Search Preparation Worksheet
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1. Write your research question.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. From your research question above, write the major concepts (either single words or short phrases) in the spaces below. [Be sure to read the ‘General “Tips and Tricks” for Searching’ on the back side of this handout.]

   Major concept #1: ____________________________________________________________

   Major concept #2: ____________________________________________________________

   Major concept #3 (if applicable): ______________________________________________

3. For each of your major concepts, write several synonyms or other search terms that might be useful for searching. This is a beginning list – you may add to it later. HINT: Your textbook may be helpful for coming up with these terms.

   Synonyms for major concept #1:
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #2:
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #3 (if applicable):
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. Using your major concepts/search terms and synonyms, write several search statements that you will use to search the article database CINAHL Complete and/or MEDLINE Complete.

   a. ___________________________________ AND ___________________________________ AND ___________________________________
      Major Concept #1                             Major Concept #2                             Major Concept #3 (if applies)

   b. ___________________________________ AND ___________________________________ AND ___________________________________
      Synonym for Major Concept #1                 Synonym for Major Concept #2                 Synonym For Major Concept #3 (if applies)
General “Tips and Tricks” for Searching:

- When searching the article databases, keeping it simple works best!

**Example:**
Research Question: Why is the dorsal gluteal site unsafe for intramuscular injections?

Major concept #1: dorsal gluteal  Major concept #2: intramuscular injections

Search strategy: dorsal gluteal AND intramuscular injections

**Key Points:**
- Leave off short words that do not add meaning, such as a, an, the, on, of, off.
- Focus on major concepts, which are single words or short phrases. Short phrases are generally no longer than 3 words.
- Avoid entering your entire question or part of your question as your search. You will get zero results. In the example above, you would not want to search for either ‘Why is the dorsal gluteal site unsafe for intramuscular injections’ or ‘safety of dorsal gluteal site injections;’

- If you have two or three major concepts/search terms and retrieve either a few or no results when searching the article databases, try leaving off a major concept to make your search broader.

- If you are retrieving too many results, try adding a third major concept, or be more specific with your other search terms.

- **If you are having no luck after searching for an hour, save yourself from frustration! Ask a librarian!**