

Tips on Buying Your First GPS Unit

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Sample of Content:

An introduction to GPS technology, the various types of GPS systems on the market, and tips on choosing a unit that is right for you.

Content:

Anyone that enjoys the great outdoors has probably heard of GPS devices. They can come in handy when you are hiking, boating, biking, or doing just about anything else in the great outdoors. Twenty years ago, you had to rely on a compass the position of the sun and stars and your own common sense. Not anymore! Now you can have a handy little device that can pinpoint your exact location at any given time of day.

If you are in the market for a GPS device, it is important that you understand how it works. Since the GPS devices rely on air signals, you must have a GPS receiver and a clear view of the sky for them to work. When your device is turned on it is actually linking up with 27 orbital satellites in place around the planet. Four of the nearest satellites are located and the distance from them to you is calculated via the hand held device. The process is called trilateration. Based on that, the GPS device can determine where you are on the planet. Pretty neat huh?

When you look at the different types of GPS devices out there, you may wonder which one is right for you. Prices can range from \$100- 5000 dollars, so it is important to do your homework. Find out what features each device has, and determine whether you need them or not. The following is a list of tips to get you started when you are shopping.

- Research the name brand. Though GPS technology is fairly new, the manufacturer should have a long track record of creating quality electronics.
- Don't buy the cheapest or the most expensive GPS device out there. The cheapest may not meet your expectations and the most expensive one probably has too much extra stuff you will never use.
- Look for a large display, lighted if you are going to be traveling at night.
- If you plan on traveling by foot look for a model that is lightweight, and water resistant.

Once you decide on a model that you are interested in, head over to your local sports supply store. Get prices on the model above and below it for a good range. You can also try to look at auction sites like Ebay.com to find a good deal. If you are lucky enough to find one that is used, make sure to test it out first to make sure that it works properly.

Deciding to buy a GPS system is a personal one, so make sure that you understand the ins and outs of the technology. If you do a variety of different activities a good basic, waterproof model will do the trick. If you have friends or family members that own a GPS system, ask them if they are happy with their purchase. That way you can get an honest opinion on the different brands out there. An online opinion site like epinions.com is also a great place for honest answers.

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