

- **Always plan your search:** this will make your search focused and time-efficient
- Consider the **purpose** of your search and implications for **resources to be searched**
- Be as **specific as possible** with your search question or topic
- Think about **PICO** (**P**-Patient/Population, **I**-Intervention, **C**-Comparison, **O**-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)

Question		
Purpose of Search		
Resources to be searched – consider secondary sources/primary sources inc. grey literature		
First Search Term		Alternative Terms
	OR	
Second Search Term	AND	Alternative Terms
	OR	
Third Search Term	AND	Alternative Terms
	OR	
Limits		AND

See Staffnet > Info Centre > Library > Literature Searching for more information on conducting a literature search

Example Planned Search Strategy

Question		
What is best practice in rehabilitation following falls in the elderly ?		
Purpose of Search		
Patient care		
Resources to be searched – consider secondary sources/primary sources inc. grey literature		
SIGN, NICE, Cochrane Library, Medline, Cinahl		
First Search Term		Alternative Terms
Rehabilitation	OR	Physiotherapy Physical Therapy Occupational Therapy
Second Search Term	AND	Alternative Terms
Falls	OR	Fall Falling Trips Slips
Third Search Term	AND	Alternative Terms
	OR	
Limits		
Past 5 years, English Language, Elderly, Reviews		