



Choosing the Best Capability Switch

Capability Switches are designed for people with physical disabilities, providing them an alternative means to interact with speech generating devices, switch adapted devices including adapted therapeutic learning products, appliance controllers, and computers.

Enabling Devices manufactures hundreds of switches but they operate in one of three ways: momentary, latch (i.e. on/off), and timed:

Momentary – When you press a momentary switch, the device stays on as long as you maintain pressure on the switch.

Latch – Turns on the device when the switch is pressed once and turns off the device when the switch is pressed again. An example of a latch switch is the On/Off Jumbo Switch (#791).

Timed – When you press, it turns on a device for a preset amount of time (0 to 120 seconds).

Enabling Devices also has a Switch Modifier (#605) that will change any momentary switch into a latch or timed switch.

Which One Is Right For You?

Enabling Devices takes pride in manufacturing hundreds of durable yet extremely sensitive capability switches at reasonable prices. However, it can be difficult to decide which switch would work best for your particular set of circumstances. In this article, we set forth important factors to consider when choosing a switch. Of course, our technical staff is available to address any additional questions or concerns you may have at customer_support@enablingdevices.com.

When selecting a switch, there are several important factors to consider:

Actions

What actions can the person who will use the switch reliably perform?

Activating the switch should not cause a person undue fatigue or pain, or compromise good muscle tone.

Parts of the Body

Which part of the body will give the person the best control over switch activation?

Many switches are available for different parts of the body: head, mouth, hand, finger, etc.

Eye Switch

Eye Blink Switch (#9008)

Hand & Finger Switches

Cushion Grip Switches (#3137 & #3141)

Finger Switch (#717)

Grip & Puff Switch (#700)

Pinch Switch (#800)

Rainbow Switches (#7220, #7221, #7222 & #7223)

Thumb Switch (#802)

Head Switches**

Easy Flex Dual Ultimate Switch (#8209)

Gumball Switch on Easy Flex Mount (#1015)

Head Switch (#705)

Pillow Switch on Easy Flex Mount (#1014)

Tilt Switch (#990)

Ultimate Switches (#1671, #2700 & #8209)

Wobble Switch with Gooseneck & Clamp (#1063)

**Can also be activated by other parts of the body

Mouth Switch

Sip & Puff Switch (#970)

Small Muscle Movement

Twitch Switch (#1061)

Sound

Sound Activated Switch (#1051)

Amount of Force

How much force can the person consistently exert when hitting a switch? See our free Switch Comparison Chart for the specific amount of force needed to activate a particular switch.

► *Sensitive Switches*

If a person can only apply a minimum amount of force, then our most sensitive switches are appropriate:

Compact Switch (#714)

Finger Switch (#717)

Grip & Puff (#700)

Gumball Switches (#782R, Y, B, G, P)

Movement Sensor Switch (#655)

Saucer Switch (#718)

Twitch Switch (#1061)

Ultimate Switch (#1671)

► *Durable Switches*

If a person will exert a lot of force, the switch will need to be very durable. Most desirable is a switch that will soften the impact between the switch and the body part. Our “Soft Yet Strong” switches are:

Gooshy Switch (#634)

Ultimate Switch (#1671)

Targeting

Does the person lack good targeting ability?

If so, you should choose a switch with a larger surface area. Our largest switches are:

5" x 8" Plate Switch (#810)

Jumbo Switches (#787R, Y, B, G, P)

Saucer Switch (#718)

Textured Saucer Switches (#722)

Does the person have tremors?

The Jumbo Switch with Latch Timer (#792) has an intention adjustment which requires the user to hold the switch for a selected amount of time from 1 to 15 seconds. This intention adjustment insures that the switch will only be activated when the user deliberately intends to activate it.

Range of Motion

What is the person's range of motion?

People with fine motor skills and a small range of motion must choose a switch which is activated after a short "travel". Travel is the distance a person must press on a switch before it is activated. Our switches requiring short travel are:

- Compact Switch (#714)
- Finger Switch (#717)
- Gumball Switches (#782R, Y, B, G, P)
- Saucer Switch (#718)
- Twitch Switch (#1061)
- Ultimate Switch (#1671)

Perception

Does the person have perceptual difficulties?

