

# WALKING IN THE BUSH

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## What's The Problem

Walking in a straight line in the bush can often be quite difficult

- Most people have a tendency to favour their preferred hand, i.e. a right-handed person will tend to curve right and left-handed person will tend to curve left.
- Each time you deviate from your course you run the risk of losing your line.
- Deviations may occur because of
  - Lack of concentration,
  - Tiredness
  - Obstacles such as trees, scrubs, rocks, boulders, depressions, waterways, swamps and a host of other things.
- Compasses help but do not solve all the problems.

## Solutions

- A GPS will go along way to solving all your problems, particularly if you can utilise the 'Goto' function. However, GPS's are not infallible – batteries fail, electronics sometimes let you down
- '**Sighting Ahead**' can keep you on line and help get you out of trouble in an emergency

## Sighting Ahead

The underlying principle is to use landmarks to guide you in the direction you want to go.

- Use your compass or map to determine your bearing
- Sight along your compass or map and pick out a prominent feature in your line of sight – the further away the better but there are possible problems (see below).
- Without referring to your compass or map, proceed to the landmark.
- Repeat the last two steps as necessary to get you to where you want to be.

## Limitations

The 'sighting ahead' method does have limitations.

- Sometimes it is not possible to sight more than a few metres ahead - accuracy improves with distance. You can improve your accuracy by vigilance and by teaming.
  - The first person remains at the starting position,
  - The second person proceeds to the limit of the sighting,
  - The first person adjusts the position of the second person to the left or right, if necessary, and the second person then holds position,

- The first person then joins the second person, and
- The exercise is repeated.
- Landmarks in the distance can change their appearance as you approach, particularly when proceeding through uneven and/or scrubby bush. Be vigilant.

### **Using the Sun**

When absolute accuracy is not a necessity, you may be able to use the sun as a guide. For instance, you may be heading to a track or road that you know crosses your line of travel. Or you may be heading towards a clearing where your vehicle is parked.

- Use your GPS or compass to get you started in the right direction
- If the sun is behind you, take note of where your shadow falls, eg. At 11 o'clock over your left shoulder, and keep it there.
- If the sun is in front of you, do the same with its position (although this can be more tiring and demanding)
- For short walks, the movement of the sun shouldn't pose any problems.
- For longer walks you should take fresh readings every 30 minutes or so.