Keyboards

When people buy keyboards, its usually for a desktop or a workstation. The one thing that makes a keyboard, is the switch. The switch is the mechanism that registers an input on a keyboard, and it ranges from a mechanical switch, to a so called “rubber dome” and electro-capacitive switch.

While switches are an important factor, the size of the keyboard and the extra features are also important to factor in. While most keyboards come with the three most used switches, tactile, linear and clicky, we’re going to focus on the features of the keyboards in this roundup. For more information about switches, head over to <https://deskthority.net/wiki/Category:Cherry_MX> for more detailed information about the switches.

Most of the keyboards comes in both a Tenkeyless and a full-size version. Tenkeyless means you don’t have a number pad to the right of the arrows, while full-size does have the number pad. While I informed about cherry switches, you should know that Logitech and Razer makes their own, custom made switches. The switches that Razer uses are very similar to the cherry switches, but Logitech’s switches are structured quite different and have a completely different feel. Quite few seems to like the Romer-G switches that Logitech uses, so its disregarded in this line-up, but its good to know they exist.

Another thing about mechanical keyboards, are the keycaps. The cherry switches have a stem that is shaped as a + and lets you switch out the keycaps on the fly. Simply pull up on the cap to remove it and place a new cap on top. There exists a wide range of keycaps, and you can mix and match to your liking.

The HyperX Alloy FPS Gaming comes in at 1235 nok for the full-size and 949 nok for the TKL. Both the TKL and the full-size have a detachable USB cable and a USB pass-through, however it does not come with any form of stand-alone media keys or macro-keys but does come with media keys as secondary functions on the F-row. The board does not come with any form of per-key lighting, and it only has red backlight.

The Cooler Master MasterKeys Pro S, M and L comes in at 949 nok, 990 nok and 1090 nok respectively. The lettering for the different versions make it seem like there’s three different sizes, but its just two sizes. The S is the TKL size and the M and L is the full-size. While the keyboards don’t offer any USB pass-through, they all come with media keys as secondary functions on the F-row, while the L also comes with four macro-keys above the number pad. This is also the only difference between the M and the L. Per-key lighting is also available on this keyboard, and it requires no software. On the keyboard, there’s a function key that lets you edit the lighting.

Corsairs three offerings are the K63, the K70 and the K95. The K63 comes in two variants, a wired and a wireless version, coming in at 845 and 1299 each. The K70 also have two variants, but both are wired. The Lux and the Rapidfire, each coming in at around 1700 nok based on the type of switches you get. The K95 only have one version, and it comes in at 1990 nok. All the keyboards have dedicated media keys and USB pass-through, except for the wireless K63. Per-key lighting on the switches can be configured in Corsairs own software, where you also can assign macro keys.

If you’re willing to shop from outside of Norway, we also have two offerings from iKBC in the F87 and F108, bought from Overclockers in the UK. The keyboards come in at 109.99£ and 104.99£ before shipping and MVA / import. Similar to the Cooler Master S and L, this board doesn’t have USB pass-through, but the F108 have dedicated volume keys. And weirdly enough, it also has a dedicated “calculator” button. Again, similar to the Cooler Master keyboards, there are per-key lighting, as well as different lighting-modes, that can be accessed by a function key on the keyboard itself.

There’s also the option to go the custom made, or DIY, route. This option is usually more expensive and takes quite a while longer before you have a finished product, but it adds the benefit of letting you customize it completely to your liking, both in features and looks. A complete keyboard with keycaps can range from 1500 nok to 6000 nok before shipping costs.

The best experience is undoubtedly from a custom-made keyboard, where you can get everything you want, just how you want it. But if you don’t want to sell your kidney to get a keyboard, you should find the one that fits your usage the most.

People that make content, either videos, streaming or pictures, probably have use for macro keys. The K95 is the go-to choice with its many profiles and macro keys.

The best full-size keyboard Would have to go to the Cooler Master MasterKeys M. Despite its lack of USB pass-through, it has RGB light, lets you customize each switch and comes in at a very affordable price. It edges out the competitors mainly due to price, but it also has a standard bottom row.

For an entry-level mechanical keyboard, the K63-wired is the best option. Coming in at the lowest price point, it has the most features for the price and you get to choose from all three switches, as well as it having USB pass-through. Unfortunately, in only supports red backlight.

PS: It’s worth noting that Razer and Corsairs “Bottom row” keys doesn’t come in a standard layout. The spacing are different than what most of custom keycaps supply, so if you want to find custom keycaps, the bottom row of your keyboard may not be completely compatible