

Touch typing skills often make it possible to use a computer more effectively. They are particularly valuable for partially sighted and blind computer users as they remove the need to constantly look between the keyboard and the screen.

To develop touch typing skills you will need some instruction on how to position your hands and which fingers to use to strike keys. Drills are used to practice each key and sequences of keys until the whole alphabet is covered.

It is worth checking with local colleges if they have courses which can be adapted. If not some of the following ideas may help:

To identify the keys:

Large print keyboard stickers: These will help you identify where the keys are, they are a learning tool rather than something to be relied upon.

Techno-Vision Systems Ltd., 76 Bunting Road Industrial Estate,

Northampton, NN2 6EE Tel: 01604 792777

Cost: £9.95 -- A choice of colours including black on white, white on black and black on yellow.

Dolphin Systems, Technology House, Blackpole Estate West, Worcester WR3 8TJ Tel: 01905 754577

Cost £15 - white on black and black on yellow

Keytools Ltd., PO Box 700, Southampton, SO17 1LQ
Tel: 023 8058 4314

Upper and lower case, lower case only yellow on black £6.95. High contrast upper case black on white, black on yellow, white on black, complete keyboard coverage £9.95.

Bump-ons: These are small stick on "blobs" which can be used to mark specific keys on the keyboard. Many people like to mark "f", "j" and "backspace". Available in different sizes and colours.

RNIB, PO Box 173, Peterborough, PE2 6WS Tel: 0845 702 3153

Computer based typing tutors

A number of these are available, but not all will be suitable for use with magnification software or speech output.

VICTAR have written a large print typing tutor which allows you to select the character size that suits you and change background and foreground colours. It also has speech output through any soundcard or an Apollo speech synthesiser. Cost: £30

VICTAR, School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT Tel: 0121 414 6733

If you have your own magnification software you could make use of a free DOS typing tutor available from AbilityNet.

Tape tutorial

If you would prefer to listen to instructions on tape you can obtain a tape course from:

RNIB, PO Box 173, Peterborough, PE2 6WS Tel: 0845 702 3153
"Learning To Touch Type"
Cost: £15

Also RNIB's tape library has the following title which can be borrowed if a member:

Typing First Course Handbook & Solutions
A. M. Drummond (T2468)

28 cassettes only available on 2 track.

May 2003