

Six Steps to Becoming a Better Navigator

Step #1 – Pay more attention to everyday navigation tasks

- What's the feel of the route?
- How long until your next action point.
- What are your confidence building landmark images?
- What are your action point predictors?

- Pay extra attention when going someplace new, or when you make a navigation error, or just plain get lost.

Step #2 – Learn to read maps.

- Visualize topography using various types of maps.
- Locate action points
- Get the feel of a route from the information on the map.
- Use a map as you navigate. Ask where am I, and what's next?

Step #3 – Learn to make a navigation story

- Combine a starting point, route feel information, action point predictors, and action points into the “story” you plan to follow.
- When you are first learning this skill, it may be helpful to write it down or make a sketch.

Step #4 – Learn to use your navigation story

- Follow along with your story as you travel.
- You only need the next small part of the story at the tip of your brain.
- Use your map and your notes to refresh your memory for the next part
- Recognize when you start to get “off story”.
- Stop, locate yourself, and fix the story.

Step #5 – Build a toolkit of navigation techniques

- GPS, Compass, Altimeter
- Speed, distance, and time
- Maps, lots of maps
- Tips, tricks, and techniques that work for you

Step #6 – Practice, Practice, Practice

- Take real hikes and virtual hikes to improve your map skills.
- Go to lots of new places, by road, by trail, and cross country.

- Back to step #1. Pay attention to how you are navigating.