



**Step 1) What is your research topic/question?** *(Try and formulate a specific question)*

**Pick out the keywords from your topic:**

**Consider how the following PICO categories apply to your research topic:** *(PICO is an evidence-based model for formulating a clinical question. By dividing your concepts into these categories, you will also be doing the groundwork for developing a search strategy)*

Patient/ Population and /or Problem	Intervention/Exposure	Comparison/Control	Outcome

**Step 2) Write down alternative terms/ synonyms for your keywords:** *(Think about acronyms, phrases, lay and medical terminology, brand and generic names and old and new terminology)*

**Step 3) Apply truncation, wildcard and speech marks to your keywords and synonyms:**

*(Truncation (\*) will find alternative endings to words, Speech marks (" ") enclosed around a phrase will find all of those terms together).*

**Step 4) Apply Boolean Operators to your search strategy** (*OR will broaden your search, AND will narrow your search*)

**Step 5) Make a note of your complete search strategy here:** (*This is useful for your records*)

**Step 6) What limits could you apply to your search?** (*Age, Sex, Publication date, Publication type etc*)

**Step 7) Write down a list of databases that will be appropriate for your search** (*For a comprehensive, systematic search it is advisable to search numerous databases*).

**Step 8) To ensure a comprehensive search has been completed, consider the following:**  
*MeSH/Thesaurus searching, citation searching, hand searching of key journals, grey literature.*