

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing!

Help Index



[How Do I Start?](#)

[Learning to Type](#)

[Main Menu Commands](#)

[Graph Menu Commands](#)

[Keyboard Shortcuts](#)

[Ergonomics](#)

How Do I Start?


When you start Mavis Beacon, you'll see the Welcome dialog, where Mavis gives you three choices:

For an orientation tour, select "Meet Mavis"

For immediate help, select "Help for New Users"

To start your typing lessons, select "Start the Lessons"

If you are a new typist, Mavis will ask you your name followed by a few questions concerning your typing ability and age and the lessons will begin.

If you need help at any time, press the function key F1 

Have fun and good learning!

Learning to Type

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing gives you numerous paths to typing success. You can let Mavis lead you through a complete curriculum or you can freely move around the system and spend time only on the subjects of most interest to you. Here are some topics to help you choose how to best benefit from Mavis' instruction:

Standard vs. 10-Key Lessons

Chalkboard

Workshop

Classroom

Race Game

Grocery Checkout Game

Standard vs. 10-Key Lessons

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing has two main modes of keyboard instruction. The first, called Standard Typing, teaches you the skills you'll need to perform everyday typing tasks. The second teaching mode, called 10-key typing, teaches you to perform speedy numerical data entry tasks as required for operation of adding machines or cash registers.

To toggle between standard and 10-key lesson mode, choose the Take 10-Key Lessons selection from the Lessons menu. To change back, choose the Take Typing Lessons selection.

Chalkboard



The Chalkboard is where you get your assignment from Mavis. The suggested lesson is designed to quickly correct any problems that you appear to have. You choose what you want to do next by selecting one of the choices beneath the board. Usually, you just accept the offered suggestion by choosing OK.

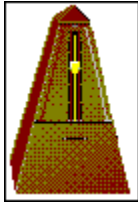
OK: Choose OK if you like the lesson Mavis has offered.

Next: If you do not want to take the lesson Mavis has suggested, choose Next, and a new lesson is presented on the board.

First: Choose first to return to the First suggestion Mavis offered you for this lesson.

Last: Re-do the previous lesson from this session. If you have not yet completed any lessons during the current session, this choice is not available.

Workshop



Mavis directs you to the Workshop when she's found that you have a specific problem that needs attention. A number of teaching aids are available to help you, such as:

Speed meter: This meter shows your current typing speed in words per minute.

Accuracy, Speed and Completion: The three bars at the left side of the screen labelled A, S and C show relative measures of **A**ccuracy, current **S**peed adjusted for errors and percentage **C**ompletion of the current exercise.

Clock: At the right side of the screen is an analog clock which shows how much time you've spent in the current exercise.

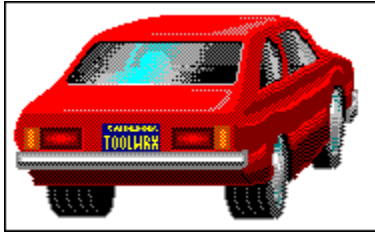
Metronome: Mavis often suggests that you practice with the metronome to build rhythm in your typing.

The operation of all of these features can be modified in the Settings dialog available through the Typist Options selection of the File menu.

Classroom

Mavis takes you to the Classroom after you've been given a suggestion for improvement or have learned a new concept. In the Classroom, you'll work on text selected specifically to help you reinforce what you've learned.

Race Game



The objective of the typing race game is to type with greater speed and accuracy than the pace car, which travels at a preset speed (usually just a little bit faster than you have been typing to give you a challenge).

To play, just type the words displayed in the sky. Your current speed and accuracy appear on the two meters. The number of 'miles' you race appears in the odometer. When your average adjusted words per minute score is greater than the pace car's you will pass the pace car and you'll be able to see it in your rear view mirror.

But watch out - if you can't keep the pace, the challenger zooms ahead and disappears in the distance.

Grocery Checkout Game

The Grocery Checkout game tests your 10-key speed in the Grocery Store, where grocery items travel past the cash register. When an item reaches the price scanner (shaped like an 'X' on the counter) its price will be shown on the screen below the item.



You must enter the price quickly on the numeric keypad or the item will fall to the floor. If you enter the correct price, the grocery item will fall into the waiting grocery sack.

