

**This sample is of course taken out of context and represents only a part of the overall keyboarding technique taught in *Typing Without Repetitive Strain*.**

## TYPING EXERCISE 2 - Touch the Keys

Learn to be **sensitive** to the **surface** of the keys. The alternative is to be **insensitive** to the keys, which means that you're not in control of them.

### Suss out those keys!

Natural typists use **touch** to make contact with the keys, and **vision** to judge the text. Touching the keys corresponds to gripping a tennis racket.

**Blind people can play the piano! Some famous names come to mind. They use touch as a means of finding and contacting the keys, and hearing to judge the sound.**

**Natural typists use touch as a means of finding and contacting the keys and vision to judge the text.**

Blind people must depend on their sense of touch, which they develop to an unusually high degree. Those of us who are not blind would also be at an advantage if we developed our sense of **touch**.

We need to learn to rely on our sense of touch to make contact with the keys. Without touch, you wouldn't know whether or not you were in proper contact with anything. Vision - which is useful for looking at things - is of little real help when it comes to making sensitive contact with a delicate object.

### Hands On Experience - Put it into Practice!

Now sensitively **touch** and **make contact with** your computer keys without depressing them. Become conscious of what the surfaces of the keys **feel like** when touched very lightly by the sensitive fingertips.

Cultivate your tactile sense generally. For a while, become vividly aware of what it feels like to make tactile contact with objects of different textures. Then apply your new sense of touch to the computer keys!

Try closing your eyes and exploring the keyboard with your fingertips. Do the keys feel rough or smooth?

When typing, never strike the keys! Striking destroys tactile refinement.

## Summary

### *Typing Exercise 2 - Touch the Keys*

- *Contact the keys by touching and feeling the surfaces with the sensitive fingertips. Remember the sensation. Never Strike!*

## TYPING EXERCISE 3 - Key Depression

We have learned in Typing Exercise 1 that the weight of the fingers is not sufficient to depress the keys. Therefore finger **pressure** must be needed to depress them. Finger pressure originates in the knuckles.

The finger should:

- fall towards the key by relaxing the knuckle.
- contact and feel the key on the way down.

- continue to follow through and depress the key by using gentle finger pressure (and movement) from the knuckle. To put it another way, the finger need only apply pressure after the key surface has been touched. The amount of pressure required is slight.

In normal typing the three elements listed above will occur in one flash of continuous downwards finger movement that can be quite rapid. They will blend seamlessly. But they need to be considered individually when they are being learned. Please understand that they are not separate actions in practice, but one unbroken descent of the finger.

### Brain or brawn?

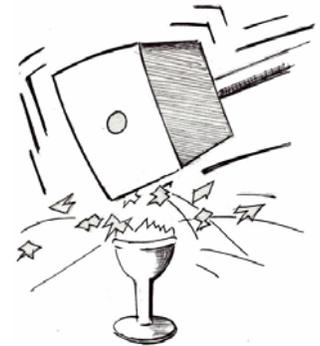
Unfortunately conscientious people often imagine that the more strength they use, the better their work might be. And it's conscientious, hard working people who so often get injured.

We are going to learn a more natural way.

Gentle - never heavy - downward pressure of your fingers and thumbs on the keys and space bar is all that's required.

### Do you use a hammer to break eggs - or an ax to slice bread?

A common mistake is to use the downward strength of the arms and hands, as well as the fingers. This can be a cause of serious trouble. It's the equivalent of using a hammer to break an egg - or an ax to cut a slice of bread! Gentle **finger pressure alone** is needed to overcome the slight resistance of the keys. The fingers don't need any help from the much stronger hands or arms, which should hover continuously as the fingers depress the keys.



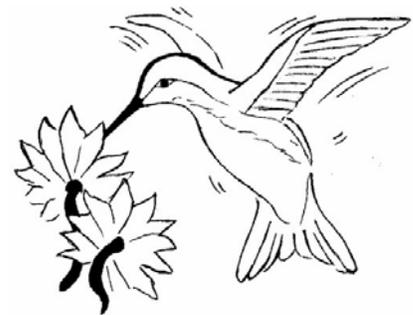
### Helicopters, hummingbirds, arms and hands hover!

As explained previously, your forearms and hands should hover continuously while you are typing **despite** the downward pressing of your fingers. To put it another way, your forearm and hands should support themselves while your fingers are pressing down gently.

It's not easy at first to understand that the fingers should depress the keys at the same time as the forearms and hands carry their own weight along. Think of it this way: a hummingbird uses it's beak to sip nectar at the same time as it hovers.

### Don't lock yourself up!

As mentioned already, trouble arises when the downwards strength of the hands and arms is used in addition to the downwards pressure of the fingers. In this scenario -



which is extremely common unfortunately - the arm, hand and fingers become viciously **trapped** between the shoulder and the immovable keyboard every time a key is depressed! This encourages the wrists, elbows and shoulders (and sometimes even the neck, back and chest) to become tense and full of muscular conflict. Instead, everything should be kept as **pliable** and **yielding** as possible.

It is also unsatisfactory for the arm to be too relaxed as the fingers depress the keys, because then the fingers and hand will be forced to support the weight of the arm. Arm weight can be almost as damaging as arm strength. When the arm is too relaxed, its weight bears down upon the hand and fingers, which then become trapped between the keyboard and the arm every time a key is depressed. The arm should hover.

## If it doesn't move it doesn't mean it's not up to mischief!

If you're typing by using the finger pressure alone, then only the fingers will move downwards as the keys are depressed. However it does not follow that if the fingers only are moving, the strength of the hands and arms is not being used. Movement and physical exertion are not dependent upon one another.

For example, if you were to press your arm down onto a desk or table strongly the pressure would not be seen and there would be no visible movement. If you hold your arm in the air and then relax it there is movement as it falls due to gravity, but no physical exertion. If you cup your palms together and press hard you are using plenty of arm strength, but there is no movement. That's what I mean by saying that movement and physical exertion are not dependent upon one another. Movement, or lack of it, is a highly misleading method of judgment.

### Remember:

- Do not strike the keys!
- Striking destroys every correct action.
- It encourages inappropriate hand and arm pressure.
- Gentle finger pressure is all that's required.

That the forearm and hand are motionless as the fingers depress the keys is inadequate proof that the forearm and hand are not pressing down too. Conscientiously cultivate the **feeling** that the forearm and hand are hovering.

## The inner game of typing

The inner action of the forearm and hand carrying themselves along is **invisible!** In other words, it must be **felt**. **The only correct approach can be to understand your inner physical feelings and sensations.** Many of these have already been taught in the previous exercises.

## Tend to your thumbs

Be particularly careful with the actions of your thumbs on the space bar. Your thumb will tend to drag your arm down with it unless you make sure you are using your thumb from the joint next to the wrist. The movement of the thumb from the correct joint was explained fully on Day One – Relaxation Exercise 4. Everything that applies to your fingers applies to your thumbs too.

The space bar should be depressed by the gentle pressure of your thumb alone - not by the more powerful strength of the hand, or the hand plus the arm. If the downward strength of the hand - or worse of the arm - is used every time a space is typed, **then the arm is not hovering continuously.**

Having understood the above, you are ready to put it into practice.