



CINAHL Help Sheet

An Introduction to Using CINAHL

Creating a Basic or Advanced Search

1. On the Basic Search Screen, enter search terms in the **Find** field to conduct a *text word* search. On the Advanced Search Screen, enter search terms in the **Find** field to conduct a *subject* search.
2. Use **Limiters** to narrow your search, for example:
 - **Publication** – Limit search results to records from a specific title.
 - **Journal Subset** – Choose from blind peer reviewed, behavioral sciences, nursing, etc.
 - **Special Interest** – Limit to advanced nursing practice, case management, critical care, etc.
 - **Publication Type** – Limit results to source types such as care plans or systematic review.
 - **Age Groups** (Advanced) – Limit to Child, 6-12 years; Middle Age, 45-64 years, etc.
3. Click the **Search** button.

Searching Techniques

The **CINAHL Subject Heading List** (controlled vocabulary or thesaurus) provides a more effective searching capability in the CINAHL database. On the Advanced Search Screen, enter a research topic (e.g., **arthritis**). To retrieve a relevancy ranked list of related subject headings, first click the **Suggest subject terms** box above the **Find** field, then click **Search**. Click on a resulting hyperlinked term for details.

Subheadings are available by checking the box to the left of the desired subject term. Tree views of the subject heading are shown when you click on the subject term. To retrieve results with arthritis as a subject heading, click the box to the left of the term arthritis. To retrieve results in which arthritis is the major point of the article, check the box in the Major Concept column. To expand on a subject heading, check the box in the Explode column.

Specific sub-headings can be selected by checking the appropriate box in the sub-headings column. As subject terms and sub-headings are checked, they are added to the Search Term Builder box on the right. Click **Search Database** to view results. To narrow the focus of your search, click the **Show More** link under **Refine your results**. Select the limiters you want to apply to your search, then click Search for a more focused Result List.

Field Searching allows you to designate one *specific* field in the CINAHL record within which your term will be searched. These fields include (but are not limited to):

Article Title (TI), Author (AU), Author Affiliation (AF), Abstract (AB), Pagination (PG), Source (SO).

- To search within a field, enter the two-letter field code, followed by your search term. For example, type **au Smith** to search for **Smith** in the **Author** field of the record.
Note: *Field codes are not case sensitive.* For a complete list of field codes, click the **Field Codes** link that appears directly above the **Find** field on your search screen.
- Depending upon the format of your Advanced Search Screen, you may be allowed to select the most commonly searched field codes from a drop-down list.

Managing Your Search Results

To manage (print/e-mail/save) results for the current session only, click on the folder icon for a desired item in the Result List. Items placed in the session folder will be removed if you log out of EBSCOhost, or if your session times out. **Sign in to My EBSCOhost** to create a personalized folder for saving results, searches, persistent links to searches, search or journal alerts and web pages created using Page Composer, which will remain in your folder *after* you log out of EBSCOhost.