Main Menu Commands

Mavis Beacon's main menu contains the following items:

File
Lessons
Keyboard
Style
Progress
Help

"File" Menu Commands

The File menu contains commands to enroll a new student, remove a student and modify student options:

New Typist...
Delete a Typist...
Typist Options
Typist Personal File...
Exit

"New Typist..." Menu Item

Use this option to log in as a new or different typist.

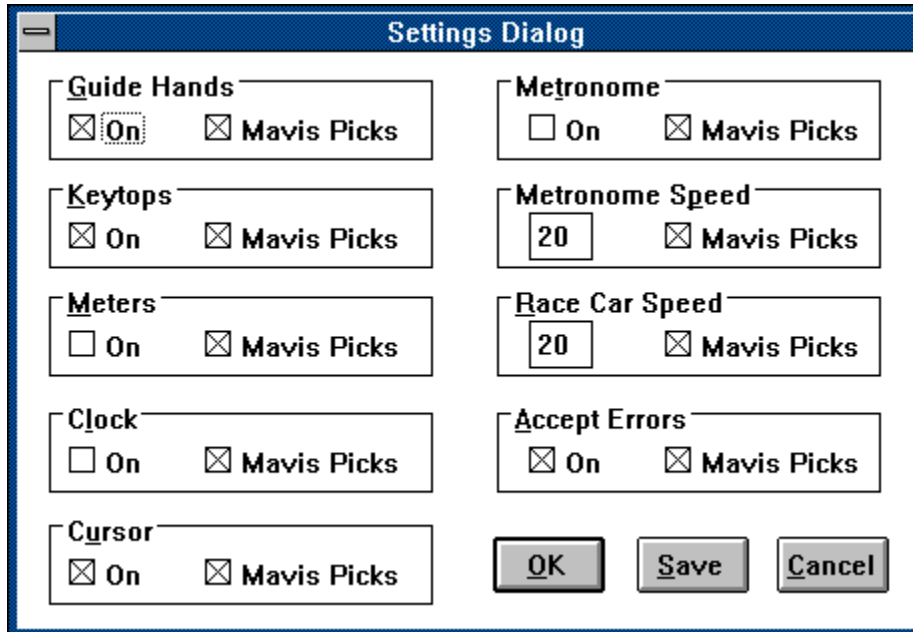
"Delete a Typist..." Menu Item

To remove a typist from Mavis' records, select this option. It deletes the user's name and all record of typing progress. Be careful - once a user is deleted, there is no way to get any of the information back.

You are not allowed to delete typists if you are only browsing.

"Typist Options" Menu Item

Mavis allows you to customize the typing environment to meet your needs. When this item is selected, Mavis displays the Settings dialog where you make your selections. If you press the Save button, this data will be restored each time you log in.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Settings Dialog" with a blue title bar. The window contains several sections, each with a title and two checkboxes: "On" and "Mavis Picks".

- Guide Hands:** On Mavis Picks
- Keytops:** On Mavis Picks
- Meters:** On Mavis Picks
- Clock:** On Mavis Picks
- Cursor:** On Mavis Picks
- Metronome:** On Mavis Picks
- Metronome Speed:** Mavis Picks
- Race Car Speed:** Mavis Picks
- Accept Errors:** On Mavis Picks

At the bottom of the dialog are three buttons: "OK", "Save", and "Cancel".

Mavis will monitor your progress and make appropriate choices for all of the listed parameters. If you to accept her suggestions, the Settings Dialog gives you control over many of the features that are used to create your lessons. Included are:

Guide Hands: Turn the shadowy Guide Hands on/off. If Guide Hands is on, when the keyboard is displayed in the Regular Typing lessons, the guide hands show you the proper finger placement for the last key pressed.

Keytops: Turn the keytop labels on/off.

Meters: Show/hide the Keyboard Meters that display your current typing speed. When Meters are on, in the Workshop digital displays show your current speed in words per minute and bar displays show accuracy, adjusted speed and percentage of lesson completed.

Clock: Show/hide lesson clock. When the clock is displayed, it shows how much time you've spent in the current lesson.

