Tactus Therapy presents

GETTING STARTED with Apps in Speech Therapy

an e-book
Based on the Popular Blog Series

tactustherapy.com
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For busy clinicians, it can be a challenge to spend the time investigating new therapy techniques when there is already a familiar and comfortable repertoire of materials. Keeping up with the rapid changes in technology can feel overwhelming. In Part 1 of our 7-part series entitled “Getting Started with Apps in Speech Therapy,” we bring you information on why speech-language professionals should be interested in learning more about using apps or tablets in speech therapy. If you’re feeling under-resourced, over-worked, or disinterested, please join us as we try to answer the question ‘why bother?’ when it comes to adding technology to your practice.

In no particular order, here are the top 10 reasons why you should consider using apps in therapy:

1. **Incredible Built-in Tools**

   A touch-screen tablet with only the basic apps gives you a camera, audio recorder, video player, video camera, maps of the world, email, the Internet, video phone calls, stopwatch, alarm clock, photo album, calendar, notepad, to-do list, address book, music player, and e-book reader. All of this weighs about a pound and is the size of a pad of paper. Think how many therapy goals you can address with each one of those features!
Access the World of Apps

Beyond the built-in features, there are thousands of apps that add value to your tablet for both professional utility and patient care. There’s an app that provides a cueing hierarchy for word retrieval. There’s an app that customizes word lists based on sounds. There’s an app that calculates time intervals for spaced retrieval memory training. There’s a reason Apple said “there’s an app for that.”

Saves Time

When nearly all of your materials are so portable and convenient, you’ll spend less time at the photocopier and running back and forth between rooms. You won’t have to haul around heavy materials any more. You won’t even have to take data or write the report when using some apps. Under pressure to use every minute of your day meaningfully with clients, you’ll appreciate these little time-savers. Depending on your facility’s record-keeping software, you may even be able to do point-of-service electronic documentation with clients weighing in on their own progress and goals.
Allows You to Focus on Your Client

When you don’t have to worry about the little things in therapy, you start to notice more about your client. You can watch how they approach problems and where their eyes go on the screen; you can allow them to control when they’re ready for the next challenge and empower them to help themselves. You are freed up to use your skill set in more meaningful ways than sorting through picture cards or tallying data.

Evidence-Based Practice

There is a large body of evidence supporting the use of computers in speech therapy, and a tablet is a small computer. Software for these tablets is more intuitive, more specialized, and more affordable than ever before. There is growing evidence that using tablets in therapy is efficacious. There are many evidence-based apps available, and the tablet replicates many of the tools for evidence-based techniques you’re already using in therapy.

Functional Therapy

If you’re someone who tries to make therapy as functional as possible, then using technology is perfect for you. Many of your clients are already using smartphones, tablets, and laptops to read the news, check the weather, pay bills, see pictures of family, send emails, and get directions. Work on these meaningful goals with them, adding techniques or apps to compensate for language, speech, or cognitive problems.

Learn how to use the built-in accessibility tools on the iPad so you can teach your clients.
The Way of the Future

Do you use a smartphone yourself? 64% of American adults do. 42% own a tablet computer as of last year, with numbers only set to increase as today’s power users grow older and a new generation of digital natives grows up. These users will want to maintain their connected lifestyles, so therapists must be ready to assist with those goals. Older clients, whether tech-savvy or not, can still benefit from the biofeedback or stimuli shown to them on a tablet.

Saves Money

How can a high-tech gadget, accessories, and apps save you or your facility money? Add up the cost of each of the gadgets mentioned in #1 above. Now add in the cost of your time that will be saved, the photocopying you aren’t doing, and the increased effectiveness of your therapy, and suddenly the $1000 or so you’ll need to be well-equipped isn’t so high. In fact, it’s a third of the cost of a simple digital camcorder 20 years ago. Your apps won’t wear out or break in the same way as paper materials, and updates are provided for free. The costly software you used to use on the computer is also more affordable in app format. Many apps are free, at least to try.

Download a sample letter to help you make the case for funding an iPad at your workplace.
Up-to-Date

It’s embarrassing to show clients photos cards of people exercising in pink spandex or ask them to match up the pictures of ashtrays. It’s frustrating to find new cassette tapes for speech samples or have old videos that you can’t show because the last VHS player broke. Vintage may be cool, but it’s often not practical. Apps are modern and can be downloaded instantly. No more waiting to place an order and have it delivered. If you need a metronome app for your next client, it takes less than a minute to find and install one.

Neuroplasticity

Probably the most important reason to use technology is your clients. These other reasons are mostly about you – your time, convenience, and professional ethics. But the whole reason you’re providing therapy, and care about how to do it, is because you want your clients to get better faster. You want them to have sufficient intensity, repetition, salience, interest, and experience to change their neural networks.

