Switch Skills
3

Introduction

Switch Skills 3 contains 15 simple activities that can be played with a single switch. They are designed for a wide range of students with learning difficulties (physical and cognitive) who need to practise the skill of operating a switch at the right time. It is ideal for those who have already learned to respond to a basic prompt (either visual or audio), such as those in **Switch Skills 2**.

These learners should now be ready for more complex challenges.

The activities are designed to make learning these new skills more interesting and motivating, primarily by having groups of activities with the same level of difficulty. The 15 activities are split into four groups to signify this*.

These activities are also excellent for promoting attention and concentration in those with severe learning difficulties. To this end, they can be used with the mouse or touch screen rather than a switch. Each activity has options to adapt it to individual needs or allow you to develop each learner's skills in small steps.

*There is some overlap between the groups and you will find that many learners will not follow the inferred sequence.
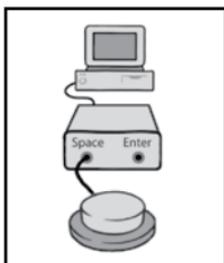
Connecting switches

Switches come in all shapes and sizes. For example, the Smoothie Switch is a simple round plastic button that can be pushed down. It springs up again when you take your hand off. This means it is a 'non-latching' or 'momentary' switch, like a doorbell. Most switches available for special needs use are of this type.

To use a switch with *Switch Skills 3*, you will need to attach it to the computer using an interface box. There are a number of interface boxes available. The **Inclusive Simple Switch Box** is inexpensive and easy to use.

Just plug your switch into the interface box, then plug that into one of computer's rectangular USB sockets.

After installing the program, you will find pictures you can print out and stick on your switches in the 'Inclusive Resources' folder on your computer or on the CD. They can also be printed out and made into flash cards for choice making, or used with communication aids.

For further information about using switches,
see **www.inclusive.co.uk/infosite**

Installation

Please note: an active internet connection is required

To install *Switch Skills 3*, simply run the following file:

switch_skills_3.exe

The installer will prompt you to enter your name, email address and activation key (sent to you at the time of purchase). All fields are required.
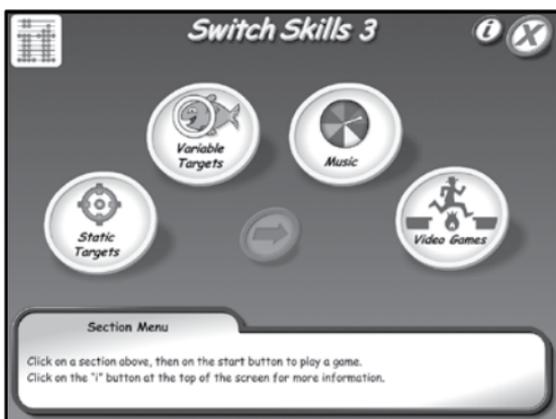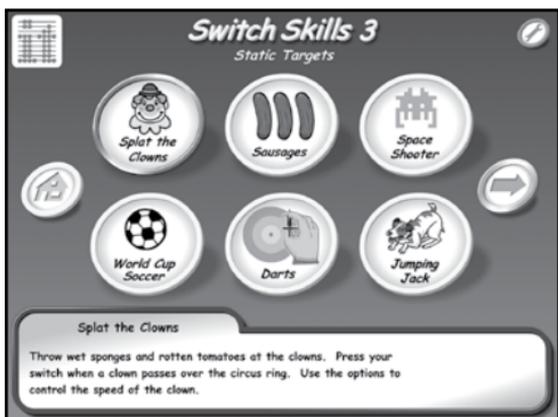

When the activation key has been successfully validated, the installation will begin.

Running Switch Skills 3

If a *Switch Skills 3* icon is visible on the the desktop , you can double- click to launch directly into the program. If there isn't a desktop shortcut, you can find the software in the *Programs* list of your *Start menu / screen*.

On starting, the title screen shows four groups of activities you can choose from. Click on a group button, then on the green arrow button to see the activities in it.

You can now click on an activity and read more about it at the bottom of the screen. Click the green arrow to play that activity.

 Click on the **information** button for information about the program.

 The **home** button will take you back to the title screen with the activity groups.