Cursor: Turn the typing cursor under the current letter on/off.

Metronome: Turn the metronome on/off.

Metronome Speed: Change the speed of the Metronome to adjust your typing speed. Mavis will normally set this value automatically, but you may adjust it here.

Race Car Speed: Set the speed of the pace car in the Race Game. **Mavis will normally set the speed automatically, but you may change the setting here.**

Accept Errors: Choose to accept your typing errors or be forced to correct them before continuing. Usually, errors are accepted. If you make a mistake, the typing cursor moves forward and the error stays on the screen. You can backspace and correct the error (unless backspace has been disabled from the Keyboard Menu). (For some lessons, Mavis wants to be sure that you type each letter correctly. Then she sets Drill mode, which does not move the cursor forward if you make an error. You must press the correct key to proceed.)

"Typist Personal File..." Menu Item



This item allows you to change your personal data which is maintained in Mavis' files. You'll go to the Personal Information dialog where you may make and save your changes.

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Personal Information". It contains the following fields and options:

- First Name: Jane
- Last Name: Doe
- Speed Goal: 35 (with left and right arrow buttons)
- Time Limit: 0 (with left and right arrow buttons)
- Age Group:
 - 5 to 8 years
 - 8 to 13 years
 - 14 to Adult
- Skill Level:
 - Beginner
 - Intermediate
 - Advanced
- Buttons: OK, Cancel

In this dialog you can change your name, age group, typing skill level, speed goal and time limit for each lesson.

The *speed goal* is used by Mavis to judge your progress. Mavis will periodically adjust this number based on your performance.

The *time limit* sets the maximum amount of time you wish to spend in any one lesson. Most lessons have unlimited time (indicated by a time limit of zero). When the time limit is reached, Mavis will ask whether you want to continue.

The *age group* setting is used to select appropriate text material for the lessons.

The *skill level* settings help Mavis determine a lesson plan tailored to help you learn efficiently.

Beginner: If you have never typed before, or know nothing of the touch typing method, you are a Beginner. If you can type a little, but no faster than 20 words per minute, you should still select the Beginner category. These lessons will increase your speed and prepare you for the next step.

Intermediate: A typing speed of over 20 words per minute puts you in the Intermediate category. Here, Mavis reviews keyboard fundamentals, analyzes your typing, and suggests lessons to help you improve.

Advanced: If you consider yourself an advanced typist, the Advanced lessons will help perfect your speed and accuracy.

Press the OK button to accept the changes or cancel to retain the original settings.

"Exit" Menu Item

When selected, the Exit item saves all student information and quits Mavis Beacon.

"Lessons" Menu Commands

The Lessons menu lets you change the course of Mavis' lesson at any time or even create your own custom lesson. The following options are available:

Keys & Fingers

Free Typing

Play a Game Instead/Do a Drill Instead

Custom Lesson...

Take 10-Key Lessons/Take Typing Lessons

Pause Lesson

Quit Lesson

"Keys & Fingers" Menu Item



The Keys & Fingers tutorial helps you review the proper fingers for typing each key. Press any key and the guide hands will display the correct typing finger. If you have Audio Messages turned On, some of the keys will be spoken as they are typed.

Press ESC to return to your previous task.

"Free Typing" Menu Item



Free Typing practice lets you type on your own for as long as you like. This can ease the stress of a lesson, and allow you to concentrate on an area which may need improvement.

"Play a Game Instead/Do a Drill Instead" Menu Item



Instead of doing what was suggested on the Chalkboard, this lets you use the same lesson plan that Mavis has chosen, but in a the opposite format: if Mavis had planned a drill, the menu item would appear as **Play a Game Instead**. If a game has been suggested, the item would read **Do a Drill Instead**.

In standard typing mode you'll go to the Race Game or to the Classroom or Workshop. In 10-key mode, you'll play the Grocery Checkout Game, or go to the Classroom.

"Custom Lesson..." Menu Item

Normally, Mavis creates customized lessons for you. Mavis chooses a drill, the race game, practice work, text passages from over a dozen sources, emphasis on speed or accuracy, audio-visual aids, and special exercises. If you want, you can make any or all of these choices yourself in the Custom Lessons dialog.