Perhaps your clients don’t need technology to learn the techniques and exercises in your office, but you need to make sure they have the opportunity to practice once they leave. Apps can give your clients exercises, home programs, reminders, stimuli, and motivation to keep working on their goals between sessions. They think speech therapy software can help them improve, but their therapists aren’t always helping them find the right tools. There are many resources available for you to learn how to support them.
Time to Get Started

Mobile technology is a very powerful tool for speech therapy with a world of potential. Apps have their limitations; they are tools for therapy, and as with anything, some will be better than others. Tablets may present privacy and infection control concerns, and they require maintenance. There is also the proper training of clinicians and clients to consider to prevent misuse. Technology is certainly not right for every client or every goal. However, taking all of that into account, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks in nearly every case. Let us help guide you as you get started.
5 Reasons to Use Apps for Speech Therapy at Home

Part 2 of 7

In Part 1 of our “Getting Started with Apps in Speech Therapy” series, we share reasons why speech-language pathologists should integrate touch-screen tablets and apps into their clinical practice – and the most important reason is you, the speech therapy client. Whether you’ve survived a stroke, suffered a head injury, or are looking to slow the progression of neurological disease, your progress in therapy is their top priority, and so much more likely to happen faster when you also do speech therapy at home.

Here are 5 reasons why it just makes sense to use apps for speech therapy at home:

1. More Practice

It seems there is never enough speech therapy. Often there are limits to the number of sessions provided, with one to three hours a week of therapy considered generous. Waitlists, fees, transportation issues, staffing shortages, and therapy caps all contribute to decreased access to the therapy you need.

We know that more therapy is better. The brain requires intensive and repetitive skilled practice to change, a process known as neuroplasticity. People with acquired communication disorders are often unable to
return to work and spend a lot of time on their own at home. They are willing to do exercises, but nobody is around to help them. With apps on an iPad or other touch-screen device, you can get more speech therapy practice.

2 Accessible

Speech therapy computer software is not a new concept, but the touch-screen interfaces of tablets make it so much easier to access. Apps do not require a mouse and keyboard, which can be very intimidating when using a single or non-dominant hand. You are also freed from sitting at a desk or table by using a lightweight and portable tablet. Most apps are designed to be user-friendly, offering attractive and intuitive graphic interfaces not found in older software.

Speech therapy workbooks and computer software have previously been hard to come by, requiring mail orders from specialty providers at niche prices. Now tablets can be picked up at any electronics store, and apps can be downloaded instantly at home. While speech therapy apps are priced higher than mass-market game or productivity apps, they are far cheaper than the home practice products of past decades.

You can download any single Tactus Therapy app for $25 USD or less and use it forever. No subscriptions or hidden costs.

3 Convenience & Control

When therapy exercises are available on a tablet, you can practice at your convenience – anytime, anyplace. There’s no limit on how often or how long you can practice. If you’re currently in therapy, your speech-language pathologist can help you find the right exercises and show you how to best use them. You can even share your results with your therapist remotely.
Tactus Therapy apps work without Wi-Fi, so once you download them, you can use them anywhere, whether you have a data signal or not. Save e-mail reports as drafts to send once you’re connected.

Apps also help put you in control of your treatment. You decide what you want to work on at any given time. You can work independently or with a partner, depending on the app. It’s amazing how empowering it can be to have some responsibility for your rehabilitation and to see your progress in a measurable way.

4 Adaptable

Speech therapy apps frequently have many levels, so you can keep using them as you improve. Cues or hints may be available to help you get the right answer. Sounds, images, videos, animations, and recording bring activities to life. The interactive nature of apps means you’ll often get instant feedback on your accuracy, something no worksheet could ever offer.

If you grow bored with one activity, there are many others to keep you challenged and motivated. Your speech therapist may also offer advice on how you or your family can expand on activities within an app to add therapeutic value.
Versatile

Speech therapy exercises are just one of many useful things you can do with a tablet. Once you’re comfortable using apps for speech therapy at home, you can also send email, search the web, read books, play games, watch videos, take pictures, get directions, schedule reminders, record appointments – you get the idea.

 Millions of adults without communication disorders use tablets in their daily lives; adding speech therapy apps is one more way to make the tablet useful for you.

Time to Get Started

A recent survey found that most home users of speech therapy apps report a significant improvement. They also look to their speech therapist for advice. You need your therapist to make informed recommendations for your home practice so you can get the most out of treatment. Please share this “Getting Started” guide with your therapist, or visit the Home Use section of our website for help navigating on your own.
29 Essential Things to Know about iPads & Apps

Part 3 of 7

In the first two parts of this series, we explained why speech-language pathologists should incorporate tablets into therapy and how people with acquired communication disorders can benefit from using apps at home. Now we’re giving you the background and technical information you need to get started, all in one place, with 29 app and iPad basics.

Buying a Device

1 Device Options

YappGuru offers a series of blogs that can help you decide: Apple or Android? 16 gb or 128 gb? Wifi or 3G? Mini or full size? For speech therapy, we recommend an Apple iPad Air with at least 32 GB of memory.

