**Search strategy worksheet**

### Develop a research question. Make it clear, concise, focused.
*Hint:* ask yourself, “What would be the title of the perfect article to answer my question?”

**Example:** How does diet and exercise affect people with Type 2 diabetes?

### Highlight each of the key, distinct concepts in your question.
*Hint:* these are usually nouns

**Example:** How does diet and exercise affect people with Type 2 diabetes?

### Generate synonyms for each of your key concepts. Use OR to link related terms that describe the same concept.
Using OR retrieves articles that contain ANY of your terms. Enclose your related concepts in brackets.

*Hint:* you may use concept mapping to help visualize relationships between concepts

Example:

- Diet
- OR
- Food
- OR
- Nutrition

Example:

- Exercise
- OR
- Physical activity
- OR
- Working out

Example:

- Type 2 diabetes
- OR
- Diabetes mellitus, Type 2
- OR
- Diabetes mellitus

### Once you’ve generated a set of related concepts linked by OR, join your distinct concepts together with AND.
Using AND means your results will include all of your distinct concepts.

*Hint:* When you search, use only your concept words – not a whole sentence

Example:

How does (diet OR food OR nutrition) AND (exercise OR physical activity OR working out) affect people with (Type 2 diabetes OR diabetes mellitus, Type 2 OR diabetes mellitus)?

### Now you’re ready to search. Think about where to find relevant material.
*Hint:* try
- Research guides by program
- Databases A-Z
- Databases by subject

**Supersearch:** Retrieves results from the library catalogue (books, e-books, videos, etc.) and journal articles from databases. Use the filters on the side menu to focus your search.

**Subject-specific databases:** such as OVID MEDLINE, CINAHL, PubMed, etc. Good for ensuring high-quality results. Special vocabulary allows you to search efficiently and effectively.

**Google Scholar:** Retrieves thousands or millions of citations, but a. not all are from peer-reviewed sources b. not all are available at Brock. No easy ways to focus your search.

### Tips and tricks

- **“exact phrase”** searching – use quotes to retrieve compound keywords as one phrase e.g. “diabetes mellitus”, “motivation theory

- **Truncation** – use an asterisk to search for alternate word endings e.g. child* retrieves child, children, childhood