The screenshot shows the "Custom Lesson Options" dialog box. It has a blue title bar and a white background. The dialog is organized into several sections:

- Lesson Type:** A group box containing three radio buttons: "Keyboard" (selected), "Race", and "Guided Key Tour".
- Emphasis:** A group box containing three radio buttons: "General" (selected), "Accuracy", and "Speed".
- Lesson Length (words):** A text input field containing the number "400".
- Lesson Time (Seconds):** A text input field containing the number "0".
- Target Typing Speed (WPM):** A text input field containing the number "20".
- Text Format:** A list box with four items: "Barrier Typing", "Pattern Typing", "Standard Format" (highlighted), and "Transcription Typing".
- Lesson Text:** A list box with four items: "500 Most Used Words" (highlighted), "Employment Tests", "Famous Quotes", and "Fiction".

On the right side of the dialog, there are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".

You may select from the following options:

Lesson Type: Choose standard keyboard practice, the Race Game or the Guided Key Tour.

Emphasis: Tell Mavis to emphasize Accuracy, Speed or General skills (a combination of accuracy and speed).

Lesson Length: Choose the number of words (of five letters average length) in the lesson.

Lesson Time: A zero means unlimited length. Enter another value to limit your time in the lesson.

Target Typing Speed: This value will be used to set the metronome speed or the speed of the pace car in the racing game.

Text Format: This setting determines the type of lesson you want. In addition to Standard typing lessons you may choose:

Barrier: Trains your eye to move ahead just the proper number of letters by the rather fiendish method of displaying only a few letters of practice text beyond the point at which you are typing.

Transcription: Gives you practice typing from text on paper. In a transcription

lesson, Mavis prints the text out on your printer before starting the lesson. The text will not be shown on the screen - you must type it from the printed copy.

Pattern Typing: Increases your speed by making you correctly type common letter sequences such as "ing". If you make an error anywhere in one of these sequences, Mavis makes a distinctive sound, and the cursor snaps back to the beginning of the pattern. To show you what is going on, the patterns within each word are highlighted.

Shift Key Practice: Gives you practice by turning the first letter of each word in the lesson into an upper case letter.

Dictation Typing: Dictation Lessons teach you to type while listening to a recorded voice, and work the same way as a Dictaphone. Like Transcription Lessons, dictated lessons are not displayed on the screen, so you must listen carefully and use the pause and rewind controls to be as efficient as possible.

Lesson Text: Select practice text from numerous sources. You'll notice that some text is specially selected to emphasize certain problems such as left or right hand, problem characters or specific characters. You can take practice text from a file that you create yourself. To use your own file, use your word processor to create a text file with no special control characters in it. Make sure that it has the file extension .TXT. Next, select the "Your Own File" option in the Lesson Text scroll box and tell Mavis to load your pre-made file.

"Take 10-Key Lessons/Take Typing Lessons" Menu Item



The menu item serves as a toggle to take you between the Standard and 10-Key typing modes. A check mark on this menu item indicates that the current mode is 10-Key.

"Pause Lesson" Menu Item



Use this option to pause in the middle of a lesson or race game. Choose OK to continue.

"Quit Lesson" Menu Item

Choose this option to end the lesson or game you are currently in, and return to the Chalkboard. You can also press Escape to end the lesson.

"Keyboard" Menu Commands

The Keyboard menu commands let you tailor the keyboard operation to your taste with these options:

Keyboard Layout

End of Line Mode

Backspace Mode

Space After Periods

"Keyboard Layout" Menu Item

The Keyboard Layout menu item lets you choose the standard QWERTY keyboard layout or the Dvorak keyboard. Most keyboards in the world use the QWERTY format (so named for the upper left six keys of the top letter row). Some people, however, use an alternative keyboard layout called the Dvorak keyboard and Mavis can be configured to teach this configuration as well.

See your manual for more information on the differences between the QWERTY and Dvorak keyboards.

"End of Line Mode" Menu Item

On a typewriter, you must press the Return key at the end of each line. However, most computer word processors have a feature called "word wrap." This automatically moves you to the next line when the current line is full. This option lets you select either mode for Mavis' lessons.

