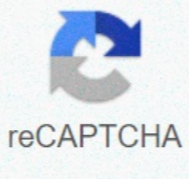




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Word for amazing mechanic

Not all keyboards are alike, and not all keyboards cater to the same types of users. Mechanical keyboards—or keyboard with individual switches under each key—have exploded in popularity recently, and for good reason. This week we're going to take a look at five of the best mechanical keyboards, based on your nominations. Mechanical keyboards, or keyboards with full, individual switches under every key, have exploded in popularity. Earlier in the week we asked you which mechanical keyboards you thought were the best, whether it was because of their switches, their added features, their bang for the buck, their overall typing comfort, or just their style and build quality. A keyboard is a keyboard, right? Not quite. Mechanical keyboards—or keyboards with individual...Read moreYou responded with way more keyboards than we have room to highlight, but here are the five that got the most nominations, in no particular order:The polls are closed and the votes are counted! To see which of these five great mechanical keyboards took the top spot thanks to your votes, head over to our [hive five followup post](#)! There you can read and discuss the winner! Mechanical keyboards—or keyboards with individual switches beneath each key—have some benefits that Read moreIBM Model M (and Variants)Ah, the IBM Model M - it's the keyboard that started it all, and while it's technically a buckling spring keyboard and not a mechanical in the way we've come to know mechanical keyboards, it's all the same when you're talking about keyboards that set themselves apart from the usual. If you have an old Model M in the back of your closet or an old one you've modded to use with modern PCs, enjoy it—they're tanks, and won't give up on you anytime soon. If you want one for yourself, you can still get them from Unicompc for around \$80, depending on the model you choose. They'll all come with buckling springs beneath each key, and your choice of connector to your computer. They're even cross-platform, so you can use it with whatever computer you own. The IBM Model M has been in production for decades, and many of you nominated the original Model M along with a number of variants that offer different quirks and features suited to your typing style. If it's too big for you, try the IBM 5150, which also picked up a few nominations in the call for contenders thread. Whether you remember the old days of computing and miss the clack-clack of those old keyboards, or you're interested in mechanicals for other reasons like ergonomics and tactile feel, you'd do yourself a favor by checking out the keyboards that started it all. Das Keyboard Ultimate Model SDas Keyboard has been in the mechanical business for a long time—way before the current rise in popularity. For that reason, they've had time to refine their keyboards, stick to what works, incorporate new switch types and introduce models that work for more people, and overall just make really sleek looking, highly functional keyboards. There was a lot of love for the Das Keyboard Ultimate in the call for contenders thread, and as someone who's used it myself, I can understand why. It's a tank that's designed for over 50 million keystrokes, packs a 2-port USB hub inside, features full N-key rollover (meaning pressing multiple keys at a time actually registers), and it's available with your choice of Cherry MX Brown (quieter, softer) or MX Blue (louder, clicky) switches. You can pick one up direct from Das Keyboard for \$139, or grab one at Amazon for a slight price break, around \$130 depending on the switches you pick. Of course, the Ultimate is actually a label-less keyboard, meaning the keys don't have inscriptions on them. You'd better be good at touch-typing to use it, because you won't be looking at your fingers. If you want your keys labeled, check out Das Keyboard's other models, specifically the Professional (also available for Mac, although technically they all work on all platforms). The keys are labeled, you can choose between Cherry MX Brown (quieter, softer), MX Blue (louder, clicky), or MX Red (quiet, no bump), and the keyboard sports media controls on the function keys, and more. Same price too—\$139 direct, a few bucks off at Amazon.Cooler Master Storm QuickFireThe Cooler Master Storm QuickFire family of mechanicals are well regarded by gamers, and our own Whitson Gordon had one and loved it. Your nominations specifically came in for the Cooler Master Storm QuickFire Rapid, a tenkeyless model with Cherry MX Blue switches (although there's a new model with Cherry MX Green switches) that's space-saving since you don't have the numberpad on the right side of the keyboard. Of course, if you prefer different switches, or you want the numberpad, you have plenty of options in the same family, including the full LED backlit QuickFire Ultimate that's available with MX Blues, Browns, or Reds, whichever you prefer, and the unassuming QuickFire Pro, available with MX Brown, Black, and Red switches. All on all though, the QuickFire line is known for being functional, affordable (the Rapid series is around \$75-\$80 at Amazon, depending on the switches you choose, and the Ultimate is \$109 at Amazon with your choice of switches or backlighting), and rock solid. You get incredible flexibility in switch types (as you can see), backlighting options, full N-Key rollover, auto-disabling of the Windows key while gaming, removable braided USB cables, and more. Those of you who nominated it praised it for being a solid, affordable, and flexible entry-level option that'll provide huge bang for your buck, regardless of what you plan to do with it—writing, gaming, working, coding, whatever. G/O Media may get a commissionDucky Shine 2/Shine 3The Ducky Shine line was a bit of a sleeper hit in the call for contenders thread. Ducky, much like Filco, has a bit of a reputation for making incredibly high-quality mechanical keyboards that are sturdy and long-lasting without being bricks on your desk. They're beautifully crafted, and generally targeted towards enthusiasts, keyboard geeks, coders and developers, and writers—people who live and die by their computers. The Shine 2 and the Shine 3 are no exception. The Shine series is one of the greats, available with your color choice