

## Choosing the right GPS for your needs Which GPS?

Many people buy a GPS based on their perception of their needs but with no real idea of the potential of these systems. The most important piece of advice we can give you is to find out what they can do before you buy, and where your end use fits in within the multitude of different models and software combinations.



With prices ranging from as little as £100 to over £500, mistakes can be costly, so some research before you buy could save money, time and frustration in the long term. Our experience is that when users find out what a GPS can really do, and discover how easy it is to connect the system to digital mapping software, they tend to change their ideas on which features are important to them.

Make sure you purchase the correct model for your use both now and in the future by ensuring you have all the information at your fingertips before you part with your cash, all the information you need to make an informed choice can be found in the [Navigation Workshop DVD](#)

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### What a GPS will and won't do

Before you buy, you need to know what a GPS will and won't do. To this end you will find listed below in a fairly non-technical way what the average entry level GPS is and isn't capable of. We have tried to use as few GPS specific terms as possible.



#### Your GPS will allow you to:

- See your position as a grid reference. This is updated every second.
- Record your movements across the ground as you travel (called a tracklog)
- Mark your current position at any time
- Input the grid reference of any position at any time
- Save waypoints to a database for future use
- Navigate on a dynamic straight line bearing to a given location
- Add waypoints together to make routes & create a database of them
- Navigate a route as straight line bearings from waypoint to waypoint
- See on the map screen where you are in relation to waypoints and your route
- View waypoint information as you navigate – e.g. current position, speed & time as well as current distance from the next waypoint and the time it will take you get there at your current speed
- Create and navigate a reversed route or track
- Allow you to plan and enter escape routes
- Set an audible proximity alarm (if it has this feature)
- Dependent on your GPS model, download and upload waypoints, routes and marks between your GPS and PC, Laptop or PDA if you have digital mapping software system or a waypoint management system.
- Dependent on your GPS model, download and upload points of interest and street level mapping if you buy the software
- Join 750,000 people worldwide who take part in the growing sport of Geocaching

#### Your GPS will not:

- Ever be a permanent substitute for a map and compass.
- Work properly unless it has been set up correctly.
- Work without batteries
- Provide a navigational bearing unless you have 'told' it where you want to go
- Be as accurate when it does not have clear view of the sky – e.g. indoors, in narrow gullies or under tree cover
- Be as accurate when ionospheric or multipath errors occur

- Give you a correct compass orientation or bearing until you start moving, unless you have a GPS with an electronic compass
- Place you at a precise location. It will only put you in a circle of accuracy. The size of the circle depends on the type of terrain, the number of satellites you are logged onto, and their position relative to you. The type of GPS you are using will be a factor too.

### **The Features of different GPS Systems**

Each manufacturer produces a series of ranges and models all aimed at different levels of the market. So how do we sort these out into some sort of order that makes sense to us? The trade splits up the ranges and places each model into a category based around the technical level of the features included in that particular model. To some degree they take into account the expected end use of the prospective user.

There is quite a sizeable market out there for GPS at a basic level where being able to communicate to a PC is un-required and navigation will be at the most elementary. This is the starting point for most ranges, from here on, like most things in life, the more whistles and bells you add the more things cost. GPS is no different. .

### **GPS Features**

Think of features as the building blocks a GPS is made from, some of which are essential, the rest are desirable or not on your shopping list. Obviously the more features and the more memory in-built into the package the more costly the model will be.

Use this checklist of the main GPS features to build your ideal GPS systems profile.

Which features are Essential, Desirable, Not Needed?

- WAAS enabled
- Database for waypoints
- Capacity to store at least Routes and Tracks
- Exchange data between the GPS and PC
- Memory-Map compatible
- Good quality colour screen
- Topo compatible
- Database of points of interest
- Memory to store extra points of interest and street mapping
- Electronic compass & barometric altimeter
- Elevation profile on screen
- Audible proximity alarm
- Waterproof to IPX7 standard
- Cable, case & lanyard included
- USB cable included or available at a reasonable price
- Downloadable firmware upgrades

### **Product Guide**

Now you have a good idea of the GPS features on your wish list, why not use this information to use our easy to use [GPS Product Guide](#) we have created for your guidance, it features the best GPS on the market with the outdoor enthusiast in mind;

- it lists the essential features
- gives you our honest opinion on the product
- links you direct to the right page in our [GPS Shop](#)

Having considered all the alternatives and you are still unsure, then why not give us a call here at GPST on **01768 885855** and talk to a friendly GPS expert.

### **Bought the wrong model? Fancy an upgrade?**

Have you have made an expensive mistake and bought a GPS that doesn't suit your needs, or just fancy moving up to something with the latest colour features?

Then why not consider an exchange. We will do an exchange deal on most modern GPS, as we can either use them on our training days or offer them as a low cost GPS to our clients at our

courses. We will make you a fair offer for your GPS (provided it meets our criteria) and put together an attractive package for you on the GPS of your choice. **Tel: 01768 885855** for more information.

### Try before you buy

Still can't decide? The smart way to find out which is the right model for you is to come on one of our of our courses, use one of our loan GPS, try a variety of different models and let us advise you on the best choice for your needs.



Need



Help



### to Get to Grips with GPS?

**Would you like to improve your GPS & Navigation Skills or just learn what a GPS can do?**

Then why not learn from the experts? GPS Training is the nations leading provider of GPS & Mapping Software Training Courses, and are Recognised Outdoor Activity Members (Cumbria Tourist Board) and approved training partners to Garmin, Magellan, and Memory-Map. They have an excellent range of courses on offer designed for every level of experience and include the chance to learn how to use GPS on up to date colour machines.



knowledge

Peter Judd & Simon Brown of GPS Training have written a useful book entitled "[Getting to Grips with GPS](#)" published by Cordee it lifts the lid the rapidly advancing world of GPS technology. It includes step-by-step guides for the two leading brands Garmin & Magellan; an excellent chapter covering the use of digital maps like Memory-Map and more importantly how to use it. Practical self assessment tasks help you get to grips with your GPS and provide a great way of checking your