Stopping Switch Skills 3

Whilst playing an activity, press the **Esc** key on the computer's keyboard or click the **X** button at the top of the screen. This will take you to the activity choice screen where you were before.

 You can now choose another activity or click the **home** button to go back to the title page with the five groups.

 To exit the program completely, click on the **home** button, then the **exit** button on the title screen.
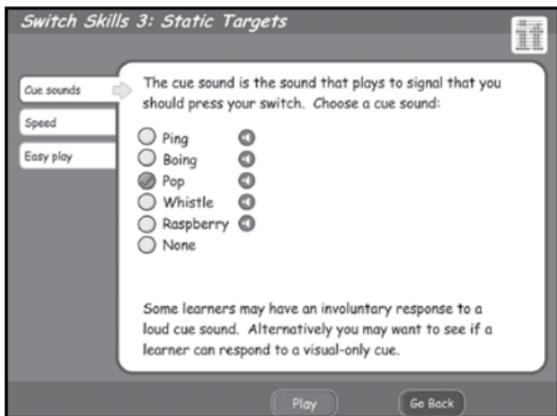
Switch Skills 3 Options

Click the **options** buttons to see the options for these activities.

These options are **very important** for your learners. They enable you to adjust the activities so they are just at the right level, depending on a learner's ability to:

• Physically operate a switch.

• Use a switch appropriately (e.g. not randomly press it).

• Respond to visual cues.

• Respond to auditory cues.

• Maintain attention on a task.

The different groups of activities have slightly different options. To see the different options, click on the 'tabs' on the left side (Penalty, Reveal time, etc.). You can then click on the buttons to change how the activities behave.

When you have finished, click on the **Go Back** button to return to where you were before.

'Static Target' activities

In these six activities, the screen shows a large target. A smaller object appears on the left and moves across the screen. The learner presses a switch to shoot when the object is over the target. Use the Options to make the activities easier or more difficult.
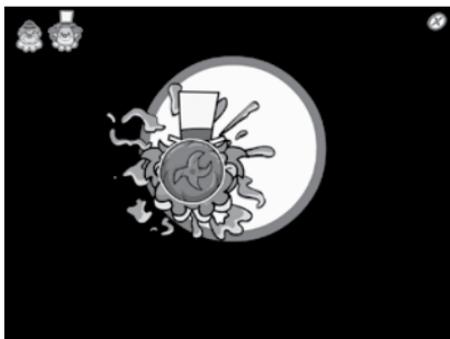
"Static Target" Options

Cue sounds: in most activities, you wait for something to happen as a cue to press your switch. This option allows you to choose different sounds (ping, pop, boing, etc.). Some learners may over-react to a loud sound, whilst others may not hear a quiet sound. You can also turn the cue sound off if you want to see if a learner will react to a visual-only cue.

Speed: controls the speed of the moving object.

Easy Play: this makes the activity very easy. When the moving object reaches the target it will stop and wait for the switch to be pressed. It will then give the reward as normal.

Splat the Clowns

Throw wet sponges and rotten tomatoes at the clowns. Press your switch when a clown passes over the circus ring. You only get one shot per clown. This is to prevent multiple inattentive switch bashing.
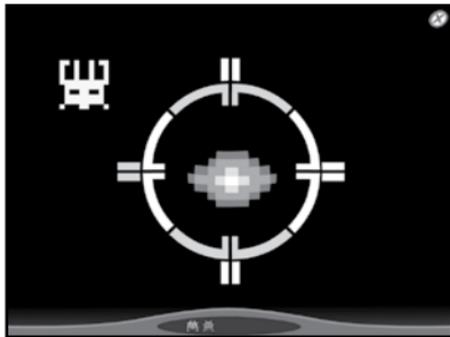
Sausages

Press your switch to drop a sausage in the frying pan. When you have three sausages they will be fried.

A number of dummy objects have been included to provide continuing interest, for instance a mouse and a toy car. You can put these in the frying pan too and see what happens.

Space Shooter

This activity may be more suitable for older learners. Press your switch to blast the space invaders when they enter the ring in the centre of the screen. Shoot five space invaders to win an animated musical reward.

World Cup Soccer

A soccer striker dribbles his ball across the screen. Press your switch to make him/her shoot. You should wait until the striker is in the centre of the screen before making your shot. You get five shots at the goal and then are given your score.

