Getting started with your Literature Search using UCONN Library tools

Identify your RESEARCH QUESTION or statement

Example #1: "What chronic diseases are impacted by regular physical activity in older adults?"

What are the most important concepts in your question?

BRAINSTORM keywords

Keywords are the main ideas of your research question.

Example #1: exercise, physical activity; impact, outcomes (i.e. weight, falls, blood pressure); chronic illness, chronic diseases

Select the BEST Search Tools:

Reliable medical sites for background information - great place to start!

Example: MedlinePlus, Micromedex (click Databases on our webpage, search by Database Name)

Databases:

Provides short descriptions (abstracts) to research material from a wide range of sources. Abstracts help you determine whether to read the full text.

If PDF link is not available, click UCONN Full Text to link through to the item or to request the item via Interlibrary Services

Example: CINAHL Plus with Full Text, Academic Search Premier, PubMed

Full-text Databases:

Is a searchable collection of research literature that includes the entire text of an article or book, reproduced as a webpage and/or in PDF format, and other related resources.

These databases may be multidisciplinary (covering a range of subjects) or subject-specific (for one subject only).

Example: PMC, JSTOR, AccessMedicine (eBooks)
Search box on Library webpage https://lib.uconn.edu/

Searches multiple databases and the library’s catalog at once. The library catalog is an online tool used to find items housed physically in the library and electronic items such as eBooks and streaming media.

Certain databases (i.e., CINAHL, PsycINFO, or Academic Search Premier) may not be included, so it is still important to check the other databases.

It can find a lot of research on a topic quickly, but it may bring back too many results from many different fields of study on a topic.

Web search engines:

Returns high quantity of results from the full range or sources available on the web. Results are determined by a formula involving popularity and relevancy.

Though temptingly familiar, it is usually not recommended as the best place to start for scholarly search.

Example: Google, Google Scholar

Types of Literature

You should find RESEARCH ARTICLES:

Journal articles are written by a researcher or scholar for a specific field, reviewed by peer scholars before publication.

Our class exercise may ask you to find a review of the literature, a research article, a systematic review, or meta-analyses.

Magazine articles are written by a journalist for a mass-market audience.

Newspaper articles are written by a journalist to inform the public about happenings in the real world.

Let’s take your keywords (natural language) and search in CINAHL

Searching with keywords finds the exact match in the title or abstract. It will only find the words exactly as you type them!

USE Boolean Operators Insert AND, OR, and NOT into your search to broaden or narrow it.

Example #1 tai chi OR yoga will broaden your results

Example #2 tai chi AND “older adults” will narrow your results
Other tips:

Use an Asterisk * to truncate a root word for more terms

Use Parentheses if you are using than more than one Boolean

Use Quotes to search an exact phrase

Example #1:  (*chronic disease* OR *chronic illness*”) AND (physical activit* OR exercise*) AND (older adults OR elderly OR seniors)

Use drop down to find word(s) in just the title, author, or abstract fields – remember this may drop important articles!

EXPAND your keywords

Click article title to view the subject headings of the materials you find and use those terms as applicable. (See examples on pages 6-8.)
Not finding what you want. **REFINE** your search results

Be more specific;

Instead of “chronic diseases” search a **specific** chronic disease. Instead of “exercise” search a **specific type** of exercise.

Perhaps you may need to **refine** your original research question.
Filters in the database allow you to narrow a search by year, content type, etc.

Look for Peer Reviewed Journals, English Language, Research Articles, Age groups, etc.

In CINAHL, click SHOW MORE under Refine Results and select your Limiters

Look up your keywords in a subject-specific database thesaurus to find predefined terms (called controlled vocabulary or subject headings).

When searching CINAHL, check the Suggest Subject Terms box, type your term and click Search.
Example: type *sports* in the search box, check the Suggest Subject Terms box, then click Search.