Learning to Use an iPad

2 The Missing Manual

When you unwrap a new iPad, you won’t find a manual in the box. Apple provides a manual online or in PDF. We recommend the Making
Cognitive Connections book to take you through each feature of the iPad, with practice opportunities focused on supporting cognition for people with brain injury.

Buying Apps

3 Apple ID

You will need to log into the iPad and App Store with an Apple ID. It’s important to remember your email and password combination for downloading apps. Every app is associated with the Apple ID used to purchase it, not the device it is installed on. You can install each app you buy with your Apple ID on any device you own.

*Pro Tip:* For clinics purchasing apps, be sure to use an Apple ID that belongs to the clinic, not an employee. This way you ensure the apps will stay if the employee leaves.

4 Restoring Purchases

If your device is lost, stolen, broken, or you want to hand it down, all the apps you’ve purchased are still yours. Once you get a new device, you simply log into the App Store with your Apple ID, find your purchased apps, and re-download them. Apple gives you step-by-step instructions.

5 App Types

There are paid, free, and freemium apps on the App Store. Even if an app is free to download, there may be hidden costs. Free apps still require an Apple ID to download.
Restricting App Purchases

If you’re worried about kids, employees, patients, or other users buying apps or in-app purchases without permission, you can restrict app purchases through the Settings app of the iPad.

Licensing

When you purchase apps, you agree to Apple’s End User License Agreement, or EULA – a lot of fine print you probably didn’t read. Here’s the rule: the person who buys the app can use it on all of their personal devices (Mary can buy an app and use it on both her iPad and iPhone). For a facility with multiple devices that are used by many people, a license is needed for each device (the rehab unit needs to purchase 5 licenses to install the same app on 5 iPads that are used by many SLPs and patients).

Volume Purchase Program and Education VPP

So how do you buy more than one copy of an app? The Volume Purchase Program allows you do this. If you are an educational institution, you may qualify for 50% off apps when you purchase 20 or more copies. There is no discount for businesses, including healthcare, but you can enroll in the VPP to purchase and distribute apps to multiple devices and stay compliant with the law.
9 Gift Cards & Gift Apps

If you don’t have a credit card, you can still buy apps using a gift card. Sometimes stores will discount App Store gift cards too, so watch for these special offers. Apps can even be given as gifts; see our gift-giving guide for step-by-step instructions. App Store cards and apps make great thank-you gifts for SLPs!

10 App Discounts

App developers can change the price of their app at any time. This price is available to everyone, so you won’t see discount codes or coupons for apps. If you’re buying several apps from the same developer, look for discounts by purchasing app bundles.

Our app bundles allow you to get related apps at bargain prices year-round. The Tactus Complete Therapy Toolkit is the most popular and best overall value.

11 Refunds

Officially, all app sales are final. However, if you have a legitimate problem, Apple will often return your money. If you bought an iPad app but only have an iPhone, or purchase an app with the wrong Apple ID, you can report a problem to Apple to request a refund. If you’re having trouble with an app not working the way you expect, it’s best to first contact the developer for support before requesting a refund.
Promo Codes

App developers are given 100 codes for a free download of each paid app to use for promotional purposes. If you’re fortunate enough to receive a promo code, you’ll need to redeem it quickly following these simple steps.

We offer our promo codes to aphasia centers, university clinics, speakers, bloggers, and researchers. Occasionally we’ll also donate them as prizes to conferences, auctions, or to say thanks to our loyal fans.

iPad Settings

Accessibility Options

Apple seems genuinely concerned with accessibility for people with visual, hearing, motor, and literacy/learning challenges. We’ve compiled some of the best accessibility features for people with communication disorders, as well as some alternative keyboards for assistive technology. All of the accessibility options are in the Settings app and are worth checking out.

Guided Access

For users with autism, brain injury, or other problems with impulsivity, guided access is a useful feature that prevents users from leaving an app. It also restricts designated zones on the screen and locks out the hardware buttons. Enable this feature through the accessibility settings, then triple-click the home button to turn it on.
15 Updating the iOS

Apple recommends that you keep your device up-to-date with the latest version of their operating system, iOS. Currently we’re on iOS8, though an older device may still be running iOS4, 5, 6, or 7. Each new version brings new features, while updates fix problems. Some apps require the latest versions of iOS. You’ll find this on the App Store where it says Compatibility:

16 Updating Apps

Keeping your apps up-to-date is important. Developers release updates to fix issues or include new features. The easiest way to make sure you have the latest version is to ensure that automatic updates are enabled. The process is simple: Go to Settings → iTunes & App Store and make sure Updates is switched on. If you’d prefer to update manually, you can go to the App Store and click on the Updates tab to see which apps have updates.

