

## Folding and thumbing the map

Folding and thumbing the map is a basic skill for orienteering.

These are two skills, but they go together. You need to fold your map so that you can thumb your map.

Always take a map each if you can so that you can practice these skills.

### Folding the map

Folding your map helps you to keep track of where you are and where you are going .

Fold your map so that you can see the entire leg of your course if possible (including a little bit after your next control)



Fold it so that the fold is parallel to your running direction. (I am running from 6 to 7 in this photo)

The size of your hand will make a difference to how far away to the side you make the fold.

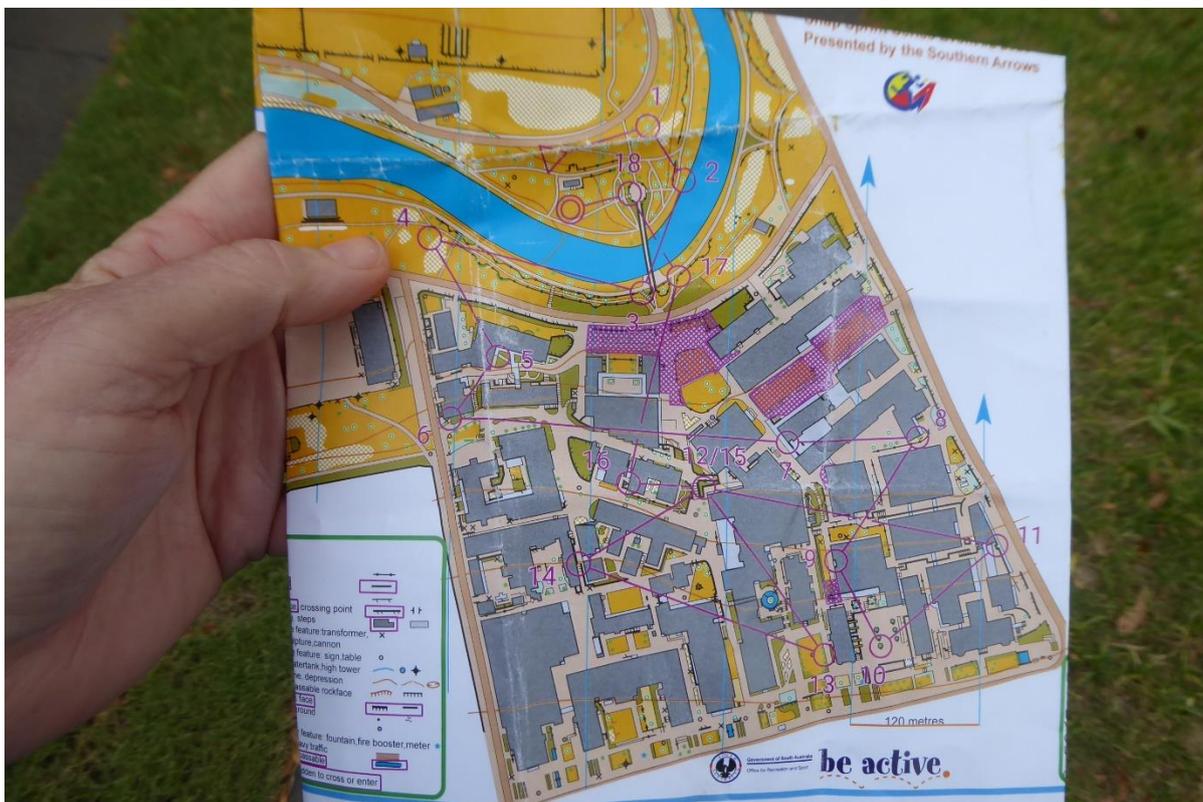
If you are holding the map in your left hand then you want the fold to be approximately 3cm to the left of your planned running line. It will be the opposite if you are running with the map in your right hand.

