

# The Rogaine Guide

For someone new to our sport, knowing what to do to prepare and compete in a rogaine can be a little intimidating. We want you to have a safe and enjoyable event so we've prepared this short guide to help you get the most from your rogaining experience.

A reference list of other rogaining websites is provided at the end of this document. They can give assistance with more technical matters such as navigation.

For a description, and a list of the rules, of rogaining please visit:

<http://rogaine.asn.au>

And remember, other rogainers are a great source of info and advice.

## Safety

Event organisers aim to provide a safe but challenging experience. However there are risks in the bush you should be aware of and prepared for - notably snakes, fractured or sprained limbs, heat stress or hypothermia, and getting lost. Good preparation and common sense will help you avoid or deal with most of the hazards. Ensure you are aware of basic first aid and remain calm if things go wrong. Help is near, even if difficult to reach. Your team-mates and other teams on the course are your best support if you get in trouble. With most problems, stop and seek help. Use the whistle to attract attention. If none is forthcoming, try to reach the nearest track and wait for help to arrive. You may get mobile coverage from higher points on a course so note down the organiser's mobile number before the start. Finally, be assured that if you don't turn up at the finish, someone will come looking for you.

In relation to the more specific hazard of snake bites, **do not attempt to move a snake bite victim!** The venom will circulate faster if you try and get them to walk. Get help from another team by blowing on your whistle, apply a bandage along the limb from the foot or hand to the body (a second bandage may be necessary to fully bandage a leg), splint the limb, and wait for help to reach you. In turn, if you hear a whistle on course, please abandon your course and offer immediate assistance.

If there is any hint of fire on course, or the weather has turned violent, then return to the Hash House as quickly and as safely as possible. Organisers will take note of weather conditions prior to the event and call off or delay if conditions look risky.

## What should I bring to a rogaine?

Generally for each rogaine you need to bring the following:

- Printed and signed indemnity forms for all members of the team
- A compass, with a good sized base plate for taking accurate bearings
- Comfortable clothing suitable for bush walking and the likely event weather, including a thermal top and good waterproof jacket with hood.
- Plate, mug and cutlery for the yummy nosh available at the end of the event.
- Sunscreen, sun hat, sunglasses, Vaseline, beanies/gloves, and insect repellent.
- Change of clothes for after the event, include a wash cloth or towel to freshen up.
- Sufficient water for before, during and after event.
- Adhesive contact and scissors for waterproofing the maps, or a map case.
- Marker pens and highlighters, and a pencil to mark any intentions boards on the course
- A loud whistle
- Safety blanket, also called a space blanket
- First Aid Kit, including two compression bandages
- Head torch with sufficient batteries to last the entire darkness period for your event. A small LED head torch is also handy in case of failure of main lights.
- Appropriate shoes and gaiters (Dunlop Volleys have been sighted on 24 hr events but are not recommended!)
- A good quality, comfortable daypack with internal bladder or sufficient water bottle carrying capacity (usually 2 - 3L per person).
- Food for during the event (very much according to your own tastes and dependent on length of event). This needs careful thought for 12/24hr events. Remember you can always plan a route that brings you back to Hash House for a fuel-up.
- Camping equipment if you plan on catching sleep during event.

- A mobile phone (courses are frequently out of range, but in case of an emergency it may be possible to get the organisers or 000 from a high point on the course).
- Fold-up table and chairs

## Rogaining terms

**Final Instructions** - are posted on this website a week before your event. In this post, the organisers provide important information about the event location, and any special instructions they would like you to note before you leave home.

**Hash House** - the event centre, where the rogaine starts and finishes. There are usually a couple of tents, one for admin and one for the caterers.

**Rogaine time** - important that your team's watch is synchronised with the organisers'. Being late will cost you 10 points per minute! Being 30 minutes late results in disqualification.

**Course-setters notes** - these are very important! They are handed out with the maps and often contain vital safety information about things like course conditions, hazards to be avoided, water drops, and safety bearings and patrols.

**Safety bearings** - just in case you get really lost there will always be a broad direction you can go in and sooner or later you will find a big collecting feature such as a road, fence or powerline that will help you relocate or return to the Hash House. This will be detailed in the course setters notes.

**Safety patrols** - organisers will identify certain tracks and times at which a car will travel in case a team is in need of help. If you do have an accident and cannot get all the way back to HH or need to get a message back to HH, then try to meet a safety patrol.

**Flight Plan** - this is a small photocopy of the course map given to you with course maps and setters notes. Please trace your intended course and direction on it, write your team number on it, and put it in the designated box at the admin tent before the start. If we need to come searching for you, this will give us some idea of where to start looking. You do not have to stick to your plan during the event.

**Control points** - controls are allocated points in multiples of 10s. So controls 23, 27 and 29 for example are all worth 20 points each. While 50, 51 and 56 are all worth 50 points each.

**Control** - a control is a flag with a bright orange and white triangular marking. An example will be hanging at the admin tent so you know what to look for.

**Water drops** - the organisers will place large water containers at marked drops on the course. They are often the only potable water available. Dehydration in hot conditions can be life-threatening. Plan your course so

that you can visit a water drop every few hours.

**Indemnity form** - rogaining carries unavoidable risks for competitors. To protect the sport, all entrants must sign indemnity forms.

**Navlight** - The scoring system called Navlight is used. When collecting maps at the start competitors will have a wrist- band with recording disk attached. At each control a pen-like device hangs from the flag. Just place the pen-end into the disk. A red light will flash inside the pen confirming a recording. If there is no flash, punch in the traditional method (the control card, not the pen). Navlight will give an instant score and printout of your times on course at the finish and any adjustments can be made from your control card if required.