17 Mute Lock

If you find that the sound isn’t working in one of your apps, it’s usually because of the mute lock switch on the side of your device. The mute lock is great for being able to quickly silence your device, but it can be confusing since some apps override the switch and make you think your sound is on. We’ve provided step-by-step instructions for resolving this issue.
18 Security

It’s important to keep both your device and data secure, especially if you work in a healthcare setting. Adding a passcode to your iPad can help with this. The passcode can be a 4-digit code or a more complex password. You can even use your fingerprint for more security on newer devices.

19 Find My iPad

If your device is lost or stolen, you can find it using the Find My iPad app. See where it is currently located on a map and remotely lock it (provided it is online). You can also send a message to be displayed on the screen so that when it’s found, the person knows who to contact.

Using Apps

20 Organizing Apps into Folders

When you have many apps on your iPad, it can be difficult to find the one you’re looking for. To help, you can arrange them into folders. Folders can be especially helpful for clinicians to organize apps by activity or goal, such as “Articulation,” “Language,” or “Social Skills.” Grouping apps by function, such as “Music,” “Games,” or “Therapy,” might be helpful for home users.
Searching for Apps on the Device

If you still can’t find what you’re looking for by using folders, you can search your iPad for apps. On iOS 8, just swipe down from the middle of the home screen. On earlier versions of iOS, keep swiping to the right to find the search on the left-most page of all your screens.

Reviewing Apps

It’s important to share your opinions of the apps you use to help others find the good ones and avoid the bad ones. Leave feedback on the App Store by indicating a rating out of 5 stars or by writing a review. Note: you cannot rate an app you do not own or one you downloaded with a promo code.

Tactus Therapy apps never interrupt your therapy to ask you to leave a rating. We depend on you to go to the App Store through the Connect with Us link on the home screen of your Tactus apps. We really appreciate the time you take to let others know how much you love our apps!
Problems with Apps

Occasionally you will experience problems with apps. Apple has a standard list of suggestions to help you try to rectify the problem. Most importantly, contact the developer of the app so they can help you work through any issues.

iPad Maintenance

Charging

There’s nothing more annoying than needing to use your device and finding the battery dead. It’s important to keep it charged. If you won’t be using it for several days or weeks, Apple recommends storing it fully powered down at half-charge.

Cleaning

Under normal use, the only cleaning you’ll need to do is wiping fingerprints off the screen with a lint-free cloth. For healthcare, the safest cleaning agent for the device is alcohol, though a protective case may be cleaned with stronger chemicals. Single-use plastic sleeves are another option for isolation precautions. It’s always best to contact your infection control department for best practices in your facility.

There’s an app to help you remember to clean and do a thorough job. DeBac-app is a free iPad app that guides you through cleaning and records the time of each disinfection.
iPad Accessories

26 Cases, Stands, & Straps
Most people decide to put a case on their device to protect it from scratches or drops. The type of case you buy depends most on the level of protection you need, which is usually quite high for speech therapists. Stands are useful when using a tablet on a table and may be built into some cases. For people who need to carry a device with them at all times for communication, a strap may be useful.

27 Mounts & Locks
Mount a device in a fixed location for one-handed access, convenience, or security. A variety of wheelchair, table, clip, and floor mounts are available. There are also locks to secure an iPad, often built into mounts, cases, or stands.

28 Styluses & Keyboards
A stylus is useful for writing on the screen of a tablet, and helps people with dexterity problems to selecting small areas of the screen. An external keyboard connected through Bluetooth can help you use a tablet more like a laptop.
Speakers & Headphones

The built-in speakers are sufficient for most purposes, but if you’re trying to use a device as a communication aid in noisy environments, external speakers are required. Some specialty cases have built-in speakers. For those with hearing or attention problems, headphones can help.

Please share this guide with your clients, colleagues, and friends through social media or email so everyone can have the basic iPad skills they need to benefit from using apps in speech therapy.
How to Find & Evaluate Apps for Adult Speech Therapy

Part 4 of 7

Good speech therapy apps come into our lives in a number of different ways. Sometimes we hear about an app and know we have to have it. Other times, we go in search of the perfect app to achieve the goal we have in mind. There are also times when we discover an app if we give ourselves the time to explore. Let’s look at what these three methods of discovery look like and how you can evaluate an app once you’ve found it.

“You’ve got to try this app!”

Has this happened to you? Someone in a similar situation to you – a colleague, stroke survivor, or friend – starts telling you about this great new app they downloaded. They show you how it works and why it’s so great. They let you try it, and you love it. You write down the name or go straight to the App Store and download it. Easy. Done. If only all apps came into our lives this way!

Word of mouth is powerful, so if you love something – tell people! We recently heard from someone who found out about our apps from a stranger during a brief conversation in the grocery store check-out line. Leave App Store reviews for your favorite apps to help spread the word.
“I need an app that does X”

Often times, you want an app for a specific client, goal, or task. This is a bit trickier; now you’re on the hunt for the right app in a seemingly endless sea of options. A good place to start is the App Store itself, similar to heading to the mall when you need a new shirt. Start by searching for what you think you need, like “aphasia” or “articulation.” Look through the descriptions, screenshots, and customer reviews.

