

Lesson plan: Simple handrails

Introduction

Have a conversation with your learner about actual handrails (e.g. on stairs) and how they guide the walker up the stairs. Tell them we use the term in orienteering for finding line features that will guide us where we want to go.

Lesson plan

- Ask your learner what they think a handrail might be in orienteering and to point one out on their map.
- Discuss the range of possible handrails like fences, streams, tracks and even the edge of a forest.
- Clarify that contours are not handrails yet, but they will learn to use them as handrails later.
- White level routes just have one obvious handrail leading to the control and runners just have to work out which direction it is- get your learner to practice this.
- Yellow level routes can use more handrails, so the learner has to deal with combining several handrails and making a decision at each junction. If your learner is ready, get them to practice this.
- Later they will learn to link point features together to make a handrail.

Recap and reflect

Get the learner to show you which handrails they used to get round the practice course. Go over another course just on a map and get them to identify handrails to you.

Tips for coach

On a sprint map handrails are harder to identify - they need a bit more practice and a bit more help. If you are planning sprint exercises for beginners, keep them really simple following only edges of buildings and open areas. Don't do route choices for their first go.

The jump from white to yellow level has controls just off the handrails. Learners gain significantly from doing courses that are all on handrails but have several decision points on the way. This type of course is a good one to plan for your white course learners who are ready to step up.

See recommended exercises at orienteering.org.nz/coaching-and-training-hub

Ideal map and terrain

For beginners, use a map with lots of tracks and fences. For intermediate, find maps where there are fewer line features but there are enough features to form their own lines.