

Lifelong Learning/Computers/Augmentative Communication

Assistive technology relating to lifelong learning, computers, and augmentative communication applies to such areas as: study skills, reading, writing, information gathering, learning, productivity and communication, work station design, hardware adaptations, computer literacy and software. Related devices include large print books, modified computer keyboards for persons with limited hand capabilities, and communication boards for those with speaking difficulties. Here are a few of the devices that can assist you:

Reading Aids: For those with limited hand strength or dexterity, book stands and page turners are available. These kinds of devices position the book at a readable angle and help to keep the pages in place. Weighted bookmarks may also be used to keep pages in place. Magnifiers are used to enlarge the print. These devices come in a variety of styles.

Writing Aids: For those who may have difficulty writing or typing, many tools are available for their use. Pen/pencil grips prevent finger cramping and provide a more secure, comfortable hold. Specially weighted pens also help those with slightly unsteady hands. Another type of writing aid straps the pencil to your hand, allowing you to write using minimal grip.

Adaptable Computer Accessories: Special keyboards can be used for persons with low vision or limited hand dexterity. Keyboards are now available in Braille, enlarged print, as well as in different layouts that are easier to use. Some programs allow you to have your keyboard on the screen and typing can be done by pointing to the desired letter. For those unable to use a keyboard, voice activated computers are now available. A wide variety of computer accessories exist to make usage easier.

Things you can do to continue learning:

- Take a few classes at a community college or university. It's never too late to go to school.
- Many community centers or craft shops offer workshops and classes for little or no charge.
- Subscribe to a senior citizens magazine like *Modern Maturity*. They often have good suggestions on how you can continue to learn and stay active.
- Learn how to use the computer with your grandchildren. It's a great way to spend time with them, and everyone will benefit from the experience.