**Pro Tip:** When looking at reviews, click on All Versions to see reviews of past versions of the app. If there are no reviews in your country, try changing your App Store to the USA store for a greater user base of reviews. This can be done on the desktop version of iTunes by clicking the flag icon.

There are also some great app listing sites that allow you to search by your specific needs. The Aphasia Software Finder from the Tavistock Trust for Aphasia in the UK offers an app finder, app list, and comparison table so you can see what’s available in aphasia therapy apps.

YappGuru is a database of speech therapy apps with reviews by a team of app experts and ratings by registered users. You can easily sort by goal or age level to see recommendations for the need you have.

The most comprehensive list of the best adult speech therapy apps on the web is right here on the Tactus Therapy site. Download our list of over 200 recommended apps for speech therapy, as well as our list of 50 apps for brain injury survivors, both available on our Free Downloads page.

If you still can’t find what you’re looking for, head to social media. Join some groups on Facebook and do a search of past discussions. If you can’t find someone with the same question, ask a new one about your specific needs. Some of the best groups for adult-focused SLPs
wanting to know about apps are SLPs Talk Apps, Adult Rehab Speech Therapy, Medical SLP Forum, Dysphagia Therapy Group – Professional Edition, and Geriatric OT, PT, and SLP Collaborative Group. Stroke survivors and their families can join the Aphasia Recovery Connection group for advice from other people dealing with aphasia.

If you’re on Twitter, ask about #SLPapps to the #SLPeeps or #MedSLP users, or tag your question with #aphasia or the relevant terms to join the discussion.

“I want some new apps”

If you’re looking to add to your collection of apps without a specific purpose or title in mind, you can go browsing to find good apps.

Again, starting with the App Store, find an app you know you like. Look for the “Customers Also Bought” listings to find related apps by other developers and check those out. To find other apps made by a developer you know you like, click on the app developer’s name to see all their titles. You can also browse the charts of Top Paid, Top Free, and Top Grossing apps in the Medical, Education, or Games categories to see what other people are using.

Pro Tip: Be sure to delete any apps you’ve downloaded that don’t pass muster so they won’t clutter your device. They will always be associated with your Apple ID, so you can download them again in the future.

Pinterest is a great way to find new apps, with many boards devoted to speech therapy. You can also search the app review sites and lists mentioned above for fresh ideas. The Tactus Therapy Resources page has links to reviews of many great apps.
Evaluating Speech Therapy Apps

Once you think you’ve found a good app, you’ll need to evaluate whether it’s truly right for your needs.

ASHA provides two helpful lists of questions, one for SLPs and one for consumers (families and clients), to use when evaluating a new product or treatment. We’ve created a similar list of questions to consider, focused specifically on evaluating apps for adult speech therapy. It is free for you to download, use, and share.

We prefer a list of questions to guide your evaluation rather than a rating system. While there are many app evaluation rubrics available, rating features on a 5-point scale, we have found that this rigid system puts most apps in the middle range, since few apps are designed to do everything on the list.

An app like Bla | Bla | Bla gives whimsical visual feedback for volume and can be quite effective, but it can’t be personalized, doesn’t collect data, nor does it store user profiles. It won’t score well on a strict rating scale, but is it a bad app? Not at all! Considering the app’s features compared to your needs is a more useful way to evaluate it.
You can answer many important questions by doing some online research. If it’s a free app or has a free trial, just download and start using it to see if you like it. If it’s a paid app that you’re not ready to purchase, use the App Store information along with the developer’s website to look for answers. Search the web for blog reviews and videos. Ask questions on social media or contact the developer directly to see if the app does what you want.

Using smart search techniques, relying on trusted sites, and having a good social network will ensure you’re always using the best speech therapy apps for adults.
5 Ways to Use Apps in Adult Speech Therapy Sessions

... and 35 apps to get you started!

In Part 5 of Getting Started with Apps in Speech Therapy, we’re looking at how speech-language pathologists can use apps in sessions with adults. There are so many great apps for speech therapy, with new ones coming out all the time, that it would be impossible to share with you every good app and how to use it. To help you get started, we’ll cover 5 different ways you can use apps, and highlight a few good apps to try.

