# Comfort Keyboard

### *Fully-adjustable ergonomic keyboard takes the pain out of typing*



Marketing professionals are quick to slap the "ergonomic" label on any device with a unique industrial design, but few such products actually reduce the causes of debilitating repetitive stress injuries such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. The Comfort Keyboard is a notable exception because it is completely adjustable and demonstrably superior to standard keyboards.

The Comfort Keyboard is available in either black or beige, with ADB (Apple Desktop Bus) or USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports for old or new Macs, respectively. The USB model reviewed here also works with Wintel clones, and can be purchased with a built-in hub offering one or two additional ports ($10 each) so other devices can be conveniently plugged into the keyboard. Because the hub adheres to the emerging USB 2.0 standard, the Comfort Keyboard is likely to remain fully compatible with Mac models which may adopt this new technology in the future.

The Comfort Keyboard has a total of 105 full-size, full-stroke keys divided into three sections which can be rearranged on the metal base track (at six pounds, it's not too heavy for placing on your lap). By sliding the sections apart to shoulder width, your wrists needn't bend outwards to place your fingers on the home row, so ulnar deviation is reduced. And since each section can be rotated 360 degrees around and tilted up to 90 degrees vertically, your palms needn't be facing down, so pronation is reduced. In essence, you can conform the keyboard to your hands' most natural and neutral positions, rather than twist and turn your wrists and scrunch your shoulders to use a standard keyboard. Not only does your posture improve, but you no longer have to stretch to reach "faraway" keys like the number 6 and Delete.

Even though the keyboard sections are fully-adjustable, all it takes to secure one is a simple twist of the large sprocketed wheel underneath. Then the section remains in place and can stand up to rather forceful hunt and pecking, but you'll want to keep children from pounding on the Comfort Keyboard or sticking their little fingers into the metal brackets holding up each section.

The manufacturer suggests gradually separating and tilting the sections over time to make the transition easy. While the keyboard may look strange when configured like a pyramid or accordion, touch typists acclimate quickly because all of the keys on the two QWERTY sections of the Comfort Keyboard are in the same relative positions as an Apple Pro Keyboard. The only differences are that the function keys are offset by one row, plus the "Command" key is labeled "Alt" and the "Option" key has a disc icon. You can request stickers with the appropriate labels from the manufacturer, and there are plans to eventually include replacement keycaps for Mac users.

As on all PC keyboards, the numeric keypad section differs slightly from the standard Apple keypad in that there is no equal sign above the number 8. Furthermore, the volume up/down, mute, and drive eject buttons are completely missing (ditto the power button found on older Apple keyboards). The lack of these specialty keys is the biggest drawback to the Comfort Keyboard. The manufacturer promised to address this shortcoming with a downloadable update, but it wasn't released in time for us to review.

There's no way to physically reproduce Apple's unique keypad configuration, but using the built-in remapping feature of the Comfort Keyboard, you can change key assignments. Remapping keys and creating macros is a rather cumbersome process that involves lots of bizarre keystroke combinations that are impossible to remember, and the poorly written documentation isn't much help. Fortunately the flash memory retains your unique programming even when your Mac is turned off or the keyboard is moved to a new computer, so you needn't repeat the process once the keyboard has been configured to your liking.

Once you've used a Comfort Keyboard for a while, switching back to a standard keyboard is quite literally a pain. And if you think the $300 price tag stings, it's nothing compared to the cost of physical therapy, prescription drugs, and lost productivity that can result from severe repetitive stress injuries.
-Owen W. Linzmayer

Comfort Keyboard: 🍎🍎🍎🍎
Comfort Keyboard Co. Inc.  |  www.comfortkeyboard.com  |  414-481-2056  | $299
**Pros**: Standard keyboard layout, fully-adjustable sections, solid construction.
**Cons**: Non-Apple keypad configuration, remapping keys and creating macros cumbersome, poorly written documentation.
**Requires**: ADB or USB port
**macHOME recommends**: USB port