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## ACCESSIBILITY

### Charachorder One Review

# THIS CUSTOMIZABLE KEYBOARD IS GREAT FOR A VARIETY OF DISABILITIES



Written and Tested by [Sarah Kovac](#), disabled editor covering adaptive products.  
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## Charachorder One

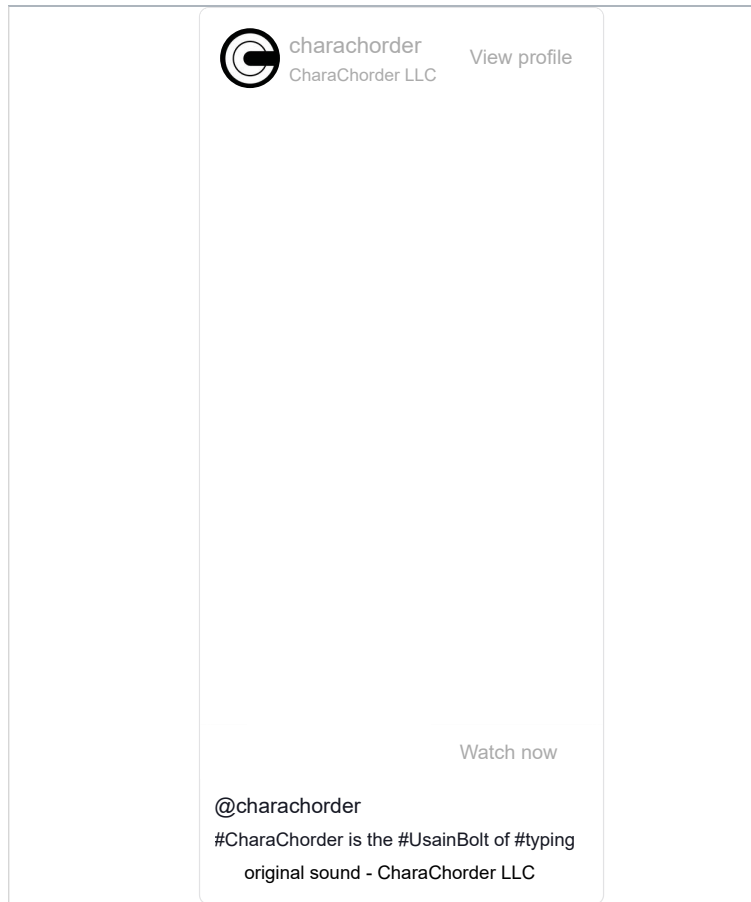
- Pros**
- + Chord typing is a great idea
  - + Ergonomic form factor
  - + Endless customization
  - + Supportive community
- Cons**
- Steep learning curve
  - Customization is cumbersome

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I work in journalism despite the fact that typing is a bit slow and difficult for me, thanks to **a disability** that restricts the use of my fingers, hands, and arms. I type with my toes, so the best I can do is a (fairly quick) hunt-and-peck with my big toes and one of my pinky toes. I have to look down at my feet to see the keyboard, and this leads to a lot of hunching over—which in turn leads to a lot of neck and back pain.

I am *always* on the lookout for new technology that might make typing easier for me, and frankly I was thrilled when I stumbled across the bizarre-looking **Charachorder One (available at Amazon)**. Not only is this keyboard highly customizable, but its chording capabilities (more on that below) allow any determined typist to achieve outrageous character entry speeds. Some users have reached (and documented on video) speeds of nearly 400 words per minute.

Don't believe me? Watch Charachorder CEO Riley Keen show off not only ridiculous speed but 98% accuracy:



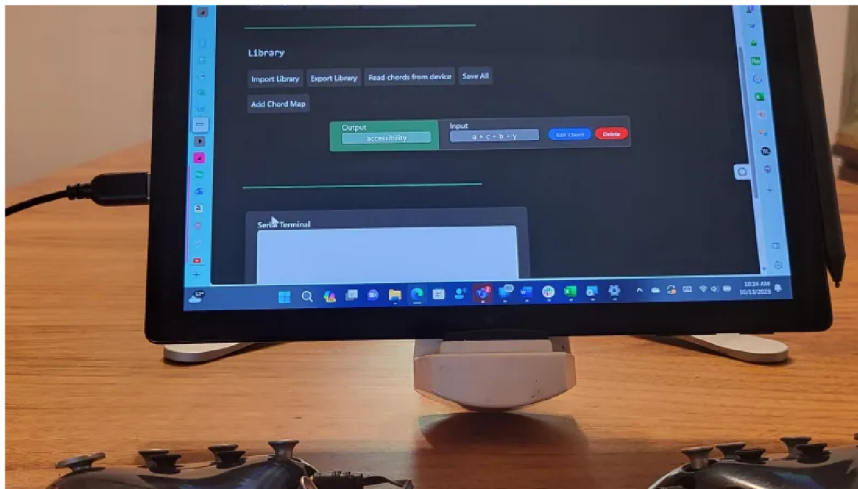
## About the Charachorder

- **Dimensions:** 12in x 4.5in x 1.25in
- **Weight:** 10.6 oz
- **Number of keys:** 18 (Remember, every key is a five-way tactile switch and therefore functions as five keys.)
- **Included accessories:** Travel case

The Charachorder's minimalistic appearance belies its multitude of functions and uses, and the case's design is both sleek and easy to carry. It travels well, but there's no specific spot for cable storage, and the cable is required for use. It can be wrapped up and lodged in the space between the cups, but this won't work well if you're one who tends to haphazardly shove cords into bags instead of wrapping them up.

# What I like about the Charachorder

## You can play it like a word piano



Charachorder's configuration site allows you to create custom chords.

Type multiple letters simultaneously, and the Charachorder deciphers what you're trying to spell. Users can program their own chords, too, so you can create abbreviations that produce full words you use most often.

For example, I could program the chord "acby" to type out "accessibility" when I type the letters a, c, b, and y simultaneously (or nearly so) and in any order. These take a while to learn, but the possibilities for chorded entry are endless when mastered.

## The form factor is ergonomic for most



The Charachorder One won't strain your hand during extended use because of its thoughtful design.

While the idea of a split keyboard is nothing new, the **Charachorder One's** hand cups are uniquely molded to fit nicely in the palm of your hand, and all the buttons are positioned exactly where your fingers naturally rest. The fact that you can remap the buttons makes it even more ergonomic, in a way.

If some buttons are harder for you to reach than others, you can just reprogram those buttons to activate letters you don't use as often, such as Q or Z. There's even a mirroring function that enables you to quickly type with only one hand.

## The customization options are almost endless



The Charachorder Lite brings the chording capabilities to a more familiar form factor.

When the Charachorder keyboard is connected to your computer (through USB, as it is not wireless) you can navigate to a website that allows you to remap all the buttons and adjust settings of the keyboard, such as whether or not the chording function is enabled, the keyboard backlight (only on Charachorder Lite) is on, or to adjust the speed of chord recognition.

With time, Charachorder users can design their ideal split-keyboard experience from the inside out.



### Charachorder One

This unique split keyboard encourages users to rethink traditional typing. After creating chords for your most used words, you'll be typing faster than ever.

**BUY NOW**  
at Charachorder

## It comes with a supportive community



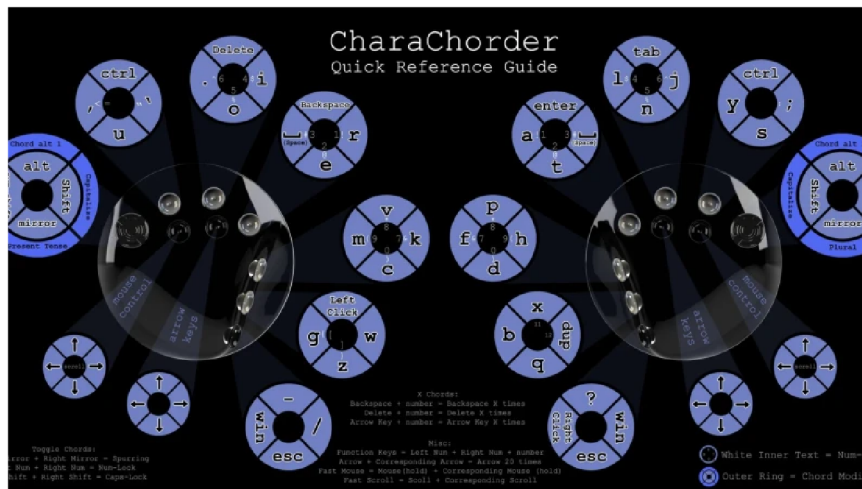
The protective case zips closed and stands up well to regular use.

