

San Diego Orienteering Clinic Guide

San Diego Orienteering (SDO) offers beginner clinics at all events, typically at 9:45 AM and 10:15 AM. These brief (5-10 minute) sessions are designed to:

- Explain how the event and courses work.
- Introduce participants to the sport of orienteering and our specialized maps.
- Build excitement about SDO and the sport of orienteering.

Clinician Responsibilities

The clinician is responsible for gathering participants, conducting the clinic, and answering questions. You don't need to be an expert orienteer to lead a clinic—recent beginners often make great clinicians because they understand the needs of newcomers.

Before the Clinic

1. **Prepare Yourself:** Review this guide.
 2. **Select a Location:** Choose a spot near registration or the start that is quiet and separate.
 3. **Grab a Control & Epunch:** Can be used during clinic.
 4. **Gather Maps:** Collect a stack of Beginner (White for 7-course events) maps.
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Starting the Clinic

1. **Announce:** A few minutes before the clinic, announce that it will start soon and direct participants to the clinic area.
2. **Hand Out Maps:**
 - Explain that beginners (White/Yellow courses) may look at their maps before starting.
 - Let them know they must use the map they take during the race to avoid shortages.
 - Intermediate and advanced participants may borrow a beginner map if necessary.
 - Only registered participants should take maps. Others may borrow but must return them.
3. **Set Expectations:** Explain this is a short clinic to cover the basics. Participants will not become experts in 5-10 minutes. Experienced orienteers may find this repetitive.

Introduction

1. **Introduce Yourself:** Share your name, how long you've been orienteering, and why you enjoy the sport.
 2. **A Unique Sport:**
 - Strategic thinking and decision-making.
 - A handicapping system for all ages.
 - A welcoming atmosphere for participants of all paces, from walkers to competitive runners.
 3. **Background**
 - Developed by Swedish military 100 years ago as a training exercise.
 - Very popular in Europe, with hundreds of weekly events and summer festivals drawing over 50,000 participants.
 - Took off in the US in the 1970s. Today, over 50 clubs across North America. There is an annual US national champs and frequent regional events,
 4. **San Diego Orienteering**
 - SDO's mission is to promote and support the sport of orienteering in San Diego County.
 - We host monthly events, including SDO's annual Desert Orienteering Festival each January.
 - 100% volunteer-driven, non-profit. Please get involved!
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How the Event Works

Walk participants through the process of completing today's event. The below details assume a traditional point-to-point format:

1. **Start Process:**
 - Go to the start. (Point out the location.)
 - Clear and check the e-punch.
 - Check in with the start greeter.
 - Enter the correct start chute and follow the starter's instructions.
 - Punch the start and head to the start triangle (if separate).
2. **Navigate the Course:**

- Use the map to find and navigate to each control in order.
- Use the electronic punch at each control. Wait for the beep!
- If you accidentally punch the wrong control, it's okay—just move on.

3. **Finish:**

- Punch the final control at the finish.
- Return to the registration table to download results, even if you didn't complete the course. Failure to download will lead to unnecessary concerns about your safety.

Additional Notes:

- Mention other event formats they might encounter (e.g., Score-O, Mass Start, Motala, Sprint).
- Remind participants about course closing time (usually 12 PM). Emphasize they must return by this time, regardless of when they started, as controls will be removed after closing.

Introducing the Orienteering Map

1. **Map Features:**

- Custom-made for orienteering, with 2-3 times more detail than standard topographic maps.
- Excludes GPS information.
- Three main types of details:
 1. **Man-Made Features (Black):** Roads, trails, buildings, and unique features (e.g., black X). Beginners can often navigate using just these.
 2. **Contour Lines (Brown):** Represent elevation.
 - Explain how they show steep vs. flat terrain.
 - Highlight that longer routes often minimize climb.
 3. **Vegetation:**
 - **Yellow:** Open grass or meadow.
 - **White:** Forest, easy to traverse.
 - **Green:** Dense or hard-to-cross areas, best avoided.

2. Map Details:

- Scale (usually 1:10,000).
 - Contour interval (meters per line).
 - North lines (aligned with magnetic north).
 - Control descriptions (clue sheet). Beginners have written descriptions, so elaborate only briefly.
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Optional: The "3 P's" Technique (Point, Place, Path)

This simple technique helps beginners navigate whenever they feel uncertain. Can be used at Start, after finding a control, or throughout each leg as you find intermediary features:

1. **Point:** Use your compass to find North. Align the map to face North and keep it that way.
2. **Place:** Identify your current location on the map. If unsure, make an educated guess and confirm as you proceed.
3. **Path:** Create a plan to reach the next control, identifying key features or landmarks along the way.

Example Plan: "I'll follow this trail north for around 500 meters/steps, turn right at the fork, and stop when I see a large rock."

Wrap-Up

1. Highlight other SDO resources on website
 2. Answer questions.
 3. Wish participants good luck.
 4. Direct them to the start area.
 5. Remind them to download their results and return before course closing time.
 6. Point out Uniform box.
 7. Collect unused beginner maps and return them to the start bin.
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Thank You!