1 As Stimuli for Therapy

As a speech-language pathologist, your job is to get people talking and improve the way they do it. To do this, you need your many years of education and experience, evidence-based techniques, and stimuli – the materials you use to evoke speech during therapy. Apps are amazing for this because they offer photos, videos, sounds, and interactive experiences that are far more engaging than the old workbook pages and flashcards. Here are some apps that provide great stimuli to use during skilled therapy:
Apps For Language Therapy

- **Conversation Therapy**: engaging pictures and questions to start conversations and target specific types of answers or communication goals (free Lite version)
- **WikiArt**: a collection of great artwork to discuss; try starting with Normal Rockwell or explore personal interests
- **Video Time Machine & YouTube**: use videos and music to work on narratives or reminiscence
- **My PlayHome**: an interactive home environment to target functional vocabulary and directions for adults who don’t mind the more childish interface (free Lite version)
- **More Grillin’ & other “More” food apps**: interactive cooking is a great way to use functional vocabulary, give and follow directions, and see the results

More Grillin’ is an app that can be used to stimulate language production in speech therapy.
Apps For Speech Therapy

- **Speech FlipBook**: thousands of single-syllable words fully-adjustable by sounds; quickly generate word lists for apraxia and dysarthria *(free Lite version)*
- **NACD Apraxia series**: simple syllables in sound classes to stimulate motor planning for people with apraxia of speech, though the illustrations are somewhat childish
- **Tongue Twisters**: an assortment of sentences to read aloud slowly and carefully to challenge the motor speech system
- **Word Vault**: words, pictures, and other therapy prompts sorted by sounds and syllable length for a variety of goals
- **You’re Only Old Once**: a Dr. Seuss book for adults to work on prosody, rate, and clear speech

You’re Only Old Once is a singsongy book that can be used to practice oral reading with varied prosody

There you’ll sit several hours, growing tenser each second, fearing your fate will be worse than you reckoned, till finally Miss Becker, your beckoner, beckons…
Apps For Cognitive Therapy

- **Tic Tac Toe**: a simple game to establish touching the screen, taking turns, and basic logic
- **Awesome Memory**: a card matching game that can be used to teach memory strategies
- **Bag Game**: a visual way to play 20 Questions to work on logic and memory
- **Matrix Game 3**: a non-verbal organization activity good for a quick screening of cognition in people with aphasia
- **Where’s My Water**: one of many games that can be used for executive function assessment and training

Where’s My Water? is a game that can be used as a cognitive stimulus to work on executive functioning
2 To Provide Feedback

When a therapist provides verbal feedback on a client’s speech, she may sound overly critical or seem a bit of a nag. But when an app provides concrete data, the client has less reason to refute the feedback and may take more ownership in adjusting their performance. Use these apps to build insight and independence in speech, swallowing, and cognition:

- **Bla | Bla | Bla or Decibel 10th**: visual feedback on volume
- **Vowel Viz**: visual feedback on vowel production
- **Dragon Dictation or Built-in Dictation**: transcribes spoken words so the user can see if they’re speaking clearly
- **Speech Prompts**: visual feedback on prosody and volume
- **Speak Up for Parkinson’s**: visual feedback on volume with video to monitor facial expression
- **Speech Pacesetter**: visual and auditory feedback on reading rate (free Lite version)
- **Conversation Paceboard**: visual feedback on rate, available in a bundle with Pacesetter
- **Visual Attention Therapy**: visual and auditory feedback on scanning from the left (free Lite version)
- **Swallow Now**: auditory reminders to swallow saliva on a set schedule
- **Breathing Zone**: visual and auditory coaching to slow breathing and calm anxiety

Breathing Zone guides you through deep, mindful breathing to calm the nervous system and ease anxiety
For Education

Some apps provide images, video, and text that can be used to educate clients, students, and clinicians. These apps are a great place to start:

- **drawMD SLP**: anatomical diagrams you can label, personalize, and send to clients
- **Aspiration Disorders**: video models of aspiration during swallowing as seen on video fluoroscopy (VFSS/MBS) and fibroendoscopic examination of swallowing (FEES), also in an app bundle
- **3D Brain**: a model of the brain with explanations of what each section does
- **One Skill**: a video collection that demonstrates aphasia-friendly communication techniques
- **Upper Respiratory Virtual Lab**: an interactive trip through the nose to the pharynx to experience what you’ll see when doing a flexible endoscopic examination of swallowing (FEES)
As Clinical Support

These apps will make your job easier and benefit your clients, even if they never know you’re using them. Check out these essential apps to support clinicians:

- **Google Translate**: when you need a quick translation and an interpreter isn’t available
- **Tx Tools**: tally data, time responses, and calculate percentages and age
- **Notability**: one of many PDF annotation apps that allows you to load digital workbooks or conference presentations and make notes
- **Bamboo Paper**: a virtual blank book you can use as a notepad, drawing pad, or photo mark-up tool
- **Spaced Retrieval Therapy**: a timer and data tracking tool for doing the evidence-based spaced retrieval memory training technique, available in a bundle with Visual Attention Therapy

Spaced Retrieval Therapy keeps track of expanding intervals and data for memory training.
For Home Use

There are many great apps for clients to use at home or in the community – for home practice, life participation, alternative and augmentative communication (AAC), and edutainment. Therapists need to introduce these apps to clients in the clinic, train proper use in therapy, and then send the apps home with the client for everyday use. These apps for home use are the ones we’ll focus on next in Part 6 of Getting Started with Apps in Speech Therapy.
5 Ways to Use Speech Therapy Apps at Home

