

The background of the entire page is a topographic map with white contour lines on an orange background. The lines represent elevation and terrain features, including a prominent circular peak in the lower-left quadrant and various ridges and valleys across the landscape.

**ORIENTEERING**

**FOR BEGINNERS**

A solid black right-angled triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page, with its hypotenuse facing the top-left.

**orientering**

A white plastic bag is suspended from a tree branch by a string. The background is a dense forest of tall, thin trees, all rendered in a monochromatic green color. The lighting is soft, suggesting a forest interior.

**Orienteering as a sport is growing like never before. More and more people are finding their way off the roads and lit-up paths to discover the joy in finding new places with nothing but a map and compass to navigate them through unknown terrain.**

**In this folder, we aim to explain the basics of orienteering and at the same time highlight the variety of activities that the sport has to offer. No matter your age, level of ambition or individual experience, we guarantee that you can find a form of orienteering that suits you.**

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# HOW IT WORKS

## THE FIVE FOUNDATIONS OF ORIENTEERING

### 1. UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU ARE ON THE MAP AND WHERE YOU ARE GOING

Turn the map so that the control you are heading towards is pointing upwards.

### 2. ORIENTATE YOUR MAP

2. Hold the map horizontally and turn with the map so that the objects on the map are aligned with the corresponding objects in reality.

### 3. CHOOSE AND PLAN YOUR ROUTE

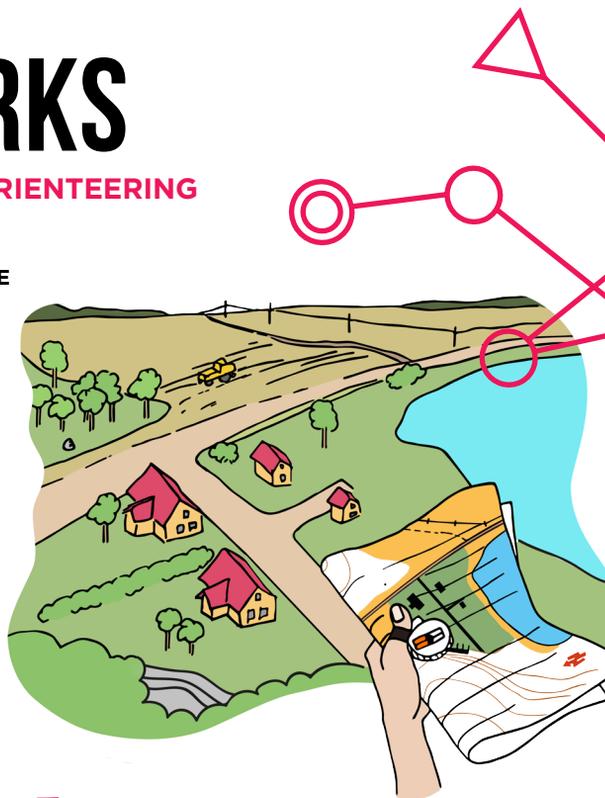
3. Pick the route that best suits your ability. Utilize roads and trails to make it easier. If it is a long distance to the next control, divide the route into smaller stretches and run via clear objects along the way.

### 4. GOING FROM A TO B

Orientate the map. Decide a direction to aim for and take your bearing. Keep an eye on the map while you're moving to make sure you are on the right track. Remember to keep the map oriented the entire way.

### 5. FIND THE CONTROL

The last step is to find the control. The control is always in the middle of the purple control circle on the map. As you are approaching the control, you gain a lot from lifting your gaze.





### THE COURSE

On the map, the orienteering course is made up of the start, controls, finish, connecting lines and controls numbers. The starting point is marked with a triangle, the controls with circles, and the finish with a double circle. The controls have to be taken in numerical order. In reality, the control object is marked with an orange and white flag, and is always in the middle of the control circle.

### THE MAP

The orienteering map is a highly detailed representation of reality and is full of symbols, colours and map signage. The scale of the map describes the distance

in relation to reality. At a scale of 1:10 000, 1 cm on the map equals 10 000 cm in reality, in other words, 100 metres. Contour intervals (distance between brown lines) describe the difference in height between the contours. The most common equidistance is 2.5 or 5 metres.