of Cherry MX switches, and if you want one you'll have to order from someone with stock or have them imported from Taiwan. The Shine 2 is tough to find at this point, and MechanicalKeyboards.com says they're discontinued. If you do find one, expect to spend around \$150 for it. However, the Ducky Shine 3 is widely available, over at MechanicalKeyboards.com for between \$130 and \$150 depending on the backlight color you choose, and the switch you choose. That's one of the beautiful things about the Ducky Shine series—not only can you customize the switches, you can customize the backlighting. You get all the great features of a good mechanical too: Full N-key rollover, reactive lighting to the ambient light in the room, a beautiful matte finish, and customizable backlighting profiles even on the same keyboard so you can set certain keys and areas to light up while the rest are dark, whichever you like. Those of you who praised the Ducky Shine series pointed to its heavy duty case and overall durability without being a massive, hulking keyboard, and the fact that it comes with two space bars—a flashy one with the logo on it, and a flat black one if you don't like the default. If you can find one, it's a solid keyboard that will stand the test of time. Razer BlackWidow UltimateRazer is pretty proud of its gaming cred, and while not all of its keyboards are mechanicals, the BlackWidow Ultimate and the BlackWidow Ultimate Stealth both are. They're both \$139 direct (\$111 at Amazon). The Ultimate packs Cherry MX Blue switches, and the Ultimate Stealth packs the quieter Cherry MX Brown switches—Razer has a whole page dedicated to its switch selection options that makes for good reading if you're curious what types of switches sound like what, which are louder, which are quieter, and which keyboards in their lineup have which features. The BlackWidow Ultimate however is a full-sized mechanical with programmable keys on the side, individual-key LED backlighting with adjustable brightness, media controls on the function keys, a USB port on the side with USB passthrough along its braided cables, audio passthrough and headphones/microphone jacks on the keyboard, on-the-fly macro recording, and more. The BlackWidow Ultimate is a pretty solid keyboard, a bit of a tank, and while the keys are satisfyingly clicky, even the MX Blues aren't horribly loud. Still, those of you who nominated it praised it for its heft, tactile feel, and build quality. Its price isn't too shabby either, and since Razer updates the model on an annual basis, if you don't like the color of the backlighting or the features in the keyboard, just wait a year—they may address your particular concern with it in the next model. There you have it, those are your top five nominees! Seriously—there were so many great nominees that now's a good time to go back to the call for contenders if you don't see your favorite here. Still, we have honorable mentions listed below. Before that though, it's time to put them to a vote to determine the Lifehacker community favorite: Honorable mentions this week go out to the Rosewill RK-9000, an affordable (around \$80 at Amazon depending on the switches you get) mechanical keyboard available with Cherry MX Blue, Red, Black, or Brown switches that we highlighted in our guide to mechanical keyboards. It earned more than a few votes from those of you looking for a simple mechanical model without a ton of bells and whistles that's not necessarily focused on gaming, and still rocks a full numberpad. I've had the opportunity personally to play with the RK-9000, and it's a great mechanical keyboard. G/O Media may get a commissionAnother honorable mention this week goes out to the new Logitech G710+ Mechanical Keyboard for Gaming. It's Logitech's first mechanical keyboard, and it's come remarkably well regarded. Logitech knows a thing or two about gaming keyboards, and this model sports Cherry MX Brown switches (with individual O-ring noise dampeners) that are quiet enough to not wake the house, but still have a firm clicky feel that you'll love, especially if you're a PC gamer. It sports dual-zone backlighting, programmable macro keys, a detachable wrist-rest, and more. It's not terribly cheap though: it retails for \$150 direct. Finally, for those folks who want the ultimate in customization for their mechanical keyboard, whether they want a full-sized model with a numpad or a tenkeyless model, we have to extend a hand to WASD Keyboards (shown in the title photo), who earned praise in the nominations specifically for their tenkeyless model. They also offer a wide variety of other mechanical models that can be customized with whatever switches you prefer: browns, blues, reds, blacks, and clears. You can even get a key switch sampler pack from them to try out each type of switch before you buy a keyboard so you know what you're getting into. Then, come back and use their customization tool to build the keyboard—keycaps and all—that's perfect for you. A few others that we love here at Lifehacker but didn't pick up the nominations to make the top five (or really the honorable mentions) that we think you should consider if you're in the market: The Corsair Vengeance K95 Mechanical Gaming Keyboard is a brilliant option if you're a PC gamer looking for a high quality, well-built mechanical packing Cherry MX Red switches. It's \$150 at Amazon. Also, the Monoprice 9433 Mechanical Gaming Keyboard is a solid option for gamers on a budget, since it's only about \$50 and packs Cherry MX Blue switches. Have something to say about one of the contenders? Want to make the case for your personal favorite, even if it wasn't included in the list? Remember, the top five are based on your most popular nominations from the call for contenders thread from earlier in the week. Don't just complain about the top five, let us know what your preferred alternative is—and make your case for it—in the discussions below.The Hive Five is based on reader nominations. As with most Hive Five posts, if your favorite was left out, it didn't get the nominations required in the call for contenders post to make the top five. We understand it's a bit of a popularity contest. Have a suggestion for the Hive Five? Send us an email at tips+hivefive@lifehacker.com!Photos by Robert Freiburger and Blake Patterson.

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