Part 6 of 7

Apps are great tools for speech-language professionals, as we saw in Part 5, but they are also extraordinarily helpful for clients to use for speech therapy at home. SLPs need to know about the apps their clients will use, so they can recommend, adjust, train, and support these apps too. Here are over 35 apps that can be used to enhance communication and quality of life at home:

1. **Home Therapy Programs**

   Touch-screen technology has dramatically improved speech therapy homework by giving clients access to many of the same exercises and stimuli they use in therapy. While speech therapy software cannot replace a therapist, it can provide more interactive and accessible ways to practice, increasing the intensity needed to recover. While many home speech therapy apps can be used independently, the therapist can train the client or care partner to get more out of these apps by providing individualized cues, strategies, or feedback after setting up the program.

   - Aphasia: Language Therapy allows home practice of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with reports that can be emailed to the SLP
Research shows that using Language Therapy just 20 minutes a day for 4 weeks can significantly improve language abilities in people with chronic aphasia who do speech therapy at home.

- Apraxia: Speech Sounds on Cue uses video modeling, automatic recording, and audio playback to help users perform phrase completion exercises
- Cognition: Brain HQ trains attention, memory, and speed to sharpen cognitive processes; add value by using strategies & self-ratings
- Dysarthria: Pocket Artic targets specific sounds at the word, phrase, or sentence-level, with on-screen audio recording for self-monitoring
- Dysphagia: iSwallow guides the client through repetitions and self-ratings of prescribed swallowing exercises

Compensation Apps

Everyone uses apps like Calendar, Notes, and Reminders to help remember important information. Our brains can’t do everything perfectly, so we use technology to compensate for our weaknesses. These apps are specifically helpful for supporting those with communication or cognitive challenges to successfully execute everyday activities:

- Communication: Pictello, Speech Journal, and Little Story Creator are talking photo albums that can be used to share stories and experiences
- Reading: Natural Reader reads websites and other files aloud to help with comprehension
- Writing: iWordQ helps struggling writers by predicting words while typing and reading back what’s been written

Many of the built-in accessibility options help people to read and write. See how to use text-to-speech, voice dictation, and third-party keyboards that can help with literacy.
• Executive Functioning: CanPlan helps with independence by explaining each step of a task, issuing reminders, and showing completion
• Memory: QCard is a schedule and reminder app specifically for people with brain injury, breaking down tasks into steps with options to remind others
• Insight: Track’n’Share (lite version) lets users collect data to track daily moods, habits, and exercises with optional sharing with a therapist
• Safety: Unus Tactus (lite version) helps people make phone calls by touching photos instead of names, doubling as a GPS tracker for those who wander

3 AAC

Augmentative and alternative communication apps must be carefully selected to match the needs and abilities of the user. They are then customized as the user is trained to communicate using symbols, text, scenes, or pre-stored messages.

• Aphasia: For those with language impairments, consider visual scene display apps such as Chatable, taxonomic grid apps like CommunicAide (free version), and pre-stored message apps similar to Talk’n Photos
• Dysarthria: For those with unclear speech, try text-based apps like Verbally and ClaroCom (free version) for those who can type, try HandySpeech for those who prefer to write, or try AlphaTopics to augment natural speech
• Hybrid: For those who may need a combination of the above, Tobii Dynavox Compass, TouchChat, and Predictable offer text, symbols, and scenes
Social Connection

People with communication disorders often feel socially isolated, but using social media can connect them with others, overcoming barriers encountered in face-to-face communication. It’s important to choose the right social media format for the needs and abilities of the user.

- Email and SMS: Built-in Mail and iMessage apps help people connect to family and friends; some AAC programs will output to these apps or users can learn strategies to use them directly
- Community: Facebook connects families, friends, and people with similar interests; look for stroke and brain injury survivor support groups
- Visual Bookmarks: Use Pinterest to create communication boards filled with favorite movies, travel destinations, recipes, or unique interests
- Photo Sharing: Instagram focuses on sharing photos and short videos to let pictures tell the story
- Video Calls: Facetime, Skype, and Oovoo connect people face-to-face with video, allowing use of facial expressions, gestures, & visual supports

The Aphasia Recovery Connection is dedicated to the social connection of people with aphasia through social media, video calls, and live events like cruises, boot camp, and retreats. SLPs can join as well, to learn & share.
Edutainment

People with new communication challenges often find themselves isolated at home. The iPad offers entertaining activities to help fill the time, while also improving language and cognitive skills:

• Word Games: Jay Bacal develops a range of fun word games for adults
• Puzzles: Set Pro HD offers visual logic puzzles; Lumosity brain training games offer more advanced challenges
• Books: While reading on the iBooks or Kindle app, learn new words by using the built-in dictionary or listen to challenging passages with text-to-speech
• Audio: Download Podcasts or iTunesU courses to learn something new and work on attention or note-taking skills
• Video: While watching movies and TV shows on Netflix, turn on captions to work on reading or improve auditory comprehension
6 Ways to Prepare Clients for Success Using Apps for Speech Homework

Part 7 of 7

In Getting Started with Apps in Speech Therapy, we’ve seen why speech-language pathologists and adults in speech therapy should consider using apps, which apps they should start with at home and in the clinic, iPad and app basics, and how to find and evaluate apps. In this seventh and final instalment, we offer six valuable tips for speech-language pathologists to help clients have positive experiences using apps for speech homework.

