1. Which databases are available through OvidSP?

The OvidSP interface provides access to the following biomedical and health-related databases and, in addition, a range of electronic journals and electronic books.

- **AMED**: allied health and complementary medicine.
- **EMBASE**: a large biomedical database with a European focus and strengths in drug information.
- **Global Health Archive**: a specialist international public health database.
- **Health and Psychosocial Instruments**: information on measurement instruments in health fields.
- **HMIC**: health management.
- **International Pharmaceutical Abstracts**: pharmaceutical science and health related literature.
- **Maternity and Infant Care**: pregnancy, birth, postnatal care, and neonatal care, first year of life.
- **MEDLINE**: the largest biomedical bibliographic database.
- **PsycBOOKS**: full text of scholarly book titles published by the American Psychological Association (APA).
- **PsycCRITIQUES**: full-text reviews of books, popular films, videos, and software relevant to psychology.
- **PsycEXTRA**: grey literature in psychological sciences.
- **PsycINFO**: psychological, social, behavioural, and health sciences.
- **PsycTESTS**: unpublished tests, developed by researchers but not made commercially available.
- **Social Policy and Practice**: evidence-based social science research.
- **Transplant Library**: randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews on all aspects of solid organ transplantation.

2. Accessing OvidSP

UCL staff and students may access OvidSP from any computer. Link to the database of your choice from the UCL Library Services databases list at [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/databases](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/databases). Off-site access requires a UCL user ID.

The examples in this leaflet use MEDLINE as the selected database. Other databases have similar functionality.

3. Searching using Advanced Ovid Search

When you first enter any OvidSP database the **Advanced Search** screen is displayed. If you are carrying out a subject search, this option offers functions to enable more effective searching. For comprehensive searching you should include both a **thesaurus** search and a **textword** search.

If you need to carry out a quick search to retrieve just a few relevant results you may prefer to use **Basic Search**. This allows you to enter a natural language search, but it is not recommended for advanced or comprehensive subject searching.

**Tip**: Use the **thesaurus search** by ticking the box.

![Map Term to Subject Heading](Check Box)

This allows you to find articles about the same concept as they will all have the same subject heading. One subject heading embraces many possible different ways of describing the same concept and helps if the same word can mean different things.

**Tip**: also use a **textword search** to collect results that were missed by the indexer; to include new items that have not yet been indexed; and, to explore topics that do not have a dedicated thesaurus term.
When carrying out an Advanced Search, it is best to search for each of your target concepts individually. For each concept do a thesaurus search and a textword search and then combine the searches together.

If we are interested in finding articles on the adverse effects of phenytoin in the treatment of epilepsy, the main concepts are epilepsy, phenytoin (particularly adverse effects).

Thesaurus search – use the thesaurus to identify relevant subject headings.
- Enter the first concept, epilepsy, in the search box and make sure that the Map Term to Subject Heading box is ticked (in most databases this will be ticked by default)
- Click Search and a list of relevant subject headings from the thesaurus will be displayed.
- Click the name of a subject heading to view more information about how it relates to other subject headings. Depending on the database you are using, the thesaurus details will be displayed either in a ‘tree’ structure (showing broader and narrower terms) or alphabetically.

- **Explode:** tick this box to search for the selected subject heading plus the narrower terms. E.g. explode Epilepsy in Medline to also retrieve records with the subject headings Epilepsies, Myoclonic; Epilepsies, Partial, etc.
- **Focus:** tick this box to limit your results to records for which your subject heading is a main topic of the article. This is useful for retrieving a few key papers on a subject, but is not recommended if you want to do a comprehensive search.
- **Scope:** click on the icon to see a definition and additional information about the term. Check the scope note carefully to ensure the thesaurus term is the correct one. Sometimes the mapping is not perfect and depending on your search term, you may not always find the right term first time. Think of different ways to describe your concept if you get unexpected results. The scope note also tells you if the term is a recent addition (if it is, check how older items on this topic were indexed).
- The last entry in the list is not a subject heading, it is a simple textword and offers you the option of performing the textword search, instead of, or in combination with, the subject heading search. As this is not a subject heading it has no Explode or Focus options, and no icon.
- You may select as many subject headings as you wish from the list and combine them using AND or OR from the drop-down menu.
- In your search history, a subject heading is indicated by an oblique stroke after the term, e.g. Epilepsy/
Using subheadings

