

Additional Search Tips Transcript

Note: This video features Cari Merkley. For questions or support, please contact Francine May at fmay@mtroyal.ca or [book an appointment](#).

Hi everyone—Cari Merkley here again with some additional tips for the Block One assignment. You've probably already watched the videos about the evidence pyramid, TRIP, and advanced searching in MEDLINE and CINAHL. I just have a few additional tips to share about TRIP.

Remember this tool searches **across the pyramid** and usually contains **more references to practice guidelines** than CINAHL, MEDLINE, and PubMed. When you type your search terms into the search box on the TRIP home page, it looks for those words in the **title**, **abstract**, and in some cases **full text** of the resource. You'll find that this type of search typically returns many results—in this case **over five thousand**—so to make it more manageable, use the **filters on the left-hand side** of your screen.

I would first check to see if there are any results at the **highest level of evidence** I have access to—**summaries or guidelines**. I might also be interested in looking at what it found in terms of **systematic reviews** (the **synthesis** layer) or even the **primary research studies** (i.e., **single studies**) that it came across. However, I often find **PubMed/MEDLINE** to be a better tool for finding **systematic reviews** or **single studies** than TRIP, so if I want to be thorough I would likely search **both** TRIP and PubMed/Medline.

Notice the difference in the number of results that I get when I use the **PICO search function** in TRIP—typically I would generally only add terms in the **Intervention** or **Outcome** categories. So in this case I'm going to go **mindfulness** and **anxiety**. Using the PICO search function has a **drastic impact** on the number of results I now see, and

that's because it's looking for the words *mindfulness* and *anxiety* in the **titles only** of the resources it is now showing on my list.

This can be both good and bad if you are looking for guidelines. In particular, this PICO search might actually **exclude some important results** because, generally speaking, you won't find guidelines having both the intervention and the condition in the title of the document. There is actually a **middle ground** between these two searches—could I look for resources that have **anxiety in the title**, but the word **mindfulness** (the intervention) can appear there **or anywhere in the full text**?

To find out how to do this, go to the TRIP home page and **scroll to the very bottom**. Click on **How to use**. On the “How to use” page of tips I learned that I can type the word **title:** into my search to distinguish where it should look for the search words I've selected. So in this particular case, it's going to look for the word **anxiety in the title** of the document, but the word **mindfulness** can appear **anywhere**. In this particular case, I can click under **Guidelines** → **Canada**, and see that there is a resource that has *anxiety* in the title but *mindfulness* in the full text.

To make my search even broader, I may want to **remove the term mindfulness** from the search altogether, look for documents that have **anxiety in the title**, **limit to guidelines**, and then look at the **full text** of the document to see if mindfulness is inside.

A quick search tip if you're using **CINAHL, MEDLINE, and PsycINFO**: sometimes a search returns **thousands of results**. If you're overwhelmed and want to test the waters to see if there are documents at **higher levels of the pyramid**—for example **practice guidelines** and **systematic reviews**—you can try **adding those terms as keywords**. In this case I've put **guideline* OR systematic review OR meta-analysis OR meta-synthesis**. In this particular case, I can see right off the bat that I'm seeing some useful results at those levels.

One thing I might remember as I look at this list is that if I find a **systematic review or guideline** that was published in, say, **2016**, there might still be value in looking at **single**

studies that have come out **since then**, because systematic reviews and practice guidelines are only written on the evidence that was available at the time. So if your guideline or systematic review was published in 2016, it might not hurt to see if there have been single studies published since that time that either **support** what they recommend or perhaps **raise questions** about their recommendations. In that case, you might use a **mix of sources from different levels** when you're answering your question.

I hope these tips help, but please don't hesitate to **reach out to me** or **book an appointment** if you have further questions. Thank you.

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