1 Teach the Basics

New users of technology or those with new impairments can learn to use an iPad, though it may require more direct teaching to master the basics. Be sure to start with instructions on how to turn the device on and off, how to navigate the screens, and how to get back to the Home screen. Practice gestures like tapping, swiping, dragging, and pinching. Use games the client enjoys to master these basic skills. Did you know that Solitaire was included with Windows to help people learn to use the mouse? It worked!
Try this brand-new free app to practice all the touchscreen gestures in a training program designed for seniors: UISEL Game

While these iPad basics aren’t communication skills, they are necessary to complete communication tasks (like using speech therapy apps, accessing email, or browsing the web). Taking a little time to teach a few key skills can open up the world of technology for your client.

2 Start Early

You know there will be a day when your client doesn’t have you to support their ongoing recovery, so don’t let that day sneak up on you. Start thinking early about the resources your client has available (people, technology, time, money) and make a plan for how to best continue therapy after discharge. The more comfortable the client feels using an app or accessibility feature, the more likely they are to carry on using it after therapy.

If you want a client to use a variety of apps, it’s often best to start with just one or two at the beginning. Once they’ve mastered those, slowly add more for speech homework. Presenting an iPad loaded with apps can be overwhelming. Consider using folders to get unnecessary apps out of the way.

Pro Tip: Put the most important or frequently used apps on the bottom dock so they’ll always be accessible.

3 Encourage Independence

Keep your hands to yourself as much as possible when using the tablet with a client. It will take longer to give instructions and let the client open the app, adjust the settings, and start the exercise, but these are
all necessary steps if the goal is to use the app for speech homework. Learning a series of steps is also a good way to monitor following directions, memory, and executive function skills while preventing learned helplessness.

*When doing Naming Practice exercises in the Naming Therapy app, allow your client to press the cues when they’re ready. You might be surprised how long they want to struggle before taking a hint, or how quickly they learn which cues are most helpful and begin self-cueing!*

4 Assign a Home Program

Just like a personal trainer at the gym, speech-language pathologists can give a few speech homework routines with recommended durations for each exercise. Alternate comprehension with expression exercises, or focus one day on rate control and another day on volume. Include therapy apps, email, reading the web, or whatever your client needs in the program. See Part 6 of this series for a refresher of ways clients can use apps at home.

For clients with aphasia or cognitive concerns, it might be best to provide two copies of instructions: one for the client to use and another for the caregiver to assist with providing extra cues or activities. A good home program contains enough structure to ensure the client works productively on the right tasks, and enough variety so the client doesn’t get bored.
Speech homework variations for clients and caregivers

5 Teach, Monitor, and Adjust

Home programs work best when they are properly taught, when progress is monitored, and when exercises are adjusted accordingly. Observe your client and caregivers doing some speech homework to be sure they’re doing it the way you intend. While you may think your instructions are clear, you might be surprised by what you see. Give gentle feedback and demonstrate the best ways to practice.

Monitoring progress is easy (and more accurate than self-report) with apps that generate scores. For impairment-based apps, you’ll want to adjust the difficulty of an exercise to aim for scores in the 70-90% range to avoid frustration or boredom. Help your clients set up their environment and expectations with speech therapy homework tips you can download.
Clients can email reports from Tactus Therapy apps with 2 touches when you put your email address in the settings of their apps. You’ll see that they’re practicing and how they’re doing, and just knowing that you’ll get the report may be enough of a push to get some clients practicing more.

Think Outside the App

When recommending an app for home practice, make sure your client is aware of all the creative ways you would use the app to stimulate communication. If your client is selecting a picture to match a word, have them name all the other pictures, too. Filling in the blank to spell word on the screen? Grab a pencil and paper to copy the complete word to also strengthen physical writing skills. Answering comprehension questions about a paragraph is great practice, but reading the story aloud first may also target clearer speech. Your professional expertise can provide more value to each exercise and help your clients make the most of their home practice efforts.

We’ll be showing you how to do more with Tactus Therapy apps on the blog soon – sign up for our monthly newsletter so you won’t miss out!

Successful Speech Homework

When you follow these six tips in your therapy sessions, your clients are more likely to have consistent follow-through on your recommendations and make faster progress as the intensity of their practice increases.