## CONTROL DESCRIPTION

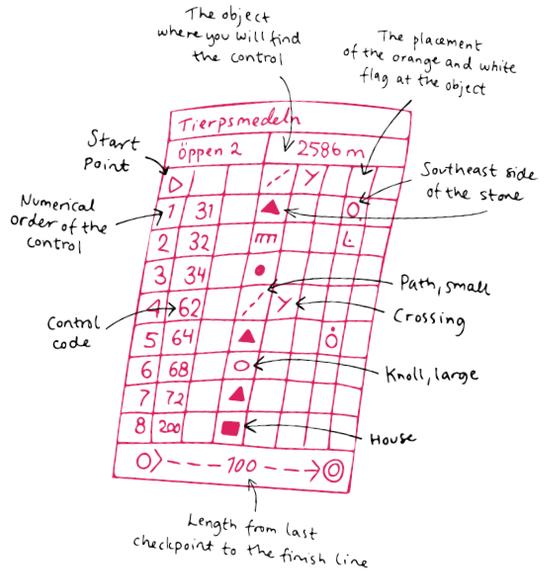
The control description, or the control definition as it is also called, gives you detailed information about the controls. Pay extra attention to the code on the description and the control point - that's how you know if you have found the right control. From the description you can also tell the character of the control object and on what part of it you can find the orange and white flag, for example "the rock, eastern side".

The control description is often printed directly on the map, but for those wishing to wear it in a special "definition holder" on their arm, there are separate copies as well.

## THE COMPASS

The compass is your best friend. It will help you to orientate the map and figure out in what direction you should be going.

There are two different kinds of compasses; thumb compasses (shown in the image to the right), and baseplate compasses. They work





in the same way, and the type you prefer is only a matter of individual preference. The majority of orienteers today use a thumb compass as it is considered slightly easier to use.

### THE GEAR

When competing, you need to have covering clothes, something that is recommended also when you train. It means that the skin on your legs and torso should be covered, meaning that a long pair of trousers and a t-shirt is fine.

Regular running clothes are more than enough when you orienteer but if you start doing it more regularly, buying

special orienteering clothes and shoes that are adapted to running in the forest can be well worth it.

We also recommend that you get your own compass, you will need it to take out your direction and orientate the map.

Competitions are always timed electronically. The most common timing systems are Emit and SportIdent. If you don't have your own SI-dibber or Emit-tag, the competition organisers always have spare ones to lend.





## CLASSES AND DIFFICULTY LEVELS

Generally, there are two classes of orienteering - competing and open (leisure classes). The competition classes are divided by gender and age, ranging from 10 yrs to 95 yrs. The open classes are divided by difficulty according to the scale below, where green is the easiest level and black the hardest. There are always open classes of different length and difficulty at competitions that you can sign up for on the day and start whenever you want.

## DIFFICULTY LEVELS



**EASIEST**

**HARDEST**

FOOT ORIENTEERING



SKI ORIENTEERING (SKIO)



# THE FOUR DISCIPLINES OF ORIENTEERING

MOUNTAIN BIKE ORIENTEERING (MTBO)



TRAIL ORIENTEERING (TrailO/PreO)



# COMPETING

## BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER

### FIND A COMPETITION

You can find competitions to sign up for at [www.orientering.se](http://www.orientering.se) or at [www.eventor.orientering.se](http://www.eventor.orientering.se) - the site that lists all competitions and competition info. This is where you sign up to pre enter any competition.

### SIGNING UP

For the open classes, you can sign up directly at the event and you can pick your start time, as well as your preferred length and difficulty as it suits you.

To sign up for competition classes you have to pre register beforehand via Eventor. You also have to be a member

of an orienteering club in order to be allowed to compete in one of these competition classes. All adult competing classes have the highest level of difficulty.

### FIND YOUR WAY TO THE COMPETITION

You can find information about the location of a competition and ways to get there via Eventor and on the competition's own website. There are usually allocated parking lots on nearby fields and roads. The fee to park is usually around 30 SEK.



## COMPETITION DISTANCES

There are five individual distances for foot orienteering; Sprint, Middle, Long, Ultra long and Night.



### 1. **Sprint**

Sprint is the shortest and most intense form of competing, characterised by many controls, quick decisions and small margins. A simple level of orienteering that gets difficult because of the high speed. Winning time is usually around 15 minutes.

### 2. **Middle**

Many controls, quick decisions and technically challenging. Winning time is around 30 minutes.

### 3. **Long**

Longer distances where route choices are essential. Winning times for the elite levels are around 90 minutes on a 17 km course.

### 4. **Ultra long**

The longest and toughest distance where stamina and route choice are essential. Winning time around 2-3 hours.