## Important rogaining rules

The rules of rogaining can be found at:

<http://rogaine.asn.au>

However the 'golden rules' are:

**Don't split the team.** Everyone has to go within 5 metres of every visited control and stay within 'unaided verbal contact' of each other at all other times. This is important for a couple of reasons. First, it is safe. It is very easy to lose your teammate/s in the bush if you don't stay close. If a separated teammate doesn't have a map or doesn't know how to read it, then you could both be in a spot of serious bother. Second, it is fair. You compete as a team, so all team members should visit the control. Split teams should be reported to organisers.

**Don't be late.** We fret if you are late! For this reason penalties are heavy for finishing late (10 points per minute, or disqualification if over 30 minutes late). Ensure that when you plan your course, you have an option to cut parts off it and return to the HH if time is tight.

**Carry the mandatory equipment.** Don't be tempted to ditch the first aid kit, safety blanket, waterproof jacket, or whistle to try and save weight. This is the falsest of economies! When needed, they are worth their weight in gold.

You can use only a map and compass for navigation. This means **no GPS, pedometers or altimeters**. We do allow you to carry a GPS recording device (e.g. Garmin watch or your phone) but this **MUST** be put at the bottom of your bag and not removed until after the finish. At championship events, we require you to bag your devices in a sealed bag.

# What do I do?

## Before the start:

1. Download indemnity forms for each team member from this website. Fill out and bring to the event.
2. Travel to the Hash House. Final Instructions appear on this website about a week before the event. Ensure you have sufficient petrol to get to and from the HH; courses are often in very remote locations far from towns.
3. Maps are handed out a few hours prior to the start. This gives you time to plan a course. This may seem like heaps of time. Be warned - it isn't! You will need every minute to get ready.
4. Try to arrive ready to compete, or dress for the rogaïne early.
5. Set up your table and chairs.
6. Start eating, and don't stop. You will need all the fuel your body can take. Bananas and fruitcake are favourites.
7. Make sure your pack is prepared. Don't forget water, food, compass, hat, thermals, waterproof jacket, whistle, first aid kit, safety blanket, head torches (including spare or extra batteries) and sunscreen.
8. Slip slop, slap. Vaseline those parts that will chafe. You know where they are.
9. Submit your signed indemnity forms (one for each competitor) to the admin tent. Include car rego where asked. This allows us to check if someone really is missing, or has left and forgotten to give us your Navlight Tags at the finish.
10. Collect maps, control descriptions, course-setters notes and flight plan.
11. Read course setters notes. Read 'em again.
12. Note any map changes from the master map near admin tent. These identify the latest out-of-bounds areas that you must respect. They may also show unmarked tracks that might be useful in route

planning.

13. Plan your course. Be realistic with your navigational and fitness abilities. Identify escape routes if you need to cut and run when time starts to run short. You will feel really desperate if you're stuck on the edge of the map with only an hour left! Don't forget to factor in appropriately spaced visits to the water drops.
14. Copy course to flight plan and submit in designated box at admin tent. Don't forget to include the direction you intend taking on your route (arrows will do) and your team number.
15. Attend briefing by organisers and note any important advice. Watches will be synchronised at the briefing.
16. Go to toilet for umpteenth time.
17. Attend the final briefing for last minute tips and wait for the siren to send you on your way.

#### **On course:**

1. Keep your fluids and food intake up, especially if weather is warm. Fill up with water when available at water drops.
2. Protect extremities in extreme weather - beanies and gloves, and water proof jacket when cold and wet. Hat is essential when hot. Long sleeved collared shirts protect neck and arms from sun, scratches and insects.
3. Stay friends at all times! Support each others spirits. Recognise when someone is flagging. Be positive. Don't be disheartened if you don't find a control.

#### **At the finish:**

1. The organisers will sound a siren to mark the end of the rogaine.
2. As you finish, record your finish with the Navlight finish punches then go directly to the admin tent to get your tags removed and downloaded.
3. Make sure you hand your Navlight tags in. It is our only record that you have returned. Otherwise you might initiate a big and unnecessary search and rescue operation.

4. Check your Navlight printout that it has recorded all your control visits. Talk to the friendly folk at Admin if it doesn't make sense.
5. Get plate, mug and fork and visit the good folk at the caterer's tent.
6. Swap outrageous tales of cunning and daring navigational choices and sheer blind luck. Make new friends in process.
7. Be nice to organisers. They have done a huge voluntary job to bring you this event. Even if a control or two has been misplaced, say thanks. Think about volunteering yourself at an event.
8. Get sleep, or have someone drive for you if you are not capable, especially after 24hr events. Buses are usually organised to and from Canberra to the HH for longer events, please use them.

Congratulations, you are now a rogainer!

### **Expert Tips:**

*Trust your compass, especially at night.*

*Be flexible with your course. Conditions may be a lot tougher in parts of the course or you may be travelling slower than anticipated. Adapt your course to suit your abilities and time availability.*

*Take time to enjoy the views! Rogaining takes you places you wouldn't go otherwise. Take the opportunity to appreciate the scenery.*

*Night is slower. Accept that as a fact. At dusk be particularly careful with navigation until you adjust to the change in pace and loss of visual space.*

### **Other guides**

Which way's North (A little dated in some aspects but still good.)

<https://vra.rogaine.asn.au/documentation/which-way-is-north-training-booklet/450-which-way-is-north/file>

Western Australian Rogaine Association - Novice Guide

<https://wa.rogaine.asn.au/index.php/information/218-wara-novice-guide>

ACT Navigation and Rogaine Skills Workshop Handouts on the website.