"Backspace Mode" Menu Item

On word processors and some typewriters, the backspace key is an easy way to erase your typing mistakes. On most typewriters, a mistake, once made, is hard to erase. To mimic that kind of typing, use this option to disable the backspace key.

"Space After Periods" Menu Item

A common typing convention is to always put two spaces after the period or other mark at the end of a sentence. Mavis normally asks you to do just that. Use this menu entry to use a single space at the end of sentences if you prefer

"Style" Menu Commands

These menu selections let you set Mavis' teaching style:

Chatty Comments

Advice Level

Past Lessons Considered

Frustration Noticed

Play Games

Sounds

Music Is

Audio Messages

"Chatty Comments" Menu Item

If this option is on, Mavis will make occasional comments on your progress.

"Advice Level" Menu Item

Use this setting to tell Mavis whether to explain her lesson suggestions fully, or just tell you the problem, focus and suggested kind of lesson.

"Past Lessons Considered" Menu Item

This tells Mavis how much of her knowledge of your past lesson performance to use when deciding what lesson to present next. If on, she will consider not only the immediate previous lesson, but all earlier lessons.

"Frustration Noticed" Menu Item

If this option is turned on, Mavis will pay attention to your perceived frustration level when suggesting future lessons.

"Play Games" Menu Item

Occasionally, Mavis suggests a game as a change of pace from the lesson flow. For younger, students, games are suggested more often. Use this option to tell Mavis how often to suggest a game.

"Sounds are" Menu Item



Mavis gives you audible cues when you make errors, when you end a lesson and at other appropriate times. You may choose a class of sound with this menu selection. You may choose from simple beeps, bits of music or silence.

"Music is" Menu Item

If you've chosen Music from the Sounds menu item, this selection lets you select the nature of the music.

When Mavis wants to get your attention, the sound you hear will be the one selected here.

"Audio Messages" Menu Item

In the Multimedia version of Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing, Mavis will occasionally speak to you, in addition to displaying a message box on the screen. To prevent Mavis from speaking, turn this option Off.

"Progress" Menu Commands

The Progress menu commands allow you to view your progress in a number of different ways:

Show Graphs...

Report Card

Proficient Keys

"Show Graphs..." Menu Item



The Show Graphs menu item leads opens a new window containing the Graph Menu which lets you view your typing progress on any of more than twenty charts and graphs summarizing you accuracy, speed and error type.

"Report Card" Menu Item

The report card lets you view your lesson progress in summary form. Choosing the Print button (on printer equipped machines) will print a copy of the current report card.

"Proficient Keys" Menu Item



This option displays the keyboard, highlighting all of the keys for which your average speed exceeds your goal speed. If a particular key is not shown, you can assume that it either has not been tested or that it is below the average in speed and accuracy. This display can easily show your problem areas.

"Help" Menu Commands



The **Help** menu or the F1 function key accesses the familiar Windows Help system. This menu also presents you with several shortcuts for moving quickly within the Help system:

Index

Introduction

Keyboard

Menus

Audio Help

Using Help

About Mavis Beacon...

"Graph" Menu Commands

Mavis Beacon's extensive graphing capabilities can show you your typing progress in over twenty ways:

Choose a Graph

Previous Graph

Next Graph

Sort Order

Exit Graphs

"Choose a Graph" Menu Item

Select a graph to view from the list presented or move through the list using the [Previous Graph](#) or [Next Graph](#) menu items.

Mavis creates graphs for the following topics:

Progress: This graph shows your adjusted speed (including a penalty for errors) for up to 26 of your most recent sessions from oldest (left) to this one (right).

Adjusted Speed: Adjusted speed penalizes you for errors by subtracting one keystroke for each mistake. This graph shows your adjusted speed for each letter key.

Speed: This graph shows your typing speed for each letter key (while ignoring errors).

Accuracy: For each of the letters or characters shown, the graph shows the percentage of the time you type it correctly.

Problem Keys: This graph shows the keys on which Mavis believes you need the most work. Along with speed and accuracy, Mavis considers how often the character occurs in written English - so that, everything else being equal, commonly occurring characters are drilled more frequently. Mavis also considers the number of times each character was tested in past sessions so you get a chance to practice the entire keyboard. The result of all these considerations are represented on the graph. Keys that require the most work have the biggest bars.