### 5. **Night**

The most renowned type of competing, done at night with a headlamp. Similar to Long orienteering due to the long distances and important route choices. Important to keep things simple and be diligent in your bearing/route choices.



## AT THE ARENA

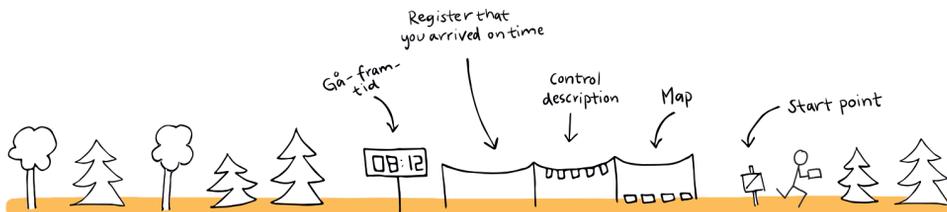
The registration for open classes is done at the arena. When you register for the competition you can also get help with finding a distance and difficulty that suits you and borrow essential gear you might not have.

At the arena there is also important competition info (PM) that you need to read through, as well as toilets, a simpler café ("marka") and directions to showers and the starting area. At larger events, there are usually vendors of sport products as well selling orienteering related gear.

## FINDING YOUR WAY TO THE START

The start area is usually located a bit away from the arena and the way there is always clearly marked. At bigger events, there can be several different starting areas, so make sure to locate the right one for you.





## STARTING METHOD

If you are competing in an open class, you decide your start time yourself. When you arrive at the start site, look for the "open area". Your start will be registered and you will receive your map and control description. You can then choose to start whenever you want. The forest is yours.

In the competing classes, the runners start with a 1-3 minute interval in between. For the start to work optimally, there are start boxes with three sections where the runners enter 1-3 minutes ahead of their starting time. When your time shows on the "gå fram-tid", 3 minutes ahead of your start, you go to the first start box, where volunteers will register that you have arrived on time. In the next section you will receive the control description and in the last one, you will receive the map. In the competing classes, the map is always handed out right at the start moment.



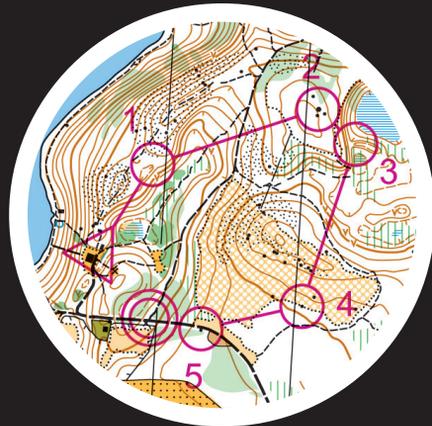


### **RUNNING THE COURSE**

The orienteering course is made up of the starting point, controls and the finish. You have to visit the controls in numerical order. In a competing class you run the course by yourself and if you are competing in an open class you can choose to do it by yourself or together.

### **FINISHING**

From the last control you need to run to the finish line and register at the finish control. After doing so, you "punch out" by registering your taken controls and getting a confirmation of that you have completed the course correctly. Here you will also receive your route times. It is





important that you "punch out" so that the organizer knows that you have reached the goal safely and are not injured on the course.

### POST-COMPETITION

In orienteering there is plenty of analysing and talking after a race, something most orienteers really enjoy doing. You learn a lot by discussing your route choices, mistakes and spikes with others, which makes the experience of competing even better. After each competition you can see participant's route times and use them to evaluate your own race. There are also plenty of digital tools to use for deeper analyzing.



# TRYING IT OUT

## ORIENTEERING ON YOUR OWN TERMS

There are many forms of orienteering, so regardless of your age, ambition and individual background, you are likely to find a form that suits you. You can run in urban environments or further out in the terrain; long or short distances; easy or advanced courses; by yourself or together with others. You are free to choose to orienteer at a certain point in your life, for a longer period of time, or perhaps a little bit now and then - it's all up to you!



### naturpasset

This kind of session is made up of a large number of controls, carefully selected to give you a scenic experience as you go along. These controls are usually available between April and October and you can visit them as often as you wish. It's up to you if you want to walk, run, or sometimes even bike between the controls and you don't need any previous experience. All it takes is a bit of time, curiosity and will. Naturpasset is arranged by orienteering clubs around the country and is on offer at around 400 locations throughout Sweden.

### motionsorientering

This is an event that offers orienteering in easily accessible areas, with courses of varying levels of difficulty and length that you can choose to do with or without timing. There is always an instructor on site that can help you choose a course and make sure you have everything you need.





