

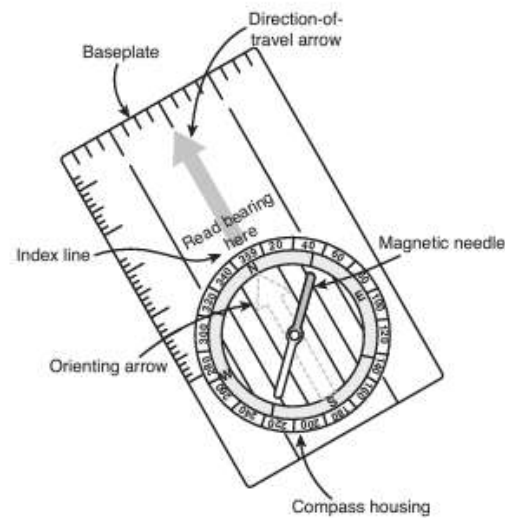
Each contour line represents 60 vertical feet on the mountain.

## Getting Oriented

For everyone who spends time on a trail—but especially for the directionally challenged—finding your way in the woods requires a compass. Even with today's GPS-enabled smartphones, the compass remains a simple and reliable tool that every hiker should learn how to use.



**Safety Check** Metal objects, power lines, and even buried iron ore can influence the magnetic needle on a compass. When using your compass, hold it flat and away from your body. Double-check with the time of day and the sun's position to make sure it's working right.



A hiker's orienteering compass has a rotating compass housing, an orienting arrow, and a flat plastic baseplate.

## The Orienteering Compass

Land surveyors, ship captains, and pilots all depend on specialized compasses for their work. Hikers have their own special compass, too. It's called an *orienteering compass*, and it can be used on its own or along with a map. Unlike a cheap button or keychain compass, an orienteering compass will not only indicate north, but it can also help you navigate to a destination. A good orienteering compass will cost between \$15 and \$50, and it will contain all the elements needed to help you navigate:

- ♦ **Magnetic needle.** The needle of a compass is made from magnetized metal and floats on a pivot point. As you rotate a compass in your hand, the red end of the needle will constantly adjust itself to point north like an arrow. The opposite end of the needle will point south.