

WHAT'S NEW COMPUTING TESTED

SUPERGONOMICS

A shape-shifting keyboard keeps wrists healthy by making them move more

THE TECH

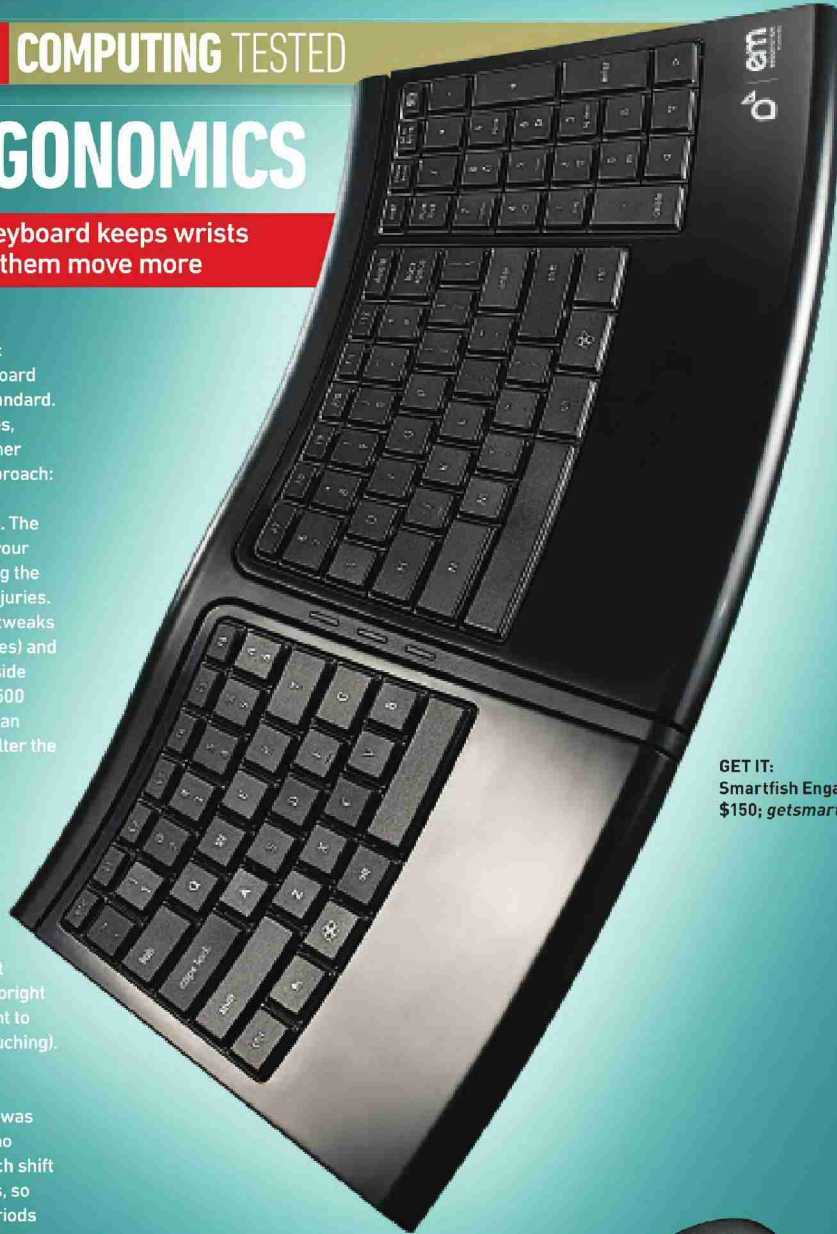
About 20 years ago, the static split-and-tilt ergonomic keyboard became the wrist-friendly standard. Today, Smartfish Technologies, a company founded by a former chiropractor, has a better approach: the Engage, a keyboard that periodically shifts its position. The goal is to constantly change your typing angle, thereby reducing the chance of repetitive-stress injuries. A motor inside the keyboard tweaks the separation (up to 1.4 inches) and tilt (up to 6 degrees) of each side in small increments every 2,500 keystrokes, the equivalent of an hour of typing. You can also alter the frequency of changes.

THE TEST

We used an early model for several days, typing articles on a Windows 7 PC as the Engage adjusted itself automatically. We paid close attention to key feel and wrist comfort and maintained an upright sitting position (we didn't want to sabotage any benefits by slouching).

THE RESULTS

The ever-changing keyboard was startling at first, but we had no problem acclimating to it. Each shift takes only about two seconds, so using the Engage for long periods is comfortable. The downsides: the motor is noisy, the keyboard a tad high (which can itself cause stress), and the keys a bit stiff. But the company is already working on a model that fixes these problems, along with an additional non-splitting option that tweaks just your wrist angle.—JAMIE LENDING



GET IT:
Smartfish Engage
\$150; getsmartfish.com

FROM TOP: DAN SAELINGER; COURTESY MICROSOFT

TWO MORE WAYS TO GO ERGONOMIC

Stand Up Straight

The Envelop desk has an electronic height adjustment that switches between sitting and standing positions, which helps prevent back, neck and muscle pain. **Herman Miller Envelop desk** \$3,000; hermanmiller.com

Rest Your Wrist

This mouse uses multitouch gestures that cut down on the need to move your arm around the desk. Commands include jumping between screens and clearing all windows. **Microsoft Touch Mouse** \$80; microsoft.com

