

**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 |
|  |  |  |  |

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

What is your research topic?

**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.*