

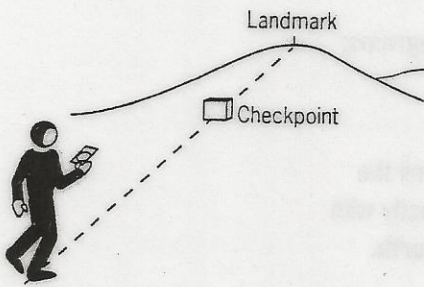
# Keeping on a bearing

Once you have set the correct bearing, it is still very easy to lose your way when following a bearing. Missing your 5p by half a pace out of 10 in the last exercise is insignificant but if you were walking 2 km you could end up 2 or 3 football pitches away.

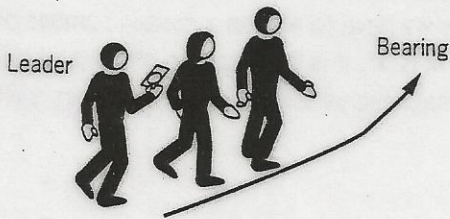
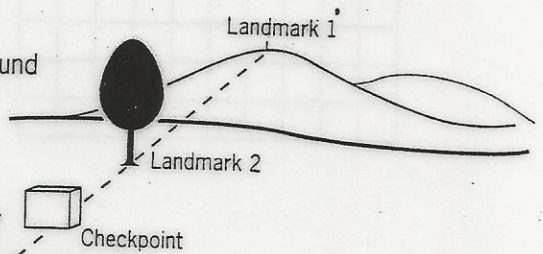
So, how do you keep on course?

Before you start, make sure that the rest of your "team" realise how important it is for you not to be distracted. You should walk in front and have no one at your shoulder who might make you drift off course.

If visibility allows, pick out at least one landmark that is on the horizon beyond your checkpoint. By keeping your eye on the landmark you can avoid making the biggest mistake when walking on a bearing, which is to stare only at the compass.



Two checkpoints on your line would be better. Now you can skirt round marshy patches or boulders and still return to the exact line.



If visibility is poor or you are walking in a featureless area, you will need to use your team more effectively. Have a "second" walking at the back checking your line regularly and calling out when there is any doubt about your direction. It will also help to have your team in a straight line.

The final check is to use what are called "tick-off points". These are recognisable landmarks that you may pass on your bearing, for example a stream bend, a cairn or a hut. To use tick-off points will not only ensure that you stay on line but also enable you to check how far along your line you are.

