Step by Step guide to searching
EBSCO CI NAHL

NHSGGC Library Network
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Step by step guide to searching EBSCO Cinahl

- **Always plan your search**: this will make your search focused and time-efficient
- Be as **specific as possible** with your search question or topic
- Think about **PI CO** when you develop your question (P-Who is your Patient/Population? I-What is the Intervention, C- Is there a Comparison? O-What is the desired Outcome?)
- Break your question down into **individual concepts**, then describe each in turn
- Think of **alternative ways to describe each concept** (synonyms, acronyms, US spellings)
- Write down **limits you want to apply** (language, age group, publication year, article type)

You can use the form below to plan your search strategy. Blank copies are available on the Library website or from library staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Are breathing exercises an effective therapy for asthma?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Search Term AND Keywords (other ways to describe concept)</td>
<td>Asthma OR Asthmatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Search Term AND Keywords (other ways to describe concept)</td>
<td>Breathing Exercises OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limits AND</td>
<td>English Language, Past 5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visit the **NHS Scotland Knowledge Network** [www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk) and **Login** at the top right of the screen with your **ATHENS account** (you can register for an account via the same link).

Next choose the **Library** tab then the **Databases** tab then ‘EBSCOhost (CINAHL, PsycINFO, Dynamed)’ under the **Popular collections** list.

Choose the database you would like to search
Enter your first search term into the search box. Click search. The database will try to match your term to a term it uses to describe the content of articles (subject headings).

**TIP: do not enter your whole search question, just one topic at a time. Refer back to your plan at all stages during the search.**

From the list of subject headings tick the most appropriate. Clicking on the small quote bubble under Scope will tell you more about the topic covered by a Subject Heading, check this if you are unsure. If none of the subject headings are suitable, you can click on “Basic Search” to go back to the start and type in an alternative search term.
Clicking on a Subject Heading will allow you to see the Subject Tree. From here you can see which additional terms would be included if you were to use the Explode tool.

Choose a subject heading and make use of the Explode or Major Concept tool where appropriate. Using the Major Concept tool will limit your search to articles where your subject is considered a MAJOR topic. Be aware that this will exclude lots of articles. You also have the option to use Subheadings. These are useful if you are interested in a particular aspect of a...
topic. Bear in mind **this will limit your results**. In most searches, especially those with more than one topic, it is best to select **Include All Subheadings**.

When you are happy with your selections click **Search Database**.

The first part of your search is complete. Your **Search History/Alerts** box will show the number of results retrieved.

You can also search with keywords. This is useful if you cannot find an appropriate subject heading or if you are doing an in-depth search and want to be sure you have retrieved all relevant articles.

Enter your term in the search box. Remember to **untick the Suggest Subject Terms box**. The database will then take the words you enter and search for them in the title, abstract and
other fields of an article record.

You can use shortcuts when keyword searching. Placing an asterisk * at the end of a word (truncation) will find all the various endings - very useful for plurals. Other useful shortcuts are detailed at the end of this guide.

A keyword search will proceed straight to your results, again listed in your Search History box.

If you have more than one topic in your search question, repeat the process. Remember to tick the Suggest Subject Terms box.
Choose an appropriate **Subject Heading**, making use of the scope note, explode or major concept tools if required.

Remember to check the **Subject Tree** before you decide to use **Explode**, by clicking on the subject heading.
Select a **Subheading** if appropriate. Otherwise tick **Include All Subheadings** and **Search Database**.

When you have finished searching for all of your topics, you will need to combine these to find articles which answer your original question.

**TIP:** To delete a search line, tick next to it and click Remove Selected

First work your way through your search history ticking all the searches on the same topic (if you have done more than one), use **OR** to combine these. This will give you one large set of articles on the same subject.
Then use **AND** to combine your searches on different topics. This will give you a smaller set of articles. Each article will contain **ALL** of your topics.

Finally you apply **Limits** to your search results. You find the limits to the left of your search results under Refine your results.
Click on Show More to view all available limits including English Language, Publication Year, Age Group etc. Select your limits and **click Search to apply.**

Once you have your final set of articles, you can start to browse them. Either **click View Results** or scroll down to view.
There are two ways to access the full text of articles...

1. Click the PDF icon if available to view the full text.

   ![PDF icon]

   **TIP:** Within PDFs use the Printer icon to print and the Floppy Disc icon to Save.

2. Click on SFX to check the Knowledge Network for full text. If the article is NOT available online visit [www.quest.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.quest.scot.nhs.uk) to request a copy from NHSGGC Library Network
**Shortcuts for Keyword searching**

Truncation (*) - The * symbol tells the database to include words with the letters before the asterisk and any combination of letters afterwards, eg. physiotherap*

Wildcard (?) - The ? symbol stands for any letter, or none. It’s especially useful for including both British & US spellings of terms, eg. orthop?edic

Near (N) – Use with a number to find words near each other eg. N2 this command will find the words if they are within two words of one another regardless of the order in which they appear.

**Next steps…**

Other useful features of the EBSCO databases include: saving/printing/emailing your search results, saving your search strategy to your EBSCOhost personal account and exporting your references to reference management software.

To learn more about these features and other aspects of advanced literature searching please contact the Specialist Librarians Team at LibrarySubjectTeam@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

**Useful contacts**

The Specialist Librarians Team is available for general literature searching support as well as individual and group training, contact LibrarySubjectTeam@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

For help with your Athens account please contact: GG-UHB.Athens@nhs.net

**Useful links**

NHS Scotland Knowledge Network [www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk)

To request articles not available online visit [www.quest.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.quest.scot.nhs.uk)

For full information on NHSGGC library services visit [www.nhsggc.org.uk/libraryservices](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/libraryservices)


EBSCOhost tutorials [http://support.ebsco.com/training/tutorials.php](http://support.ebsco.com/training/tutorials.php)