Errors by Hand: This graph shows what percentage of the total error, in past lessons, were typed by each hand. If one hand is more error-prone, this graph will quickly point that out.

Errors by Finger: This graph shows what percentage of the total errors in past lessons were typed by each finger. If one finger or a group of fingers is more error-prone, this graph quickly points that out. Often, typists have the most difficulty with the pinks and index fingers. Finger codes used in this graph are: (1) Left pinky, (2) Left ring, (3) Left middle, (4) Left index, (5) Right index, (6) Right middle, (7) Right ring, (8) Right pinky and (T) Right thumb.

Errors by Row: This graph shows what percentage of errors in past lessons occurred on each of the four rows of the keyboard (not including the Spacebar row). The rows are listed left to right, bottom to top, respectively.

Row Errors: A "wrong row" error occurs when you are typing with the correct fingers but are basing your typing in the wrong row. A frequent mistake of this type is typing 'F' for 'R' or vice versa. (The cure for this is usually to reposition your hands over the Home Row).

Column Errors: A column error occurs when you type a letter in the correct row but in the wrong vertical column as in typing an 'R' when you intended to type a 'T'.

Mirror Errors: A mirror image typing error happens when you type a key in the correct row and column but with the wrong hand. This is, you might type a letter

in the third row, say 'E', with the third finger of your left hand when you wanted to type an 'I' with the same finger of the right hand.

Shift Errors: Shift errors include typing upper case letters where you should be typing lower case ones (or vice versa), or substituting numbers for symbols. It is important to depress the shift keys in rhythm with the rest of your key typing and to always remember to use one hand to strike the key and the other to depress and hold the shift key.

Backspace Errors: Due to the placement of the backspace key at the upper right of the keyboard, it is easy to fall off the home row after backspacing and then make another error after just having corrected the first error! This graph indicates if your typing contains this common fault. The solution is to concentrate on recentering your hands over the home row after backspacing.

Substitution Errors: This error occurs when you type a wrong letter in place of the correct letter. This is the most common typing error.

Doubling Errors: A doubling error is what happens when you type a character twice, when you only meant to type it once. An example of this is typing the word 'belt' as 'beelt.' This often happens on keys that are closely spaced together on the keyboard and when your hands are tired. Try to remember to strike the keyboard with a quick rhythmic stroke that only touches each key long enough to depress it.

Dropped Letters: A dropped letter occurs when a letter in a word is left out, as when 'omit' becomes 'omt.'

Transpositions: This error occurs when you reverse two consecutive letters in a word, such as when you type 'the' as 'eht.' Transpositions also occur when you reverse a letter and a space position or a punctuation mark, such as when you type 'a nant' instead of 'an ant.'

Between Key Errors: This error is caused by striking in between keys, resulting in typing two letters instead of one. For example, you try to type an 'A', but hit in between keys and get 'AS.' Often repositioning your entire body in front of the keyboard helps you get your overall finger placement back into shape.

Recovery After Errors: This graph shows, for each alphabetic key, a relative error ranking for recovery after making an error. Recovery measures how quickly the typist notices an error after making it and either begins to type the correct key or backspaces to the error and continues. A large number of recovery errors indicates that the typist is probably trying to type too fast for their current skill level and that they are probably watching their hands instead of the material that is being typed.

Other Errors: This graph shows all the errors that did not fit in any other category.

"Previous Graph" Menu Item

View the previous graph (as listed in the Choose a Graph menu item).

"Next Graph" Menu Item

View the next graph (as listed in the Choose a Graph menu item).

"Sort Order" Menu Item

The bar charts created by Mavis can be sorted in three different orders:

Natural order: A normal sequence, usually alphabetic.

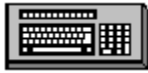
Worst First: Show keys ranked from worst to best based on performance in current topic.

Best First: Show keys ranked from best to worst based on performance in current topic.

"Exit Graphs" Menu Item

Selecting this item will close the graph window and return you to the Chalkboard.