## Step by Step:

1. Fold away the areas of the map that you will not be needing on your course at all.



This shows the original whole map

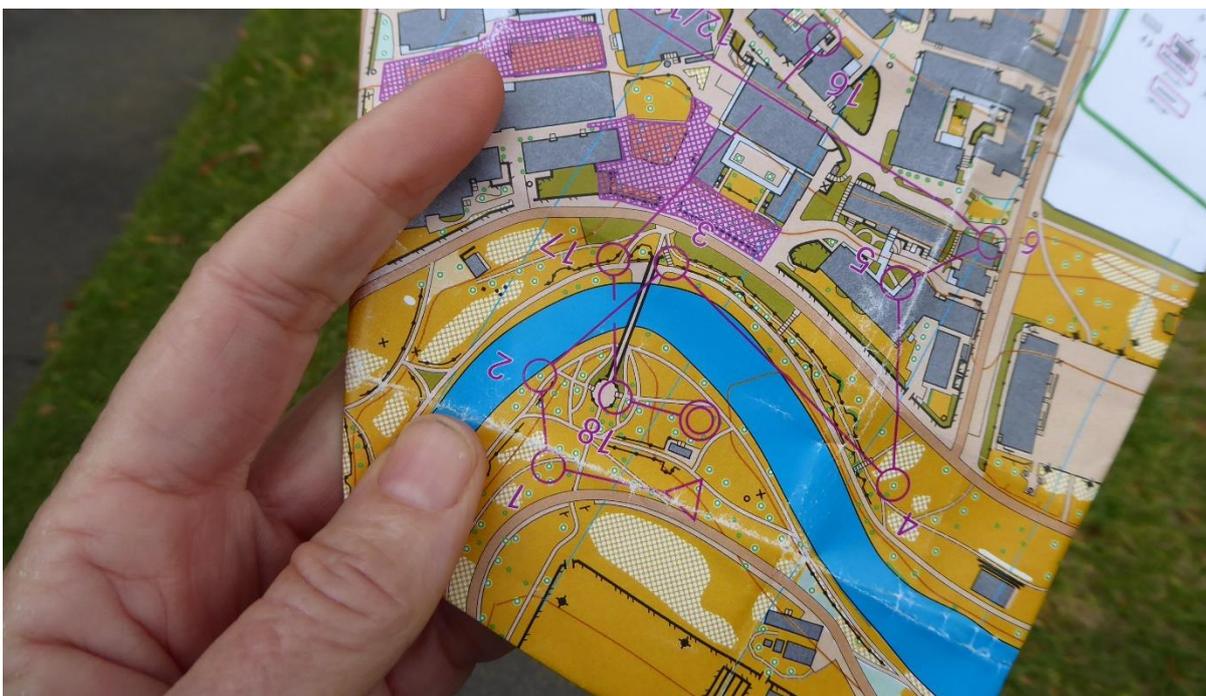


Here you can see that I have started by folding in the left side, the right side and the top (all the areas that the course does not cover)

2. Then turn your map so that you have your course in front of you and fold so that you have your current leg displayed.



3. Each time you change direction on your course (as you leave one control to head to another, or as you change direction on your leg) rotate your map in your hand so that you have your running direction directly in front of you and refold the map to make it comfortable to hold.



As you can see I am now heading from number 1 to number 2.

\*There is one disadvantage of folding your map: It may make it difficult to see the control descriptions. This is why many orienteers use control description holders which they strap to their arms or pin to their chests. These are relatively inexpensive holders which you can use to check the control descriptions as you go along your course.

Control descriptions are usually available as separate small slips of paper at the start at events. The holders are available at Orienteering shops or you can make your own.



My control description holder

### **Thumbing the map**

Thumbing the map helps you to keep track of where you are. Put your thumb next to your location on the map. As you move along, move your thumb as well.

Don't let go if you look away from your map.

If you get distracted, this will help you to quickly get yourself back on track, and will save you from making silly mistakes with parallel features on the map. You can even fall over and get up again and still know where you are.

Let your thumb help you to focus.

If you have a thumb compass, you can use the tip of your thumb compass instead of your thumb.

You can see an example of thumbing the map with thumb and thumb compass following.

In this sample I use by thumb alone as I travel from Control 6 to 7.

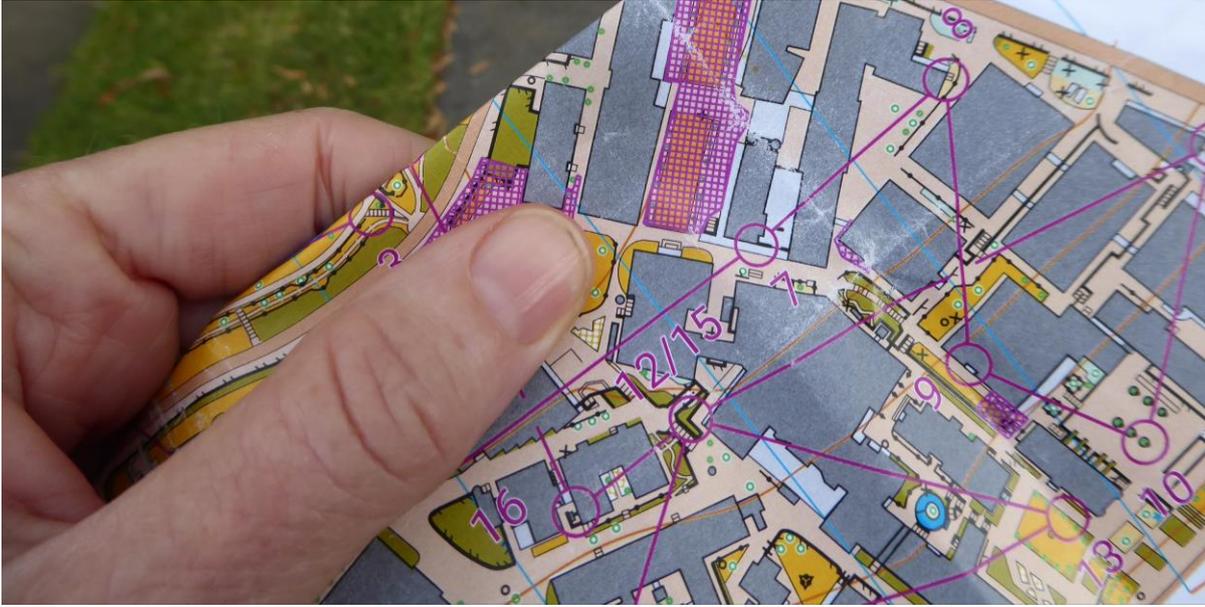
You can see my thumb indicating that I am travelling east along a paved area between two buildings.



