



## Important Things you Might Want to Know about Switches

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- A switch is a simple technology that the user activates to control an object. People with limited motor movement and/or limited cognitive skills are good candidates for consideration of switch use.
- An appropriately selected switch allows an individual to control toys, appliances, environmental control devices, communication devices, mobility devices, computers etc.
- There are many types of switches available through catalogs that differ in size, color, shape, sensitivity, cost etc. But all switches act as an ON/OFF button.
- Switch placement is critical to efficient operation of the switch. A good switch site enables a person to activate a switch reliably, repeatedly, and without fatigue.
- Switches provide visual, tactile, kinesthetic, and auditory feedback. Selecting the right switch for an individual means matching the person's needs with the appropriate feedback.
- A person may have and use several different switch sites depending on the activity, the device being operated, position, time of day, level of medication, etc.
- A person may have to learn how to "use a switch" by practicing until motor memory is established and/or a cognitive relationship is established.
- A "continuous switch" operates a device as long as the switch is held in the on position.
- A "latching switch" requires the user to hit the switch once to start an operation and once to end an operation.
- A very effective use of a switch is to pair it with a device or software, which will enable the user to select one item from many items. This is called "scanning". Scanning can be simple (choosing one out of two items) or complex (selecting one item out of many). Complex scanning is used on high-level communication devices to increase rate, to provide access to computer applications, and to operate environmental control devices such as in houses designed for people with disabilities.

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