This activity is more difficult than previous ones, as it requires you to visually line up one object with another, and understand the link between them. You may need to use the Easy Play option with some learners at first.

If you are playing this game with a group of students, you might set up a score board in the classroom and have a tournament. This will provide extra motivation and can enhance social skills.

Darts

This activity may be more suitable for older learners. Watch the hand holding a dart move across the bottom of the screen. Press your switch to throw the dart.

The blue outer ring gives 1 point. The green ring gives 2 points. The yellow ring gives 3 points.

A bullseye gives 4 points and big "thumbs up" from the referee.

As in the football activity, you can use this activity as the basis for a class competition.

Jumping Jack

An activity for dog lovers, which is a little more challenging. Press your switch to make Jack jump in the air and catch the toys flying overhead.

If you miss, the toy will fly off quickly. This is to prevent multiple inattentive switch bashing.

It can be tricky at first, but you can use the Easy Play option if your learners get frustrated. Jack collects a pile of toys and then scatters them.

'Variable Target' activities

These four activities give a small step up from the previous six. The target position is now no longer always in the same place.
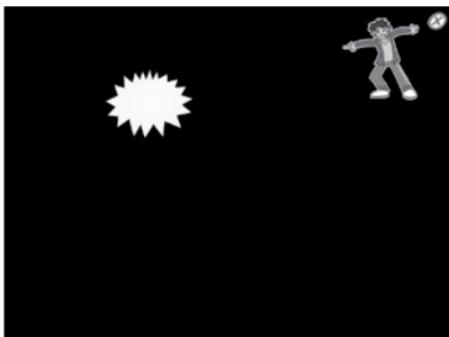
"Variable Target" Options

Cue sounds: in most activities, you wait for something to happen as a cue to press your switch. This option allows you to choose different sounds (ping, pop, boing, etc.). Some learners may over-react to a loud sound, whilst others may not hear a quiet sound. You can also turn the cue sound off if you want to see if a learner will react to a visual-only cue.

Speed: controls the speed of the moving object.

Penalty: you may find some learners "cheat" by just pressing their switch continually. The Penalty option discourages this by pausing the movement for three seconds and displaying a yellow border as a penalty.
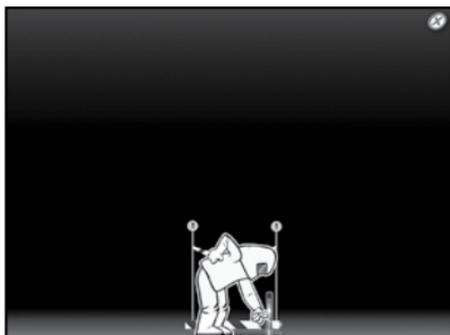
Let's Dance

Wait for the star to move to the dancer and then press the switch, space bar or mouse button or touch the screen. You will then get an animated reward with music.

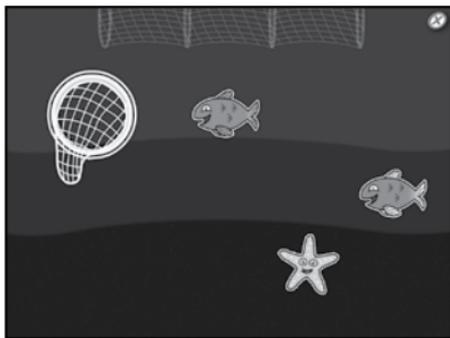Use the Penalty option to discourage inattentive switch bashing.

Fireworks

Fireworks are dangerous, and the pyrotechnician in this activity is taking them seriously. He's wearing a heavy duty fireproof suit and helmet, but he can't see very well and needs you to tell him where the firework is.

Press your switch when he is next to the firework to tell him to light it. Then stand back and enjoy the show.

Use the Penalty option to discourage inattentive switch bashing.

Fishing

This activity has a more complex presentation than the previous ones. There are three sea creatures to be caught, using a net that moves across the screen. Press your switch, space bar or mouse button or touch the screen when the net is over a fish or other sea creature.

Space Shooter 2

A more complex version of the Space Shooter activity in the Static Targets group. Wait for the circle to pass over a space invader then press to shoot.

There is no time limit on this simple video game style activity. Some learners may take a while to complete the game, but as long as they are absorbed, they are learning.

Don't forget to use the Options to make the game easier or more difficult.

