow.
3. Hold the compass FLAT in front of you (parallel to the ground) at about waist level. The direction of travel arrow should be pointing in the direction you are facing.
4. Slowly rotate your entire body until the RED end of the compass needle lines up with the "N" on the compass housing and the direction of travel arrow.
5. You are now facing north! The direction of travel arrow is pointing at an object directly north of your current position. Fix this object in your sight, then put your compass away, and walk to the object you "sighted" on.

Following a Given Bearing

1. The general procedure is the same as described above for "Finding North".
2. Turn the compass housing until the bearing you are following is lined up with the direction of travel arrow. (e.g. 220°)
3. Follow steps 3-5 above.

Finding a Bearing (for setting a trail)

1. Stand at your starting point, with the compass FLAT in front of you at about waist height.
2. Slowly rotate your entire body until the direction of travel arrow is pointing at the next point on your trail.
3. Hold the compass steady, and turn the compass housing until the RED end of the compass needle lines up with the "N" on the compass housing.
4. The bearing (angle) to your next point will be the number that is lined up with the direction of travel arrow.





For More Information

Websites:

Orienteering for Kids – <http://www.us.orienteering.org/OYoung/>

Great Outdoor Recreation pages – <http://www.gorp.com>

Mountain Equipment Co-Op – <http://www.mec.ca>

How to Use a Compass – <http://www.learn-orienteering.org/old>

Links to Camping & Outdoor Resources – <http://www.camping.about.com>

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