# Searching using Cochrane

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## Before you start searching

To search on the database it will help you if you’ve thought about what terms you are going to put in and how you are going to enter them.

If you haven’t already done so, I recommend having a look at the Constructing a Search Strategy tutorial and, if you find it helpful, completing your own Constructing a Search Strategy Support Sheet.

Throughout your studies, you can access both of these on the Library Health and Social Work subject pages in our How to… Guides section

## Why Cochrane?

If you’re looking at the effectiveness of an intervention

Cochrane is a database of systematic reviews which gather all the evidence on a given topic and draw conclusions about what works and what doesn’t

Cochrane is the ‘gold standard’ of evidence-based medicine.

## How do I find Cochrane?

Go to the Library homepage http://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/

Click on Subject Help

Choose Health and Social Work

Click Databases

## Cochrane Search Screen

There are lots of different ways of searching for your topic and lots of different options.

Don’t use the basic search in Cochrane, Click Advanced Search

Then choose the Search Manager tab

If you do individual searches in Search Manager, Cochrane will remember them for you to combine later. Alternatively, search in the standard Search and click Send to Search Manager after each search.

## Entering your search

You need to enter the search strategy you’ve already prepared.

Begin by typing (or copying and pasting) all of the alternative terms you’ve thought of for your first keyword, all separated by OR.

If this doesn’t sound familiar and make sense, then you need to have a look again at When to use AND and OR and Constructing a Search Strategy.

## Entering another search

Click Continue and a second box will appear ready for you to do exactly the same thing with the terms identified for your next keyword.

If you have another line of terms, repeat the process again.

As long as you’re in Search Manager, Cochrane stores each set of terms ready for you to work with.

## Search History

Cochrane has kept a list of your entered searches

At the moment there are 2 separate searches, one finds us all the articles on the database which have to do with handwashing and one that finds all the articles on complying with something. They aren’t linked in any way.

Look at the numbers of results for each search on the right. If these are very low (unless it’s a very niche topic) try and think of some more alternative terms as you probably haven’t yet thought of the term that the majority of people are using.

## Combining Terms

To get a list of the articles on the database which are about handwashing AND compliance

In the next box down, write the numbers of each row with AND in between (N.B. You will need to write in the # sign or the database will look for the number 1 etc and not the search terms)

Click on Continue

## Cochrane Results

Click on the number of results at the end of the row.

The results of your search will be displayed with the most relevant at the top

If you’re very lucky, the top one

will be just what you’re looking for.

Remember, no matter how good your search terms, you’ll always get

some results which aren’t relevant to you.

## Adding limits to your search

Options to limit what results are displayed appear on the left of the results screen.

You can choose things like

Date

Language

If you’re still struggling with too many results, try our Too many results? guide

## Not just Reviews

Although searching Cochrane is all about the Cochrane Reviews, there are other things indexed on this database too.

Displayed directly below the search boxes are the Reviews (55 in this example)

Everything else is hidden under the tabs at the top.

## Not just Reviews

You’ll find that there are things like

Protocols

Trials

Editorials

Other Reviews

These might be useful to you to. Click on the circles next to the ones you want to display to view the list.

## Finding full text

All the Cochrane Reviews are available in full text on the database.

You can view a PDF for the whole review, or a bit at a time.

I suggest you don’t print these out in full as they are really, really long.

To find any of the other things which aren’t reviews, you need to search for the journal using the Journal titles option in the search box on the Library homepage.

You can also use the Cairns Library at the John Radcliffe hospital to get access to additional resources, or the Great Western Hospital library if you are a Swindon student.

## Further help

For more help with forming a search strategy look at the Constructing a Search Strategy guide

If you’re wondering what the \* means, then you can look at our guide Truncation and Wildcards

For more help with what AND and OR mean and when to use them look at our When to use AND and OR guide

If want to try your search on a different database, look at the database specific guides on our How to… guides pages

If you have questions you’d like to ask a librarian…

## Any Questions?

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Ask for help if you need it.