The **Charachorder Discord group** is full of people excited about this technology and happy to help others learn to use it. When I first started using this keyboard, I asked *many* questions in different channels and always got a quick, thorough response.

People in the community are constantly sharing new ways to use the keyboard, designs for DIY accessories, individual speed test results, and unrelated stories from their everyday lives. It's a warm and exciting space to explore that enhances the use of this already exciting product.

# What I don't like about the Charachorder

## It may take a long time to learn



This is the default key map. It is unfortunately a bit hard to read the smaller characters on the map.

The warmth and helpfulness of this external community is absolutely essential, however, to the product's survival.

Since I was using the keyboard in a unique way (with my feet), I took time to figure out which buttons and motions were easiest for me to use.

I tried it with only one foot/hand cup. I tried it holding one hand cup in my hands and having one at my feet. I turned the hand cups upside down to see if the harder-to-reach buttons got any easier to access (that did actually help a little).

To use the Charachorder effectively, one must develop new muscle memory for each digit, when those digits already have muscle memory in place. It's tough to teach your brain that, no, the letter T isn't a downward press at the top of the keys; it's now an upward twitch of the left index finger. And you have to do this brain remap for every single key on a standard QWERTY keyboard.

It takes most Charachorder users months to reach their standard-keyboard typing speeds, so lots of encouragement and solidarity is required to help newbies stay engaged. I put my standard keyboard away and forced myself to use the Charachorder as I worked. Despite my obsession with it, I couldn't quite get totally comfortable with the Charachorder. And that's entirely OK. You will need time and patience to learn this tool.

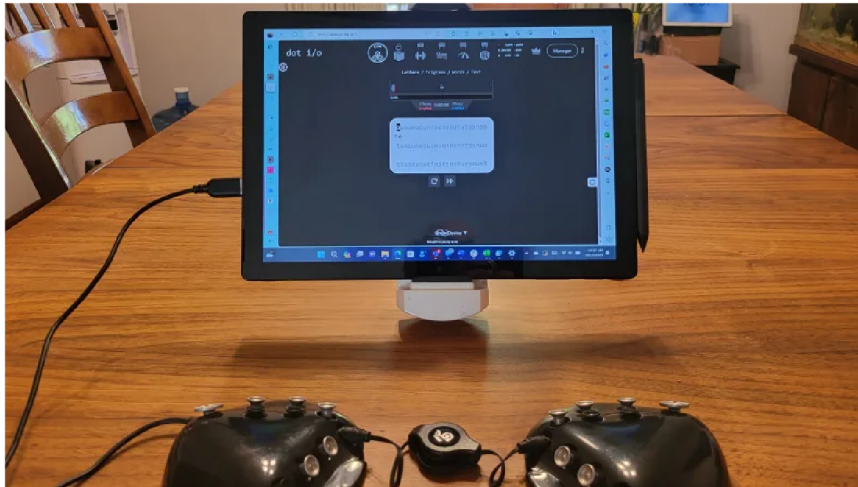
## Customizing is a bit tricky for, well, everyone

Configuring the Charachorder takes some learning, too. The keyboard is plugged into the computer via USB, and then you navigate to the configuration page in your browser. Here, you can map out the letters, assign function keys, and create or modify chords.

The site, however, has an "I'm into coding" aesthetic, which may be intimidating for those who are not used to messing around with the inner workings of software. It's not necessarily hard to use, but it takes some exploring to figure out.

# Should you buy the Charachorder One?

## Yes, but don't ditch your traditional keyboard just yet



The training program is a must for Charachorder One users.

When I first began testing for this Charachorder review, I harnessed my hyperfixation and immediately began toying with configurations, working with the training software and performing speed tests to track my progress. I researched which letters and combinations are most commonly used in English, and modified the letter placement accordingly.

I believe the **Charachorder One** keyboard has incredible potential for anyone willing to put in the time. But if you're a professional who relies on your keyboard all day, be mentally prepared to chip away at this skill over time, as you'll need to keep using your regular keyboard for a while before you're proficient with this amazing piece of technology.

### Charachorder One



This unique split keyboard encourages users to rethink traditional typing. After creating chords for your most used words, you'll be typing faster than ever.

**BUY NOW**  
at Charachorder

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