

Conducting a Literature Review

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Slides available at: tinyurl.com/ydhvwsqb

5 Simple Steps:

1. Identify & articulate your information need
2. Break your search down into two or more “pillars” and “term harvest” for each “pillar”
3. Run your search across two or more relevant databases- you may need to modify your search to “speak” to the different tools
4. Organize your results by information type and/or manuscript section to make sure you’ve fulfilled your information need
5. Use a reference management tool such as Endnote or Zotero to create in-text citations while writing your review

More Resources:

- PubMed User Guide: pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/help
- Levy’s Reference Management Tutorial:
libguides.mssm.edu/ref_managers
- *Literature Reviews: An Overview for Graduate Students* video:
youtu.be/t2d7y_r65HU

askalibrarian.mssm.edu

1. Run a basic, simple search in PubMed. Use just two keywords/concepts & stick to the single search bar on the main page.

- Navigate to the Search Details in advanced search to see how PubMed “mapped” your search. Did it find a MeSH term? Is it the same or different from the term you searched?
- Try the same search using “quotation marks”- will disable ATM
- Note the differences in your search

2. With the same search in mind, navigate to the MeSH database. Locate relevant MeSH terms and add them to your “Search Builder.” Don’t forget about the subheadings and MeSH trees!

- How does this MeSH search compare to your keyword search?
hint: compare the dates of the most recent results

3. Try combining your Keywords and Mesh terms to capture all relevant results!

example:

("Breast Neoplasms"[Mesh] OR (cancer AND breast)) AND "Anesthesia"[Mesh]

4. Save your search to your MyNCBI account (“Create alert”)

5. Use filters to limit by date, publication type, etc.!