

## Consider One Hand Typing Before Adaptive Technology

*by Lilly Walters, best selling author, and one hand typist.*

I have seven books in the marketplace. I typed every word myself, and I use one hand on a NORMAL keyboard. I am filled with a great deal of smug pride when I see members of my work team - who are all two handed - struggling with a task on the computer, and I am able to walk right over and say, "Here, let me show you how."

There are four options for those with hand disabilities; although I don't even like to mention all of them because I feel strongly about using the standard keyboard. If the user wishes to become adept at using a keyboard, and possibly pursuing technology careers that center around this important skill, consider one, or all of these:

Standard keyboard. - This is always the first option to consider. This takes one strong hand, and uses FGHJ as home base. The thumb operates the space bar. If possible, the less able hand operates the mouse. This system allows the user to compete in any mainstream environment. There are two one handed manuals available in the market place, one for about \$15 at Amazon.com. There are also free downloads of the first 39 pages of my book, *The One Hand Typing and Keyboarding Manual: With Personal Motivational Messages From Others Who Have Overcome!*, on my website, [www.aboutonehandtyping.com](http://www.aboutonehandtyping.com).

Adaptive devices. There are many devices that can be used to enter data into a computer, the most popular are the Half Keyboard, the BAT, and the Maltron, which cost from \$99 - \$1000. My website has information about these devices as well.

Alternative keyboard layouts. Many have looked for alternatives to the standard keyboard to ease the strain on the typist's hands. The two most well known are Dvoark, and Half-QWERTY. Both are faster, and easier on the hands of the typist, but not necessarily smarter, as they are not used in the regular workplace.

Voice activation. With voice recognition software, the user speaks into a microphone, and the software transcribes the users words from dictation. Voice activation will soon be a great tool when used AFTER a good understanding of the standard keyboard is learned. Just as the student must learn to read, before they are allowed to use books on tapes as their form of "reading," the student must learn to keyboard, before they use voice activation as their main data input device. Otherwise, the user will not be able to operate in environments that use only common equipment, i.e., the library, the workplace, at play with friends, etc.

Before the one handed person makes a decision which choice is best for them, ask: Is the "good" hand strong? Can it take the burden normally shared by two hands? If one hand has good usage, then, although harder on the hands, the standard keyboard is perhaps the best choice. The issue is sell-ability in the job market. Standard keyboards are more appealing to employers.