Select *Sports* by selecting box. That opens a middle box called *Subheadings* which enables you to restrict your search to specific aspects. You do not have to choose any of the subheadings.
Example of **exploding** a term:

If you click the word **Sports**, a screen pops up that lists all the narrower terms under **Sports**.

By selecting **Sports**, the computer will **OR** all the various sport activities. You will not have to type all the terms! Very powerful. This is called **exploding** a term.

Also, the **boxes with a plus sign** means that there are other windows which you can open which will show narrower terms.

Click **Search Database** to get back to the main work page.
Click **Search History** to view your results

If you search the keyword **sports** you will find approximately 47,380 articles that have just the word “**sports**” in the article title, journal title, author’s name and/or abstract.

The **CINAHL Subject Heading, MH “Sports+”** finds 65,001 articles about sports, all types of sports. Subject headings are assigned to articles that describe the content of the article. The subject heading **Sports** will look for all types of sports.

**Need more information or better results? Try a different database!**

Run same search in **different EBSCO databases without changing your strategy!**
- Click **Choose Databases** to navigate to other EBSCO Databases

![Choose Databases](image)

- **DESELECT** the database you were in - **CINAHL Plus with Full Text** (just remove check mark in box)
- **Select the box** next to a new database, (i.e. Academic Search Premier). Select one database at a time.
- **Click OK button**
• Now you are running the same search in Academic Search Premier
• Click Search button to run the search in the new database, if needed.
• Use Refresh Search Results button if needed

EVALUATE INFORMATION ~ to determine trustworthiness of the material, try the CRAAP test developed by the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico. ([http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf](http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf))

**CURRENCY** - When was the information published and is that important to know?

**RELEVANCE** - How important is the information to your needs?

**AUTHORITY** - Who is the author and what are their credentials? Do they work for a reputable institution? Was the information published in a peer-reviewed journal?

**ACCURACY** - How reliable is the information? Does it lack citations? Are there spelling errors?

**PURPOSE** - Is it a well-balanced independent piece of research, or intended to sell a product or idea?

ORGANIZE YOUR RESEARCH - Use a Citation Manager/Reference Manager

An online tool or desktop software used to organize and store citations and full-text articles or other documents, create bibliographies, insert in-text citations into a paper, and share references with research partners.

**Example:** RefWorks, Mendeley.

CITATIONS - Identify the source of the information found during your research.

Citation is a mandatory scholarly practice that gives credit and helps prevent plagiarism. Citations may be used in bibliographies, footnotes and within the body of your text. Common citation formats are APA, MLA, and Chicago Style.
Use our Research Guides for more help

- **Health Subject Guide**  [https://guides.lib.uconn.edu/health](https://guides.lib.uconn.edu/health)
- **Research Now!**  [https://guides.lib.uconn.edu/researchnow](https://guides.lib.uconn.edu/researchnow)
- **Undergraduate Students Start Guide**  [http://lib.uconn.edu/about/get-help/start-guides/undergraduate-students/](http://lib.uconn.edu/about/get-help/start-guides/undergraduate-students/)
- **Citation Guides and Management Tools**  [http://guides.lib.uconn.edu/citationguides](http://guides.lib.uconn.edu/citationguides)

Now for some fun web sites that you can demonstrate at health fairs!

Go to **Environmental Health & Toxicology** web site  [https://sis.nlm.nih.gov/enviro.html](https://sis.nlm.nih.gov/enviro.html)

- **ToxMystery** with Toxie the Cat!
- **ToxTown**
- **Environmental Health Student Portal**
- **Household Products Database**

For a “fun journal” check out “**Nursing Made Incredibly Easy!**”

View some of our streaming videos:

- Series of streaming videos on “**Unnatural Causes is inequality making us sick?**”  View 7 episodes

Valori Ann Banfi

[valori.banfi@uconn.edu](mailto:valori.banfi@uconn.edu)

(860) 486-2824

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Some of the ideas used in this handout was brought to you by Katy Kavanagh Webb, Research and Instructional Services Librarian kavanaghk@ecu.edu and Elsevier’s Library Connect.