If so, feedback from the switch that has been activated will be beneficial. Feedback on our switches includes lights (L), music (M), and/or vibration (V). Our switches with feedback include:

- Jumbo Switch with Vibration (#791) (V only)
- Koosh Switch (#883) (LMV)
- Musical Fan Switch w/Lights (#742) (L)
- Textured Roller Switch with lights, vibration & music (#639) (LMV)
- Vibrating Plate Switch (#1040) (V only)

The following switches have music, lights and vibration that can be individually turned on or off so you can have all three effects, just one effect or any combination:

- 9" x 6" Multi-Sensory Center (#725)
- 11" x 7" Multi-Sensory Center (#726)

Jumbo Switch w/Lights, Music & Vibration (#768)

Visual

Does the person have visual impairments?

Several of our switches are specifically designed for people with visual impairments. Several have bright locator lights, texture and the switch itself is a bright light. These switches include:

- Adjustable Angled Sequencer/Switch (#806)
- Bright Switch for the VI (#2045)
- Bright Red Switch (#262)
- Large Lens Switch (#957)
- Switch and Glow (#894)
- Tail Light Switch (#464)

Tactile

Does the person need sensory input or do they need to work on tactile defensiveness and/or sensory integration?

We have several switches to help – bumpy, shaggy, gooshy, vibrating. These switches include:

- Gooshy Switch (#634)
- Jumbo Switch with Vibration (#791)
- Light Up Gel Switch (#7452)
- Senso Dot Switches (#682)
- Sensory Plate Switch (#886)
- Soft Shaggy Switch (#3133)
- Super Bumpy Switch (#736)
- Switch and Glow (#894)
- Textured Plate Switches (#7226)
- Textured Tops for Gumball Switches (#3821)

Motivation

Do you want to motivate a student to participate in activities?

Many switches are designed to encourage a person to reach out and engage in activities. Some examples include:

- Switch & Glow (#894)
- Koosh Switch (#883)

Lady Bug Switch with lights, vibration & music (#729)
 Mini Dome Switch (#725)
 Pull & Play (#8042)
 Soft Shaggy Switch (#3133)

Mounting Switches on Wheelchairs, Tables or Bedrails:

Where will the person be using the switch?

This will determine how the switch should be mounted in order to facilitate its use. The switch should not be positioned too far away so that it is inconvenient to reach, nor should it be too close so that it interferes with other activities. Many of the switches discussed in this article may require mounting systems that are sold separately. We also sell Switch Mounting Plates (#7808 & #7809).

Switches that are sold with mounts are:

Easy Flex Dual Ultimate Switch (#8209)
 Gumball Switch on Easy Flex Mount (#1015)
 Pillow Switch on Easy Flex Mount (#1014)
 Ultimate Switches (#1671, #1551, #1552, #2700, & #8209)
 Wobble Switch with Gooseneck & Clamp (#1063)

Switches for Learning

Do you want to use switches to teach your students new skills?

► ***For Cause and Effect, we suggest:***

Musical Fan Switch with Lights (#742)

► ***For Teaching Directionality:***

4-in-1 Joystick Switch (#7301) (Four directions)

► ***To Increase Strength, Dexterity, or Fine Motor Skills, we suggest:***

Finger Isolation Button (#716)
 Cushion Grip Switch (#3137)
 Grip & Puff Switch (#700)
 Pinch Switch (#800)

Switches for Computers and iPads

► For iPads:

iPad Wireless Switch Interface (#1166)

iPad Wireless Switch (#1164)

iPad Wireless Two Switch (#1167)

Switches for the Classroom

Do different students in your classroom have different switch needs? We suggest:

Classroom Switch Kit (#7803N)

Switches for Assessment

Do you need a variety of switches to ascertain what is best for each of your clients? We suggest:

Basic Switch Assessment Kit (#7750)

Assessment Kit for More Involved Clients (#7755)

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