

Literature Search Assistance

There are several free areas to access research with some having full text capabilities. Below is listed (in order of ease of use) a few website with descriptions for use in tracking down primary research

1) Google

- a. This seems to be the easiest way to search a lot of information quickly and free
- b. Searches often come back unrelated to your question
- c. Phrase your input carefully to limit but not over limit the potential responses
- d. Often times you may enter a journal title and the online version has free test of past issues

2) Google Scholar (www.scholar.google.com)

- a. This site is more tailored to academic searches and often has full text in PDF format direct from the Google site
- b. Again the same pitfalls exist as with regular google but the results will be more refined

3) PubMed (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez)

- a. This site is hosted by the National Institute of health
- b. You can perform searches on multiple terms and look for individual and pooled results
 - i. For example you can search for articles pertaining to PT, ACL tear of ACL tear and PT combined
- c. This can be performed in the advanced search section by adding AND in the search builder section
- d. You can also limit results to only those containing full text
- e. One limitation to PubMed is many physical therapy journals are not listed in the database so they will not show up in your results
- f. The Clinical Queries search feature will allow you to perform either more specific or sensitive searches by limiting your results to a specific area of the patient interaction (ie diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, etc) or study type (RCT, Systematic review, case study, etc)

4) Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL) – This is only if you have access through a university/organization as there is a subscription needed

- a. This search engine is similar to PubMed/Medline but is specific to allied health and cites the majority of PT relevant journals
- b. The search strategies for CINAHL are similar to PubMed and if you have access through a university you also likely have access to many full text (even current) references

5) BioMed Library (<http://www.relemed.com>)

- a. This is a form of meta-crawler that queries various databases for relevant articles
- b. You may find articles in this database that are missed in PubMed
- c. You can limit and refine your search queries similarly to the PubMed interface

If your desire is to search for systematic reviews or practice guidelines, you may consider the following sources:

- 1) The Physiotherapy Evidence Database (PEDro) (<http://www.pedro.org.au/>)
 - a. Emphasis is on systematic review and meta-analyses
 - b. 0-10 score is given rating the methodological quality of the studies
 - c. No access to full text however
- 2) Cochran Collaboration (<http://www.cochrane.org>)
 - a. A large number of systematic reviews and meta-analyses
 - b. Good summary and abstract availability
 - c. Difficult to obtain full test of the articles
- 3) National Guideline Clearinghouse (<http://www.guideline.gov>)
 - a. This site contains practice guidelines from a variety of fields
 - b. These guidelines are typically industry specific and constitute a consensus from experts in the that field
 - c. While research evidence is used to create each of the guidelines, keep in mind there is also personal opinion infused and cannot always be distinguished from the best research evidence

Listing of periodicals with free full-text on the web

American Family Physician - <http://www.aafp.org/afp>

- Free full-text articles in issues > 1 year old

Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation - <http://www.archives-pmr.org>

- Free full-text articles in issues > 1 year old

Australian Journal of Physiotherapy - <http://www.physiotherapy.asn.au/>

- Free full-text articles in issues > 1 year old
- Follow the link to the AJP Journal Back issues

BioMed Central - <http://www.biomedcentral.com>

- This is an open access publisher that produces a variety or online journals with free full-text
- While the articles are peer reviewed, the review standards are not as rigorous any many print publications
- This is still a great resource for free and useful information

Journal of Orthopedic and Sports PT – <http://www.jospt.org>

- Free full-text for issues > 1 year old for everyone
- All issues free for current APTA Orthopedic Section members

The New England Journal of Medicine- <http://www.nejm.org>

Physical Therapy Journal - <http://ptjournal.apta.org>

- Free full-text for issues > 1 year old for everyone
- All issues free for current APTA members