

BEYOND THE BASICS: AIMING OFF

Aiming off is a technique used in conjunction with catching features. It involves deliberately aiming to one side or the other of the straight line you wish to follow, so that when you arrive at your catching feature you know which way to turn.

WHY to aim off:

1. You can move faster because you are running for a long feature rather than a point.
2. You can run more confidently because it is easier to hit the long/large feature.
3. It is difficult to run on a compass bearing through the forest and hit a point feature dead on.

WHEN to aim off:

1. Along the route: select a large handrail or catching feature to one side of the direct route.
2. Extend the control: Aiming off to a distinct linear feature that can lead you into the control extends the area of the control, making it larger & easier to find.
3. Behind the control: A large linear feature immediately behind the control can be used to help find the control: travel parallel to the linear feature at the correct distance from it.

Hints:

1. There is nearly always a right way to aim off rather than a 50-50 choice. Aim off to the side that represents the least total distance.
2. Competent orienteers usually aim only slightly off the control site, to minimise the distance to run after turning. Aim 50-100m to one side.
3. Aim off precisely; don't be too loose/rough with your aim.

What to practice today:

1. Hold the map and compass correctly all the time.
2. Keep the map oriented all the time.
3. Look for linear features - handrails and catching features – along your route.
4. Practice aiming off whenever possible.

