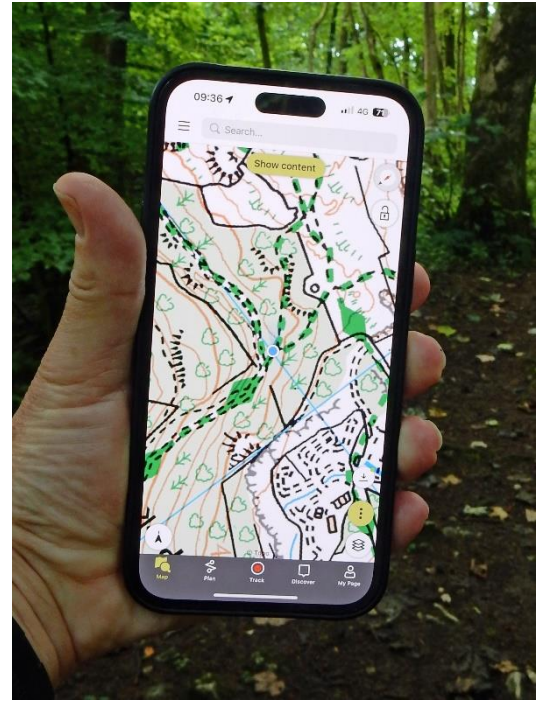


# Outdoor Navigation Using OutdoorActive

Smartphones, together with next-generation outdoor mapping and navigation apps, have improved significantly in recent years. By making use of a smartphone's location services (GPS and so on) apps can mimic a handheld GPS device and be used for outdoor location and navigation. These courses use the OutdoorActive app, the de facto, go-to app for all outdoor activities, now that competitors, such as ViewRanger and FatMap, are defunct. The course is designed for all comers: those new to using a smartphone to navigate, and those with some experience, perhaps with a different app, but who would like to learn more. We start focusing on using OutdoorActive as a backup aid, to locate in an emergency and for basic navigation. Next, we explore more advanced ad-hoc and preplanned navigation both for UK and alpine scenarios so it can be used as the main navigation aid. The OutdoorActive app, which works well on both Android and iOS platforms, is the leader in its field, has the greatest range of maps and features, and is specifically designed for a wide range of global summer and winter outdoor activities on foot, on skis, on snowshoes, on two-wheels and even on horseback!



## Course Content

This course begins by outlining some GPS fundamentals so that the capabilities and limitations of using a smartphone for location and navigation can be understood. It then focuses on OutdoorActive itself, explaining the mapping available in the app, preparing the smartphone and app for use and understanding the very well-thought-out, but complicated user interface or, in other words, how best to use it. The first practical part of the course covers using the map, locating on the map and in suitable coordinates to relay to emergency services, and using the app for basic navigation to get to a known point before resuming using conventional techniques. Throughout, we contrast conventional maps and navigation techniques to those using the app, and discover they have much in common. Next, the course will cover some key features such as tracking (recording where we have been), together with marking and creating waypoints, something that many apps simply cannot do, but at which OutdoorActive excels, and is a particularly useful feature. Then the course majors on using the app to navigate as the main navigation aid in lieu of map and compass. It covers ad-hoc, point-to-point navigation; in other words, navigating from the user's current location, either to a waypoint previously stored in the device, a point selected on the map, or suitable coordinates. Both direct (straight line) and network navigation (automatically following summer paths and tracks or winter routes), will be covered, and when to use which. Importantly, we will use the app to plan routes, either beforehand or enroute, synchronise them with third-party wearables and handheld GPS devices, then using the app to follow the route, deal with off-route scenarios and changes of plan. In particular, we focus on using OutdoorActive for winter activities. The app has specific, bang up-to-date winter maps, it has key facilities such as slope angle, avalanche terrain maps, avalanche reports, live weather and web cams. Importantly, it can network navigate following a variety of different winter activities. Time permitting, other advanced features like "buddy beacon" (sharing your location with others) and "skyline" (identifying summits on the skyline) will also be introduced. Finally, everything will be brought together with the practical and focused "OutdoorActive Checklist", a single A4 sheet and supporting A6 laminated card, with everything you need to know summarised for everyday use of OutdoorActive as your principle outdoor navigation tool, whatever your choice of activity.

## What you need to know and bring with you ...

Importantly, you should understand the basics of outdoor navigation using map and compass before attending this course, but you don't necessarily need to be an ace navigator! The course is very much hands-on; it is designed so that participants can follow each step using their own smartphone with the app, initially in the classroom, then extensively outdoors, and practicing skills in representative terrain where the app is to

be used. As a pre-requisite, ***you will need a capable smartphone*** and know how to use it confidently. It can be either an Android or iOS smartphone and it doesn't need to be top-of-the range or expensive, but it should be less than 5-years old and not a "budget" model. OutdoorActive will work on most smartphones, but on older or budget phones it struggles. You should also bring a suitable power bank for your phone with any necessary cable. As we will be outside for much of the course, walking 3-6km on potentially steep and slippery terrain, good outdoor clothing, footwear, a small rucksack including a packed meal and drink are essential, together with a suitable level of fitness. Course notes and other material are available for the sessions.

OutdoorActive is available cost-free in a basic version, but you'll need a Pro or Pro+ subscription for these courses. However, if you don't already subscribe at Pro or Pro+ level and are not sure if you want to spend money on a subscription, you can get a cost-free trial of either, usually for 2 weeks, so you can start the trial, just before the course and, if you don't take to it, you've lost nothing! Full details of how to get Pro or Pro+ on your smartphone, which would be best for you, and how not accidentally subscribe (and pay) for something you may not want, or need will be sent to all course members in good time prior to attending. If you are a member of the AAC, the best way to subscribe is using the Alpenvereinaktiv deal available through the club (details here: <https://www.alpenverein.at/britannia/resources/alpenvereinaktiv-com.php>).



### ***About the Trainer***

My name is Rick Shearer. I have been leading groups in hills and mountains, in Britain and internationally, both in summer and winter conditions, for the past 30 years. I am qualified as an international mountain leader. In addition, for the past 15 years I have also been training outdoor navigators and leaders in how to use a GPS device safely and effectively to locate and navigate outdoors. Initially, this was using conventional handheld GPS units, the only devices available then and, more recently, with wearable devices and smartphones using an appropriate app. Over 700 people have attended one or more of my courses. As an operational support member of my local MRT, I manage 70 OutdoorActive licences on their behalf and train the Team how best to use the app in the challenging circumstances they sometimes face.