If you select a single subject heading and click Continue, a list of possible subheadings for that single subject heading will be displayed (although please note that some subjects do not offer subheadings). Use subheadings if you need to search for just a particular aspect of your chosen subject. E.g. for phenytoin we might choose to select the subheading Adverse Effects. Select subheading(s) which interest you. If you wish to include them all (recommended for a more comprehensive search), then do not select any (or tick the Include All Subheadings box). In your search history a subheading will appear after the oblique stroke e.g. Phenytoin/ae [Adverse Effects].

Textword search – If you wish to carry out a comprehensive search you should search for words that occur in the title or abstract of articles as well as searching for subject headings. To do this, simply enter your search terms into the search box and untick the Map term to subject heading box.

The following tips can help with textword searching:

- **Phrase searching** – as a default, Ovid searches for multiple words as a phrase. E.g. if you type social anxiety Ovid will search for the phrase “social anxiety” (i.e., retrieving records only where the two words appear next to each other and in the order you typed them). If you wish to enter multiple words but not treated as a phrase, you should separate the words with AND or OR. Eg. typing social AND anxiety will search for both words, not necessarily together.

- **Select a field to search** – you can choose fields to search. Most databases by default will search title, abstract and keywords which, in Ovid, is indicated by the code .mp (‘multiple posting’).

- **Truncation and wildcards**
  - $ or * represent any number of characters at the end of a word – so therap$ finds therapy, therapies, therapist, etc.
  - # represents one (and only one) character in the middle or at the end of a word – so wom#n finds woman or women.
  - ? represents zero or one characters in the middle or at the end of a word – so colo?r finds color or colour.

- **Proximity searching**
  - ADJn finds two search terms within n words of each other - so cancer ADJ3 colon would find the two words where they are within three words of each other, such as colon cancer or cancer of the colon.

### 4. Search History and combining searches

Click Search History (top left-hand corner) to view a list of search steps and the number of results for each one.

**Tip:** use AND or OR to combine search terms together.

- **AND** - retrieves articles which contain all of your concepts. Eg. Search for phenytoin and epilepsy to retrieve articles that mention both of the terms.
- **OR** - retrieves articles which contain any of your concepts. Eg. search for epilepsy OR seizures to retrieve articles that mention either of the terms.

To **combine searches** together, select the searches and click And or Or. Your combined search now forms a new line in the Search History. You may remove searches from the Search History by ticking the box alongside the search you no longer require and clicking the Remove Selected button (at the bottom of the search history).
5. Applying Limits

Limits offer the option to refine your search according to criteria that are difficult to search using text words – e.g. the type of article, publication date, age group, language of publication, etc.

Click the Limits link underneath the search box in Advanced Search to view a selection of the most popular limits. Select one (or more) of them and type into the search box the number of the search line you wish to limit. Click Search and your limited search will appear as an additional line in your search history.

If you need more extensive limit options, click Additional limits. To use them, click the radio button alongside the search you wish to limit and make selections from the menus, then click the Limit A Search button.

6. Viewing results

Results are displayed below your search history. To view results from any previous search, click on for that search line.

Results are displayed 10 to a page in citation format. To change the display, use the menu at the top of the list of results: E.g. to display the abstracts for your results, select the Abstract view.

Tip: To view the abstract for an individual article click to the right of the article details.

The left-hand menu displays information about your search, with options for sorting the list of results. You can also filter results from this menu using criteria such as year or publication type; click on the + to expand the options.

Click Find Similar alongside any useful article to carry out a new search for articles on a similar topic.

Click Find Citing Articles alongside any article to retrieve a list of articles that cite that article. This can be used as another way to broaden a search for relevant articles.

Tip: this only shows citations that are included in the journals available via OvidSP and includes citations regardless of whether or not UCL has a subscription to the journal.