As I continue along, you can see that I have moved my thumb to indicate where I am up to. I will see the steps on my left soon where I am planning to turn.



I turned up the stairs and turned right again. You can see that I am running between two grassed areas. Soon I will turn to the right and head for my control.

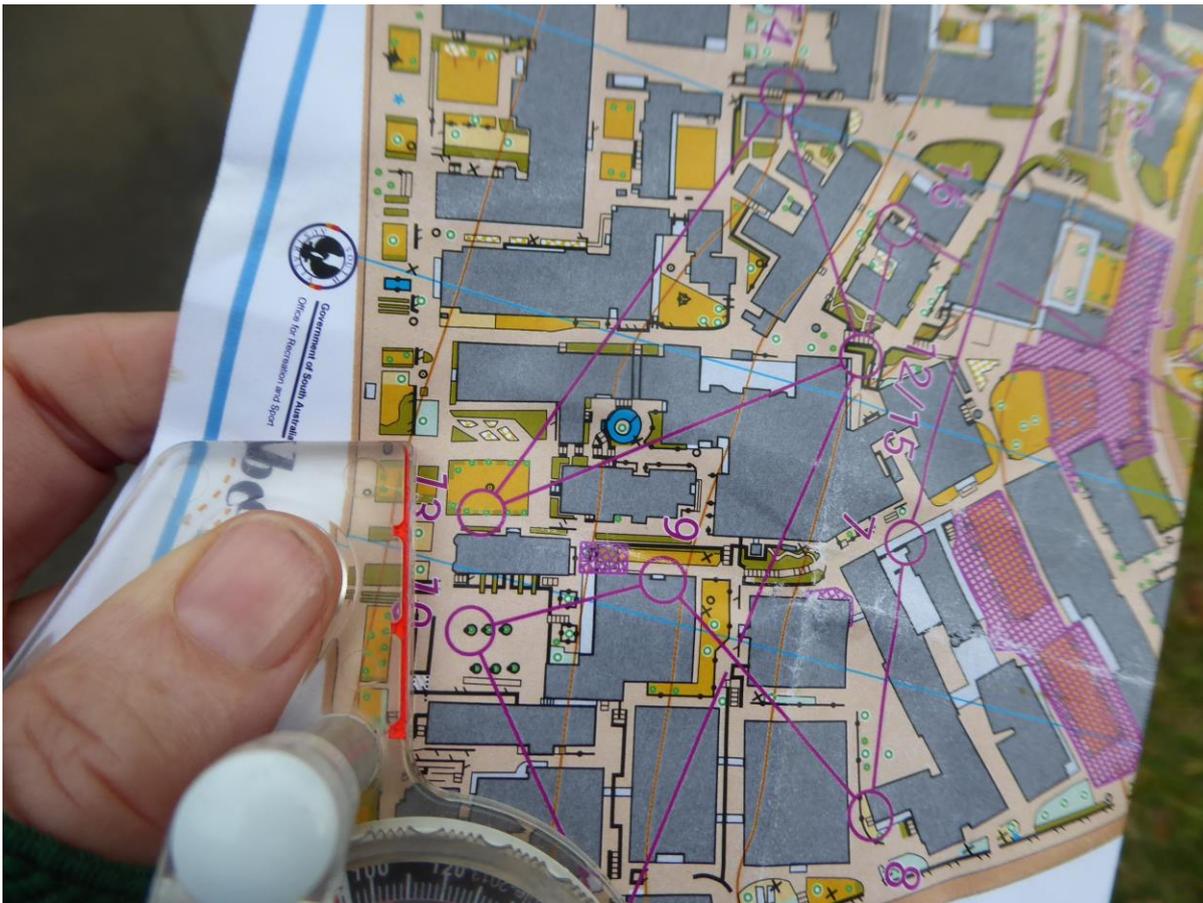


Now I have turned and am heading directly for my control. I have an "out of bounds" area on my left.



In the following sample I use my thumb compass to go from control 13 – 14.

I travel west past the green open area and the end of the first building on my right.



I then turn right, so I turn my map in my hand and my compass indicates that I am running between the two buildings towards the fenced grassed area, which will be on my left.



I then turn left and rotate my map again (see below). My compass tip shows that I am now moving towards the open grassed area on my left, and getting ready to turn right and go down the stairs to find my control.



You can watch a video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLgaAU0ZI4Y>

Whether you use the tip of your thumb compass or your thumb, you will find that this is a great habit to build and it will help you to avoid many errors over the years.