

Orienteering Level 3

Advanced Techniques

Advanced Techniques

The first 2 levels have dealt with basic and intermediate techniques and the section moves on to more advanced techniques.

With some techniques it is hard to fit them into a difficulty category as they span across all the categories at different levels. Some of the ones described here may be very useful when used at a lower level of technical difficulty and some of them may be too much for the average red course orienteer to carry in their head until they have had time to practice. One technique which is often overlooked is that of reading the control codes and descriptions accurately and in detail. This is a must at all levels as it saves disappointing disqualification, unnecessary misreading errors and helps you to find the flag quickly once the feature has been located.

The important thing is that you decide which techniques are best to include in your tool kit and make sure that you understand them all and can apply them all in the real situation. As you get more confident and automatic with those techniques you can add to your tool kit by reading up on, talking about and practicing new ones. These techniques need to be practiced. Too many orienteers spend every event racing and not enough time practicing skills. You should either get out to a map for extra training, or use some events as practice time. Try choosing two techniques to practice at each event.

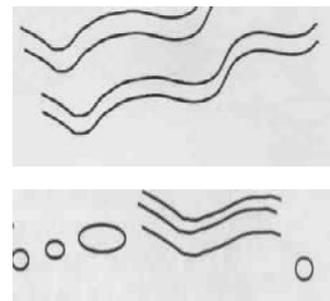
The next thing to remember is that although you may have a huge repertoire of techniques and skills, you may actually forget to apply them. You have to take responsibility for making sure that you do apply the techniques. If you do apply all these techniques all through the race, then your chances of a clean run are ten times higher than if you don't. It's worth taking 5 seconds to apply a technique in order to save 5 minutes of mistakes, especially if the consequences of not applying techniques (ie time loss) is happening at every control!

1. Observation in the broadest sense

- Many orienteers observe what is immediately around them but miss out on looking further afield. Look further away to see ridges and valleys, vegetation changes and other features
- Look behind you as well as to left, right and straight ahead

2. Linking points or contour features together to make handrails

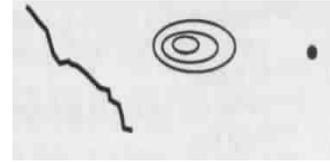
- Form "leading lines " to guide you on your route
- Try to follow "lines of least resistance" through the terrain eg terraces along slopes etc



- Link point features together to make a handrail
- Use edges of slopes, long valleys or ridges as handrails

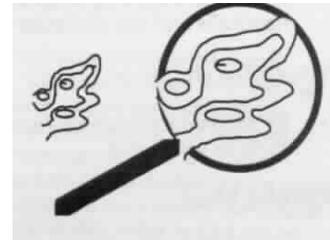
3. Simplification

- Break a route down to key points and don't read the detail until after the attack point allows you to shorten the length of time you look at the map for



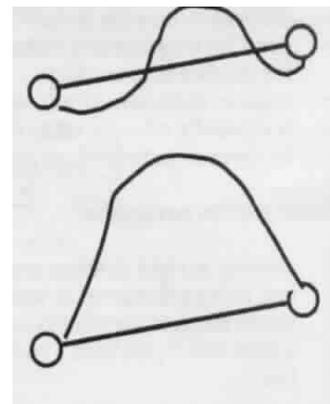
4. Magnification

- Magnify control circle in your mind
- Magnifiers on compasses are not just for crumbles



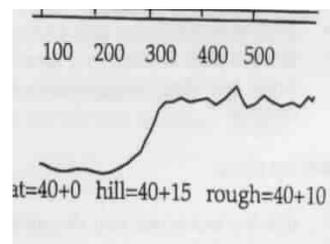
5. Route choice

- Always look at route to attack point
- Consider quality and size of attack point
- Practice this in armchair or running training settings
- Rule of thumb: going across the line between controls twice means long route
- Going more than half the leg distance to the side of the line is only faster if more direct route is big hill or fight
- Choose a route that allows for your strengths and weaknesses i.e. hill vs. flat
- Choose a route that compliments the stage of the course you are at, i.e. you may choose a safer option to no.1 than to no.5



6. Distance judgment

- You should know what 200m, 100m, and 50m looks like in different terrain and what it feels like to run in different terrain and on a track
- You should be able to estimate how far features are away from you just by looking at them
- Pacing is under rated and has its value if you practice it
- Counting double paces is easier
- Recommend pace in blocks of 100m and adjust as you go if you use it, i.e. flat=40 + 0, hill=40 + 15, rough=40 + 10 Know your 100m pace for tracks, flat terrain, rough terrain and hills. Pace the base 100m (i.e. 40 paces then add on 5, 10 15 or whatever depending



on that terrain. That way you can adjust as you go along and you are actually sensing the distance as well.) Never measure off a distance in paces i.e. 320 paces to the next control, this is hard to adjust

