

DISTANCE JUDGEMENT



PACE COUNTING

This is a key technique for judging distances. You'll be able to work out when to turn off a line feature such as a fence, and whether it really is the path on the map or just a sheep track. It is also a good check when following a bearing, when it might be difficult to judge visually how far you have gone.

That's the "why", now for the "how". Pick a known distance between two obvious points on your map and run along it at your normal "racing" speed, counting every time you put your right (or left) foot down. If you try to count every foot step, you will rapidly lose count! If you usually walk, don't do a flat out sprint, because you will end up short when you get out into the woods. Make sure you do your test run alone. It is very easy to match strides with someone running next to you, which will disturb your normal stride.

Divide the number of paces by the known distance and multiply by 100 to work out your paces per 100m. There will be some variation - it's only a guide. Try to find an area of terrain to run through as well as a path and compare your paces on both. Remember that going uphill is harder work and you will therefore take more steps than if you are sprinting down through an open bit of woods.

Once you've tried it a few times, you'll get a fairly good idea of your paces. Now you can measure distances on the map and count the right number of paces. I don't bother doing the maths - if it's 350m I count my 100m paces 3.5 times and tick off each 100m on my fingers - but if you're good at mental arithmetic in oxygen debt, go ahead.

JUDGEMENT

Try picking an object ahead of you and estimate how far away it is. Then pace up to the object. Keep practising until you get an idea of what various distances look like. This is particularly useful on open areas where you may be able to see controls or ground features a long way off. You'll be able to work out which feature it must be, or that it can't possibly be your control!

Technique Sheet 3

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