Basic Rules of Doing a Good Search

1) Break Search into Concepts
   - Easier to Manipulate Your Search to Get Desired Results
   - Start with Two Most Important Concepts from Your Question
   - Combine with Boolean Operators - **AND, OR, NOT**

   **Concept 1:**
   - Pressure Ulcer
     OR
     Pressure Ulcer
     OR Bed Sore

   **Concept 2:**
   - Elderly
     OR
     Elderly
     OR Aged

   **Concept 3:**
   - Inpatient
     OR
     Inpatient
     OR Hospitalized

2) Come up with Alternative Terms or Concepts for Your Topic
   - Databases = Different Audiences
   - Remember Terms People Use Are Based on Background/Perspective
   - Sources for:
     - Index/Entry Terms of Subject Headings
     - Terms from Related Articles
     - Google Scholar

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept/ Term #1</th>
<th>Synonyms/ Related Concepts (Other Ways to Describe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept/ Term #2</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept/ Term #3</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Truncation • Train** *(Trained, Trainer, Training, etc.)*
Be careful where you place * as it could return unrelated articles.

**Grouping • Use Quotation Marks**
Use to search as a phrase - “Pressure Ulcer” instead of “Pressure AND Ulcer”

**Compound Words** – May need to search word together and separate. (ex. “Health Care”/ “Healthcare”)

**Title and Abstract – Two Best Fields to Search**
- PubMed - [TIAB] or Advanced Search/Drop Downs
- CINAHL - Use drop down beside Search box / Not Always Necessary
3) Use Subject Heading When Possible
   • PubMed – Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)
   • CINAHL – CINAHL Headings
   • Useful Tools:
     o MeSH on Demand: https://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/MeSHonDemand.html
     o Yale MeSH Analyzer: http://mesh.med.yale.edu/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controlled Vocabulary (Subject Heading)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• May provide terms that can broaden or narrow search</td>
<td>• Recently coined terms may not have a subject term assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Accounts for most common synonyms</td>
<td>• Can be difficult to find if no list of subject terms is included in the database</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Retrieve all items in database indexed under the topic</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Retrieve synonyms, jargon, new or distinctive words</td>
<td>• May retrieve irrelevant articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify relevant articles quickly to find appropriate controlled vocabulary</td>
<td>• Your search must account for synonyms and alternative terms</td>
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4) Start Your Search Broad and Then Focus
   • Use Limits/Filter of the Database *(Publication/Study Types, Language, Gender/Sex, Etc.)*
     o Start at the Top of the Evidence Pyramid and Work Down
   • Add an Additional Concept or Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding Too Many Articles? Ways to Decrease/Focus Your Results</th>
<th>Not Finding Enough? Ways to Expand/Increase Your Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do not explode</td>
<td>• Explode whenever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Restrict subject heading to major focus</td>
<td>• Do not restrict subject headings to major focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Choose any relevant subheadings</td>
<td>• Do not choose subheadings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilize limits to English language, human subjects, review articles, etc.</td>
<td>• Consider searching back in time, look at citations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consider doing a keyword search</td>
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</table>
5) **Always Search at Least Two Databases – Unique Articles in Each Database**

- Provide different ways to access same information base and may find evidence in one database using terminology that would not be found in another database.

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**Notes**