Urban orienteering made easy: a guide for newcomers

Urban orienteering is, at heart, very simple. Enter the course that you want to do and then run or walk round it as quickly as you can. After entering, go down to the start, queue for the course you have entered and you will be off in a few minutes as people start every minute. You do not need any specialist gear except a timing chip which will be loaned to you at registration. You will pick up a map when you start your course which will take you to checkpoints around town using streets, alleyways, footpaths and urban park areas before arriving back at the finish. Your timing chip will detect every checkpoint when you are about half a metre from it so you do not have to do anything special. Cross the finish, smile and then take your timing chip to Download to get your time. That really is all there is to it.

Orienteers do make it seem far more complicated than it is by using all sorts of jargon and terms. This guide will cut through all the jargon to make it very straightforward for newcomers. A compass is not necessary in an urban event although regular orienteers often carry them, mainly out of habit.

1. First, you have to enter. Visit [www.fabian4.co.uk](http://www.fabian4.co.uk) where many events will be listed in date order. Our Rugby event will be listed on the weekend of March 25th and 26th. Alternatively, just turn up on the day and enter. There will be someone on hand to help you and explain everything that is going on. We are limited to 500 entries so be there early. You will also find out more details by checking our webpage at [www.octavian-droobers.org/wow](http://www.octavian-droobers.org/wow) which will be regularly updated. Final details will be added a few days before the event.
2. There are seven courses of different lengths to choose from. The courses will be listed by course number (1-7) and, for regular orienteers only, by age group, e.g. M21, W45, M60, W75, etc.. Regular orienteers gain points by running in their age group class. They are not compulsory, everyone can totally ignore the age classes and enter any course they choose. Newcomers should perhaps make the choice according to the distance they want. The only exception is for juniors of 16 and under who must stick to their age group courses in order to avoid traffic. The entry start times for juniors will be restricted to the period 14.30 - 15.00 at the Rugby Urban to allow for road crossings to be adequately marshalled.
3. If you enter on the day of the event, every course will show a distance which is the straight- line distance from the start via every checkpoint and back to the finish. You will not be able to go in a straight line because there are buildings in the way. Adding a quarter to the distance shown will give a better idea of how far you will travel.
4. Course distances will not be shown if you enter on line before the day of the event. Don’t worry, you can change courses on the day simply by going to the registration desk. As a guide to distances, Course 1 (the longest) will travel around 10k or slightly longer, Course 7 (the shortest) will likely be between 2 and 3k. The other courses range evenly between these two so, for example, Course 4 will be in the 5-6k range.
5. The longer courses will have more checkpoints and take you further afield.
6. Everyone needs to go to the registration desk to pick up a timing chip before they start. You wear the timer on your wrist. There will be plenty of people on hand to help and guide newcomers. There will also be specimen checkpoints for you to see how your timer will work and test that everything is okay.
7. Next is the all-important map. Orienteering maps are a little different to other maps and there will be example maps of Rugby on display. It really is worth taking the time out to look over them. The scale is 1cm equals 50m so you will be able to pick out individual buildings and trees.
8. Map symbols: urban orienteering maps use special symbols but everything will be very obvious. For example, there is a special symbol for a statue but it will be very clear when you are standing against it because there may be a stone man riding a horse!
9. Map legends for these special symbols will be available to collect on the day or you can look at them or download beforehand at [www.maprunner.co.uk/map-symbols/](http://www.maprunner.co.uk/map-symbols/) and select the sprint option. Whatever, do not worry about them because it will be clear and you will get around the course when it is in front of you even if you do not know the symbols.
10. Uncrossable features – there are places you cannot go like flower beds, decorative low walls, unfenced private property and the like which are shown on the map. For example, you cannot go on any land marked on the map in an olive-green colour. These special uncrossable symbols are shown on every map. Make sure that you check them out before you start and do not go there.
11. Sometimes, timed-out road crossings are used to get over busy roads or junctions. The time spent crossing them will be electronically excluded so keep safe, follow marshals’ instructions and do not rush.
12. Urban races take place in busy towns on busy streets. Treat members of the public courteously at all times and give way to them. Be especially careful when running around building corners because someone may be coming the other way. Most importantly, be very aware of traffic and act safely at all times. Do not take risks with traffic!
13. We are particularly grateful to the Hospital of St Cross for allowing us to use their grounds, the first time a hospital has ever been used. It is a busy working hospital so please be aware of patients, visitors, staff and emergency vehicles when in their grounds.
14. You will have enjoyed the new experience so why not come along to one of our regular events which are shown at [www.octavian-droobers.org/index.php/events/club-events](http://www.octavian-droobers.org/index.php/events/club-events)

That really is all there is to it – a run with a difference!

We look forward to welcoming you at Rugby on March 25th with registration from 12.30.