

GPS Training Satmap Active 10 Plus Review

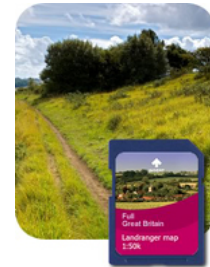
Our first reaction to the Active 10 when launched was nice but needs some more work to make it a more complete navigation solution. We have recently revisited and retested the Active 10 plus on the hill and during our training courses. Mainly in response to requests from our customers and some good reports we received from the guys on Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team.

So what's new or included in the Active 10 Plus package that could make us change our minds? Firstly the guys at Satmap have completely addressed battery issues by offering 3 power options as standard in the box. You can choose between using AA batteries (plug in cradle) and smart lithium battery, both options plug to the same source.

- ✚ 3 x AA batteries - Standard or Lithium (recommended)
- ✚ Smart lithium battery (mains re-charger included)
- ✚ 12v DC vehicle power cable (cigarette lighter to mini USB)

In common with most high end mapping GPS the Active 10 plus displays your position centre screen and redraws the map as you move, this type of use has the potential to eat batteries, added to which as I'm a great fiddler, the more you fiddle the more battery use. After an overnight charge I used the unit all day on the hill with barely a dent in the battery indicator which was very impressive and a vast improvement on previous performance.

I used the Active 10 plus with OS Whole GB mapping on a plug & play card; all I had to do to access maps was to simply slip the card into the SD card slot and switch on, I found the screen bright with the OS mapping easy to see even in sunlight.



In all fairness it took me a day of playing to get my head around the operating system mainly because I was in a traditional GPS mode of thinking, once I dismissed that and understood how easy the Satmap was to use I started to navigate with the unit in a completely different fashion; more like a moving map with reference points. In fact by the end of the day I was wondering why you would need to use waypoints or routes at all as they merely cluttered the screen.

The star of the operating system is the onboard route planner; from the start of your proposed route you pan the screen and click/enter where you wish to add another point and so on, then just start walking, its as easy as that, no PC's needed as you can see on the map where you are placing your route points.

Importing routes and trails to the Satmap is done by a proprietary piece of software downloadable direct from their website called SatSYNC; the guys from Satmap have taken the wise decision to use the international GPS gpx.file format, meaning that files created in your favourite software or downloaded from the web from sites like Walkingworld and Geocaching.com can be uploaded from your PC direct to your Satmap.



On our previous look at the Satmap there was no international dimension to the unit; this has now changed with the Active 10 plus; it comes with options to change the position format settings and with a world basemap pre-loaded to the internal memory of the unit. All of which gives the unit a platform to accept maps from around the world, with maps for Austria, Germany and Switzerland already available; Satmap is currently preparing mapping for other areas in Western

Europe and beyond.

Finally we come to one of the most interesting aspects of new Active 10 plus; free access to registered users of unlimited access to an online route planning tool. It's long been a complaint from GPS users wishing to create waypoints, routes etc on their PC that they have to pay twice for their OS maps; once for the PC and then again for the GPS. Satmap are the first company to offer the GPS user access to whole GB OS maps online at both 25k & 50k scale, in the case of the Active 10 plus the one off fee for this service is included in the price of the unit. (I once asked for a quote for whole GB OS 25k maps - £1800 just to give you an idea of the value of this offer)



The route planner is accessed through the Satmap website; its good but don't expect the sophistication perhaps of Memory-Map or Quo, our take is that the route planner is working under new OS terms and conditions (hence the 2km sized map portion perhaps the only limitation of the planning tool) but it does deliver all most users require without the whistles and bells of a PC based digital mapping system. This type of online route planner is the

future; it's taken many years of negotiation with Ordnance Survey to reach agreement for this type of online mapping use. Expect more developments in this area with more companies providing online or in the clouds mapping in the future.

In general our experience is that most users just want to create routes & trails save them to a PC, share routes perhaps, print out a map for use in the field and transfer data to and from a GPS. The Satmap route planner does all this and gives you access to maps that would otherwise cost you a fortune to purchase, we suspect that some users would still want to have their own maps on their PC but for most users this is a great offer.

To sum up we think the Satmap is a serious contender in the Handheld GPS stakes, and GPS Training is happy to recommend it to our customers, we now have the Active 10 plus (RRP £380) in stock and have set up these two great money saving deals.

Active 10 + including All National Parks 50k scale £380.00 Save £50

Active 10 + including Whole GB 50k scale £499.00 Save £80

For more information call 01768 885855 or visit www.gpstraining.co.uk