'Music' activities

This group contains two music themed activities for error-free experimental play. Note that *Switch Skills 2* contains some simple art activities which you may also find useful.

"Music" Options

Speed: controls the speed of the DJ in DJ Master and the pointer in Wheel of Music.

DJ Master

Learners can play the part of a club DJ in this music activity. When the program starts, turn up your loudspeakers so you can hear the drumbeat. You can now play music and sound effects to go with the drumbeat.

The position of the DJ when you press your switch determines what effect is played.

On the **red** square: some music.

On the **blue** square: a cool sound effect.

On the **yellow** square: a vocal effect.

You can also change the style of the music and the drumbeat, although this is limited to use by those working with the learner. Using the mouse or touch screen click the buttons numbered 1, 2 and 3 to select one of the styles.

Wheel of Music

In this simple activity, the learner can experiment listening to different styles of music with a rotating pointer. Once the learner has heard all the music, he or she can try to choose his/her favourite again.

Different music is selected each time the activity is started, but the styles associated with each quarter of the wheel are always the same:

Red: rock music.

Blue: classical music

Green: electronic dance music.

Yellow: folk music. Sometimes bagpipes, sometimes banjo, sometimes guitar.

'Video Games' activities

These three games have a more complex presentation which provides a more interesting and motivating challenge. Each follows the same story-like pattern, in which a string of six tasks in different locations must be completed to reach a celebratory animation at the end.

Each task requires one correctly timed switch press. Unlike normal video games, there is no concept of losing lives and you do not have to go all the way back to the beginning if you fail.

"Video Games" Options

Speed: these games have only one timing option to control the difficulty of the games.

Jungle Adventure

Battle through an Amazonian jungle and enter an ancient pyramid with treasure within.

Title screen: decide whether you want Johnny or Jane. Press your switch when the green box appears round the player you want. You now enter the jungle…

Crocodile: press your switch to make Johnny jump over the swamp – but only when the crocodile has sunk down.

Rolling logs: press your switch to make Johnny jump over the log as it rolls past. To make it easier, slow down the speed setting in the options. The log will then stop for a few seconds to give you time to jump.
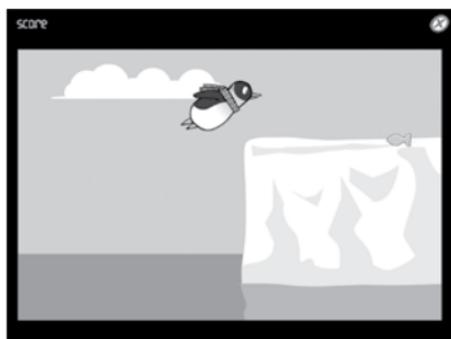
Rope swing (waterfall): press your switch when the rope swings near to make Johnny jump and catch it.

Jaguar (pyramid steps): press your switch to make Johnny jump over the cat as it runs past.

Pyramid door: wait for the door to open then press your switch to make Johnny run through.

Pit of fire: press your switch when the jaws of the pit roll shut.

Little Lost Penguin

A little penguin, swept up in an Antarctic whirlwind, falls into the sea far from home. Can you help him find his way back?

Title screen: press your switch to start the game.

Ice cliff: press your switch when the penguin bobs up to make him leap out.

Leopard seal: the staple food of leopard seals is penguins. Wait for the seal to sink into the water, then press your switch to make the penguin jump over.

Giant snowballs: press your switch to make the penguin jump over the snowball as it rolls down.

Polar bear see-saw: a polar bear (on holiday) blocks the way. Wait for the bear to rear up on its hind legs, then make the penguin jump on the lowered end of the see-saw.

Icy chasm: press your switch make the penguin cross when the chasm closes.

Iceberg ferry: poor penguin mustn't swim across the break in the ice – he'll get eaten by the killer whale. Wait for the little iceberg to float up to him so he can jump on and be carried across.
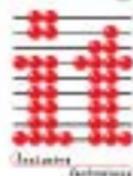
Chopper Rescue

In this version of a classic video game, you must rescue people and animals in precarious situations.

Simply wait until the helicopter is close to the target, then press your switch to execute a rescue.

In each situation, the helicopter stops and hovers in the rescue position for one or more seconds. You can control how long it stays in this position in the Options.

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