## hittaut

These events are very similar to Naturpasset, with controls of various levels of difficulty. Online you have your own account and here you can register and compare the taken controls with others – your mum, friend och colleague. What makes these events stand out is that the activity is always located in and around urban areas. You are able to find the control by foot, bike or wheelchair. Focus at this activity is digital tools and the location of the controls.

 For more information:  
[www.orientering.se](http://www.orientering.se)

## TRYING IT OUT THROUGH COMPETING

Competing is a good and fun way to see if orienteering is your cup of tea.

Generally, there are two classes of orienteering – competition class and open classes. There are always open classes at competitions that you can sign up for on the spot and start whenever you want.

Over 700 competitions are organised throughout Sweden each year.

## TRYING IT OUT THROUGH JOINING ONE OF OUR 600 ORIENTEERING CLUBS

Contacting your local orienteering club is a very easy way to try orienteering. Many clubs offer try-it-out sessions or courses for beginners and the level of activity and engagement is completely up to you. There is no better way to develop as an orienteer than joining a club, and a membership in a club is a basic requirement for entering competitions. There are 600 orienteering clubs spread across Sweden, from Kiruna in the North, to Malmö in the South and everywhere in between.



Forest: run



Rough open land



Forest: walk



Residential areas



Lake



Control



Building



Marsh



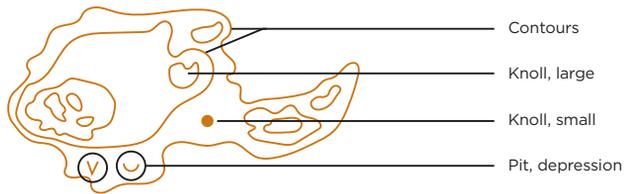
Stream



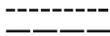
Stone

# LEGEND/

# COMMON MAP SYMBOLS



Road  
forest/major



Path  
small/large



Power line  
small/large



Wall  
passable/  
not passable



Fence  
passable/  
not passable

# GLOSSARY

**In orienteering, there are many special terms and words. This is a list of the most commonly used phrases and words that will come in handy if you are new to the sport.**

**THE ARENA** - Competition centre

**ATTACK POINT** - Also called “the last safe point”, a position that the orienteer chooses to “attack” the control from.

**CHASING START** - A starting form used in competitions that are run over several days where you start based on your previous results. First one to hit the finish line wins.

**CONTROL CODE** - Number on or beside the control screen and on the control description allowing you to make sure you have found the correct control.

**CONTROL DESCRIPTION** - The detailed information about the controls. Also known as definition or in Swedish is it referred to “deffen”.

**DIBBER** - SportIdent-tag to use when punching in the SportIdent system.

**DIRECT COURSE** - Old name for open classes.

**DNF** - Did not finish, completing the course without taking all the controls.

**DOWNLOADING** - Registering that you have completed the course after taking the finishing control.

**EMPTY AND CHECK** - Before start you have to empty your SportIdent’s card memory and make sure it is working.

**EVENTOR** - Website where you find info and register for competitions.

**EQUIDISTANCE** - Describes the difference in height between the contours. Also called contour interval.

**FOLLOWING** - Running behind or “hanging on to” another orienteer on the same course. In competition classes this is illegal.

**HAND-RAIL** - An eye-catching feature to run parallel to without having to check the map, for example roads, paths or power lines.

**“MARKA”** - A café where you can buy “fika”, snacks or food.

**OPEN COURSES** - Courses when you can enter on the day and run a course based on preferred difficulty level.

**PUNCHING** - Registering that you have been to a control.

**REVERSE BEARING** - When you are running in the opposite direction of where you are supposed to be going.

**SHADOWING** - Parent, friend or trainer running behind you in the forest, for safety or for training purposes.

**SOFT** - The Swedish Orienteering Federation

**SPIKING A CONTROL** - Finding the control marker on the first attempt.

**TC** - Competition centre, older word for the arena.

# ORIENTEERING

## MORE THAN JUST RUNNING

Orienteering for beginners gives you a crash course on the in's and out's of orienteering, how you can try it out and what competing is like.

Svensk Orienteering is made up of 600 orienteering clubs and over 80 000 members. Each year, 700 competitions and a large number of leisure activities are arranged across Sweden.

If you want to learn more about orienteering, if you have any questions or want to know more about finding competitions, clubs, maps or courses, visit [www.orientering.se](http://www.orientering.se) - our website filled with all things about orienteering.

