



## About Orienteering

Orienteering is the sport of navigating with map and compass. The object is to find a series of points shown on a map, choosing routes — both on and off trail — that will help you find all the points and get back to the finish in the shortest amount of time. The points on the course are marked with orange and white flags accompanied by electronic or mechanical punches, which provide proof that the point was visited. Each “control” marker is located on a distinct feature, such as a stream junction or the top of a hill.

Orienteering is often called the “thinking sport” because it involves map reading and decision-making in addition to providing a great workout. Any kind of map may be used for orienteering but it is usually practised using detailed five-color topographic maps developed especially for the sport. Orienteering maps show features that don't appear on most styles of map, including boulders, cliffs, pits, knolls, ditches, fences, and thick vegetation in addition to elevation, bodies of water, marshy areas, buildings, roads and trails. The maps are also at higher scale (more “blown up”) than common trail maps; for example, orienteering maps usually range in scale from 1:5,000 to 1:15,000, compared to traditional topo maps that are either 1:24,000 or 1:62,500.

Orienteering is a sport for everyone, regardless of age or experience. The competitive athlete can experience the exhilaration of moving through the woods at top speed, while a contemplative orienteer can enjoy the forest at a more leisurely pace. Most events provide courses for all levels — from beginner to advanced.

QOC offers (free) beginner instruction at all of our public events; just ask for it at the registration table. While COVID-19 policies are in effect, please check out instructional videos online such as those mentioned above in lieu of in-person/at-event instruction. After instruction (and paying the course fee) you are encouraged to try out what you've learned on one of the available beginner courses. We do not offer “classroom instruction”, because we strongly believe that having instruction at an event and then being able to immediately practice what you've learned is the most effective way to both learn - and have fun - orienteering.

If you love maps, exploring, and the great outdoors, try orienteering. You'll be hooked for life!  
[ShareThis](#) [1]

**Source URL:** <https://www.qocweb.org/content/about-orienteering>

**Links:**

[1] <https://www.qocweb.org/content/about-orienteering>