7. Linking to the full text of articles

- Click on the SFX@UCL to link to the full text (where available) or to check whether UCL holds the journal in printed form. A new window will appear.
- Where the full text is available, the details of coverage and publisher are displayed. Click the Go button to link to the full text.
- Where the full text is not available, alternative options are shown lower down the window, e.g. to search the UCL Library Catalogue (Explore) or other library catalogues to locate the journal in printed form.
8. Printing, emailing and exporting your results
   - Check the boxes next to the articles you wish to keep from all pages.
   - Select from options at the top of the list of results
     Print: Choose which fields to print, which citation style, and optionally your search history
     Email: In addition to the options for printing, you can add a message and choose to send the list as an attachment
     Export: You can choose to export as a Word, pdf, or text document, as well as different options for exporting your results to bibliographic software such as EndNote.

9. Saving results, searches and creating alerts
   To keep selected results from a list of results you can tick the boxes and click on Keep Selected to save selected results as a line in your search history, for the duration of your session.
   To save results permanently, you need to create an Ovid Personal account. This allows you to use the My Workspace feature (to save results and searches, set up alerts and more). Click Personal Account at the top of the screen then Create a new personal account. When you have logged in you can use:
   - Add to My Projects From your list of results, tick the boxes alongside items of interest and then click Add to My Projects to save a collection of items within the Ovid system, for viewing again later. You can add items to an existing project or create a new one.
   - to make notes about a particular item, e.g. to indicate what you thought of an article.

Click My Workspace to view and manage all your Projects. As well as article results you can save sections of text and images from Ovid full text articles. For details please see the My Projects section in the online Help at the top right of the screen.

You can also save your search strategy to re-run it at a later date, or set up alerts, so that you are emailed when new articles that match your search criteria are added to the database. To do this:
   - Click Save at the bottom of the Search History
   - Enter a name for your search or alert. Optionally, you can add comments.
   - Use the pull-down menu to choose a permanent search, a temporary search (removed from the server after 24 hours) or an alert and click Save.
   Tip: if you choose an alert, a box will appear allowing you to enter an email address and choose from many other options. You can also save your search strategy to a project.

You can run, view and change saved searches and alerts within My Workspace, under My searches and alerts. To re-run a saved search:
   - Click My searches and alerts, select the search you need and click Run. Alternatively, from the main search page click View Saved (top right of the Search History), select a search, and click Run.

To edit a saved search:
   - Go to My searches and alerts and click the Edit icon for the search you wish to edit.
   - Insert or delete search lines using the appropriate icons to the right of the screen. OvidSP will renumber search lines as necessary where they appear in your search history.
10. Changing databases

If you are doing a comprehensive search, you may wish to carry out your search in more than one Ovid database. To change to another database simply click Change on the main search page, above the search box.

To start a new search, select a different database and click OK. Tip: this clears the previous search so capture what you need first. To re-run your search in a different Ovid database, select the database and click Run search, remembering that subject headings from one database may not work correctly in the second database. It is possible to search more than one database at once but this will disable the thesaurus feature and is not advised for comprehensive searching.

11. Further information and support

The online help manual is available from the Help link at the top right of the Ovid screen. There is also a link to support and training online at the top right of the screen. Please contact your local UCL library for further support.

12. A worked search example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Searches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>exercise/ or muscle stretching exercises/ or resistance training/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>exp Exercise Therapy/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>exp Muscle Contraction/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(stretching or training or contraction or exercise).mp. [mp-title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word, unique identifier]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>static.mp. [mp-title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word, unique identifier]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 or 2 or 3 or 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 and 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>exp Muscles/an. ph [Anatomy &amp; Histology, Physiology]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>[muscle or tendon].mp. [mp-title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word, unique identifier]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8 or 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7 and 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>((muscle or tendon) adj4 (length or width or construct or thickness or angle or size or architecture)).mp. [mp-title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word, unique identifier]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11 and 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 14 | limit 13 to (english language and "all adult (19 plus years)")

- Thesaurus terms are indicated by an oblique stroke /
- An exploded subject heading is indicated by exp in front of the heading
- Truncation is indicated by an asterisk. The fields searched are shown in square brackets. mp = ‘multiple posting’.
- Subheadings are shown after the oblique stroke as abbreviations; the meanings are in square brackets.
- When you combine searches, only the line numbers are given in the search history.
- The adjacency operator used in this example is adj4.
- Limits are shown in parentheses.