

Dyslexia and Learning to touch-type

Choosing a Programme

Which programme?

- choose something that maintains interest but does not become difficult too quickly
- check if the programme is designed for school or home use

What are your aims?

1. use of keyboard layout using correct fingers
2. accuracy
3. speed

<<Tip
avoid programmes which try to quickly develop all three at once

Does it have dyslexia friendly features?

- multi-sensory - seeing, hearing, doing
- has text AND auditory instructions (or have your text to speech software running)
- has on screen keyboard whilst you are learning
- has an uncluttered screen with minimum movement/distraction
- avoid ones that get you to type made-up words

<<Tip
it may be helpful to say the letters as you type

<<Tip
typing programmes which group similar spelling patterns can also help spelling

Using the programme and practicing

- go for frequent short sessions
- covering letter keys with stickers may prevent you looking
- stickers can also be used to convert your keyboard to lower case, e.g. those sold by Inclusive Technology
- disable autocorrect in every day word-processing work (In XP Tools>Autocorrect Options>uncheck box 'Replace text as you type')
- For more tips see: www.bdatech.org/learning/typing-skills and www.nimblefingers.com

Programmes to buy

For commercial programmes go to www.dyslexic.com/typing

Then scroll down and some suitable programmes, with their pros and cons, are listed, e.g.

- First Keys to Literacy
- Nessy Fingers
- English Type Junior
- English Type Senior
- Type Quick for Students
- Type to Learn
- Typing Instructor Deluxe
- KAZ Typing Tutor

For keyboard familiarity in Wordshark use: Bombs/Word Sort/Dictionary Fish/Holes

Free Programmes

Examples of free on-line graded courses:

1. Dancemat BBC - good fun start (for ages 7-11 approx.) www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing
2. Nimblefingers - indicates speed and errors as you type. Easy to get started. Typing tips throughout, and individual feedback possible. Some will struggle with the black print/blue background and font used in the exercises. Extra free download activities, and option to purchase more. www.nimblefingers.com
3. Typeonline - course with number practice and speed exercises. Main course has a lot of wordy text (no auditory instructions). Exercises ok for reinforcement, without the pressure of a speed game. Gives an idea of accuracy and speed at the end, but does not indicate errors as you go along. www.typeonline.co.uk
Note: the typeonline copy and speed exercises cannot be done unless you print out the passage first. (Once you start you cannot see on the screen what you are to type).

Examples of free on-line reinforcement/practice:

1. Individual letter practice (capitals only). Does not demand initial speed or accuracy. Very limited format. www.primarygames.com/langarts/cupstacking/index.htm
2. Individual letter practice (capitals only). For consolidation of skills. Demands accuracy first time. Fun/exciting. Limited format. www.tvokids.com/games/keyboardclimber
3. Individual letter practice. Type to burst the bubble. If successful, gets faster. Fun, but demanding.
www.typingmaster.com/games/bubbleapplet.asp?keys=abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz&Submit=Start+Game
4. Individual letter/word practice. Easiest level is quite demanding, and yet it is presented in a 'very young' context. Has progression and options. Good for consolidation, if the 'nursery' pictures do not bother you.
www.funschool.kaboose.com/fun-blaster/super-speller/games/game_type_me.html?g=arcade/ptypeme3
5. Words/phrases practice. Practice using a 'blocks' game idea - you have to type words or phrases before they reach the bottom. The only grading is the speed at which the blocks fall. <http://www.powertyping.com/trees.shtml>
6. Graded practice (letters/words/sentences) with different levels and an indication of progress, BUT has US spelling. www.usspeller.com/keytutor.html
7. To see how you are doing www.typingtest.com