- Never use pacing in isolation, read the map too.
- It is an ideal back up in areas with few handrails and lots of similar features

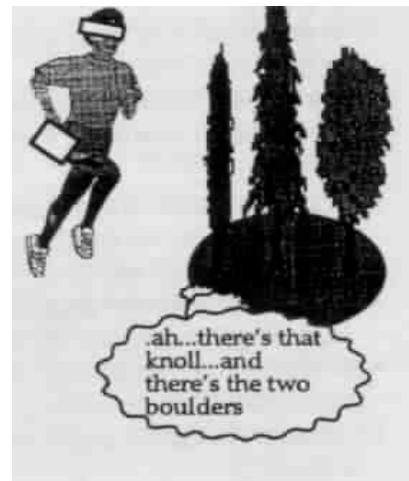
7. Visualizing circle

- Try to have a picture of the control circle in your head



8. Running blind

- Go hard knowing direction and distance to hit a big feature
- Good for long legs as it reduces need for detailed map reading
- Requires confidence in relocation skills
- Is especially effective when backed up by distance judgment or pacing

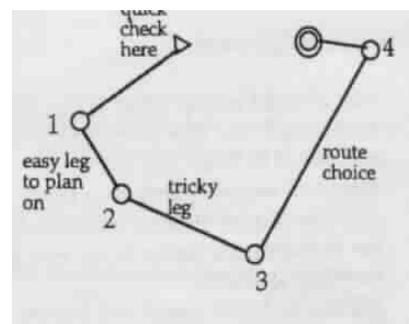


9. Retrospective navigation

- Running in right direction and distance and picking things up as you go
- Worth doing in certain terrain types
- Works well if you have a backup plan too

10. Planning ahead

- Check out course at start for tricky or long legs
- Do while on easy legs
- Look at route choice legs early
- Always plan at least your next attack point and check compass while exiting control

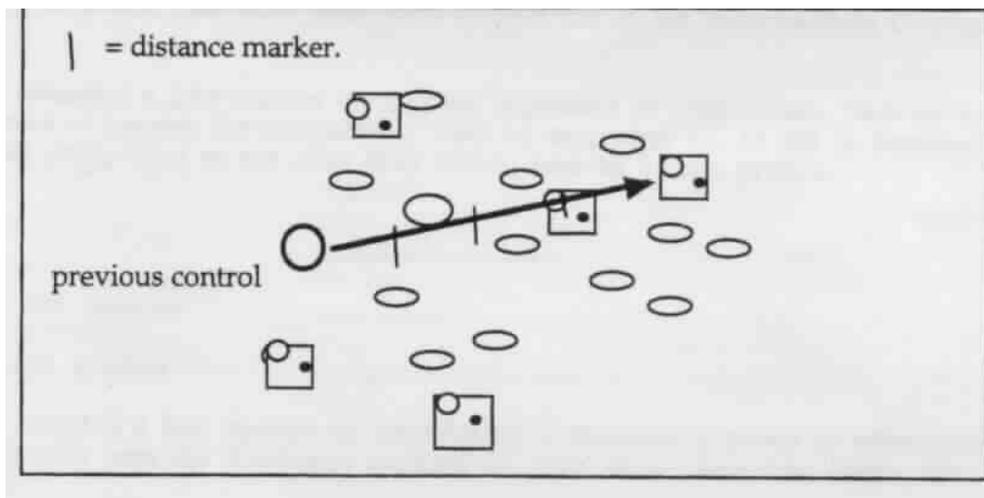


11. Back up plans

- This is a technique you should think about when the others have been practised! It involves you in actually orienteering by intuition (which many people do anyway) but you have a "technical backup" going on in your head, eg you are just running along a ridge looking for a double spur on the left, but in your head you know the direction of the

ridge and spur, how far along it should be, what you will see if you go too far, what you might see before the spur and which ridge you might be on if you don't see the spur and have made a parallel error!

- Its a matter of being able to use as many techniques as possible to back up your position on the map. This means that if something looks different from how you expected it to on the map, you still know that it is the feature you think because you know how far you have come and in which direction and you saw an open area about 200m to your right while half way along the leg which could only have been one particular place.
- The most widely applied back up plan is to know your distance and direction from your last known feature. This can be done with pacing and compass. In the diagram below you could lose contact with the knolls and could actually relocate at any of the double knoll features marked with a square. However, if you are sure of your compass direction this narrows the option down to two of the double knolls and if you know your distance this narrows it down to only one of the double knolls. This is a great confidence booster and also helps to pick up on mistakes before they get too big



GOOD LUCK!

That's all for this level. Hopefully you have already been out there practicing and will put it all into action during up and coming events.