Keyboard Shortcuts



Mavis provides a number of keyboard shortcuts (or direct action keys) for performing often used menu operations, as follows:

- F1 Go to help
- F2 Pause/Continue a lesson
- F3 Keys and fingers tour
- F4 Free typing practice
- F5 Change sounds
- F6 Turn metronome on/off
- F7 Turn guide hands on/off
- F8 Show proficient keys
- F9 Select a graph
- F10 Turn 10-Key lessons on/off

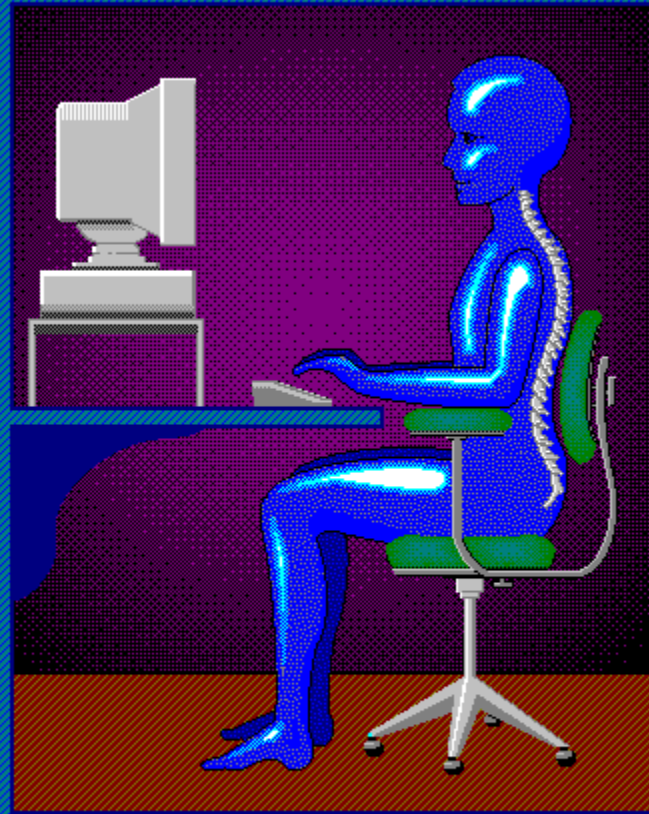
On extended keyboards, the follows function keys are also available:

- F11 Play a game instead
- F12 Typist options

Ergonomics

Using the correct posture at the keyboard can reduce eye strain and fatigue and will result in significantly better typing performance. Follow these guidelines:

1. Line up top of monitor with top of head.
2. Position screen at arm's length.
3. Relax shoulders.
4. Bend elbows 90°.
5. Keep wrists straight.
6. Line up hips, shoulders and ears vertically.
7. Place hips far back in chair, bent at 90°.



"Audio Help" Menu Item

The Audio Help Menu Item on the HELP MENU gives you a list of several topics on which you can get spoken help. Choosing an item from the list will give you a simple audio explanation, telling you how that item works.

Dictation Typing

Dictation lessons teach you to type as if you were taking dictation, and still concentrate on speed and accuracy! When in a dictation lesson the cursor shape will be changed to one of four cassette tapes, to show you the status of audio.



Audio is Playing



Audio is Paused



Audio is Rewinding



Audio has reached the end, and has stopped.

To control playback of the audio, you may use the mouse buttons, or the keyboard.

- To pause the audio, click the right mouse button, or press CTRL-P. To resume, click the right mouse button again, or press CTRL-P. Whenever you stop playback, the audio also backs up approximately one second.
- To rewind the audio, click the left mouse button, or press CTRL-R. The audio will continue to rewind as long as the button is down, and resume playing when it is released.

Choosing Dictation Lessons - From the Custom Lesson dialog, select Dictation Lesson from the Lesson Format listbox. You may choose from lesson text from two sources, Business Letters, or your own text file.

Creating Your Own Dictation Lesson - To create your own dictation lesson, you must create two files: a Text file, and a matching Wave file that contains the audio portion of the lesson. Both of the files must have the same file name, but with the extensions ".txt" and ".wav." To create the Wave file, you will need to use a Multimedia sound utility program such as the Sound Recorder. See also *Creating Your Own Dictation Lesson* in the Mavis Beacon User Guide, and refer to the Multimedia Windows User Manual for instructions on using the Sound Recorder.