

Search Strategy Worksheet

Developing a Search Strategy

Use this worksheet to plan a search strategy using your own area of research interest.

Topic/question/problem

Write your topic/question/problem in the box below and underline the key concepts

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Synonyms

Write a key concept into each box in the top row, and in the column beneath, list as many synonyms/alternatives you can think of. Remember to include singular/plural, acronyms, newer/older terminology, US/UK spellings/terminology, technical terms.

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Search Operators

Look at your synonyms above and consider how you might streamline the search using truncation (e.g. therap*), wildcards (e.g. wom?n, *therapy), and phrase searching (e.g. "Cognitive behav* therap*")

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Limits

Think about any limits that might apply to your topic/question/problem.

| Date range | Language | Material type | Other |
|------------|----------|---------------|-------|
| | | | |

Broadening/Narrowing

Consider how you might broaden/narrow your search if you find too few/too many references

| Broadening search | Narrowing search |
|--|---|
| e.g. think of more synonyms. Remember to use truncation. | e.g. add more precise concepts. Apply more limits |

You should now be ready to start entering your search on the database of your choice.