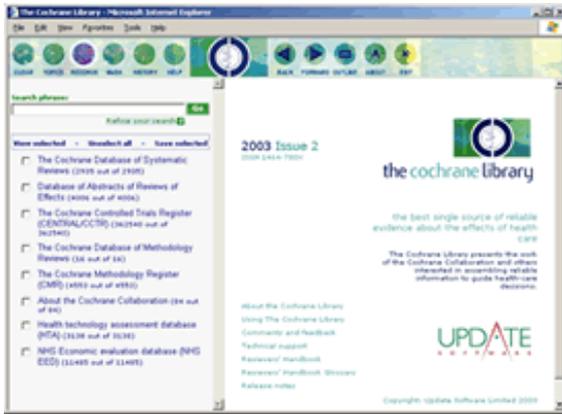# The Cochrane Library Online
Quick Reference Card

To search the library

Enter a term in the **Search Phrase** box that appears near the top of the left pane and click on the button labeled **Go**. All databases in the library are searched, and the results are shown under each database name in the left pane.

Databases which contain "hits" matching the chosen search term are shown in blue whilst the titles of those databases which contain no "hits" are shown in grey. The number of "hits", that is documents meeting the search criterion or criteria, is shown in brackets at the end of each database title. The second figure in the brackets is the total number of documents in each database.

Click on a database name to open a drop–down list showing the titles of documents located by the search.

To browse all documents

Click on a database name without entering a search term in the **Search Phrase** window. A drop down list showing the titles of first 20 documents within that database will be displayed. To navigate through the document titles use the arrows at the top and bottom of the document list.

To view a document

Click on a title of a document in the left pane to display the text of the document in the right pane.

Printing documents

To print any document diplayed in the right pane click the "Printer friendly document" link at the top of the document. This will open the document in a new browser window. You can then use your browser's "print" function to print that document.

Combining search terms

Boolean Operators
You can combine search terms using the words: **AND**, **OR**, **NOT**, **NEAR** and **NEXT**.

- **OR**. If you use OR between search terms, you will retrieve documents containing at least one of those terms. For example, entering *aspirin OR paracetamol OR pain* will locate documents containing any of these terms.
- **AND**. If you use AND between search terms, you will only retrieve documents that contain each of the terms specified. For example, entering *aspirin AND ulcer AND stomach* will only retrieve documents containing all three terms

- **NOT**. If you use NOT between search terms, you will retrieve documents containing the first term but not the second term. For example, entering *ulcer NOT stomach* will retrieve documents containing the word "ulcer" without the word "stomach"

Phrases
The operator **NEXT** will link the word or phrase following NEXT to the word or phrase before NEXT. For example, entering *breast NEXT Cancer* will retrieve documents containing the phrase "breast cancer"

The operator **NEAR** searches on words that are within 6 words of each other. For example, entering *breast NEAR cancer* will retrieve documents containing such phrases as:

- Cancer was found in the breast following…
- …that breast lumps indicate possible cancer.

Wildcards (truncation)

When searching for a word, the search system looks for an exact match unless the word ends with an asterisk (*). The asterisk symbol acts as a 'wildcard' and matches all words that begin with the string of characters before the asterisk. For example, entering *arter** will retrieve documents containing words such as "artery", "arteries", "arterial", etc.

Restricting searches

Searches can be restricted in various ways by clicking on the **Refine your search** link underneath the Search Phrase window.

Restricting by date of publication
Enter the first and last dates of the search range required in the **Date Range** boxes. The range selected in inclusive. To restrict to a single publication year, enter that year in both Date Range boxes. You must use the full four–digit number for the year (e.g. 2001)

Other options

Commented	Only items with comments attached will be searched
New	Only items new to the current issue
Updated	Only items updated in the current issue

The option to search only those items which have been withdrawn is also included.

Restrict Search to Specific Field

Title	only document titles
Author	only names entered in author field
Abstract	only document abstracts
Publication	only publication type field (this field is only available
Type	in the CENTRAL database)

Note: Some records do not have all fields. Abstracts and Publication Types, in particular, are missing from or not relevant to many records. These records will not be retrieved if the search is restricted.

Clear a Search

To clear your search at any time, click on the **Clear** button in the menu bar.

Search History

Following each search, the search number and search term will be shown under 'History'. Your search history can be viewed by clicking on the **History** button in the menu bar. Users with individual usernames and passwords can also choose to save and rerun previous searches. Further information about how to edit and save searches can be found in the help files.

Click on **Clear** button on the left hand side of the History page to entirely clear the present search history.

Other tips

- You can move backwards and forwards through the documents selected during a session by clicking on the **Back** and **Forward** buttons in the menu bar.
- Documents in some of the databases are divided in to sections (e.g. abstract, discussion, references etc). You can view the list of section headings for any such document displayed in the right hand pane by clicking on the **Outline** button in the menu bar. To jump to a specific section within the document such as the conclusion simply click on the section heading in the outline.
- You can return to the results of your most recent search from the MeSH, Topics or History options by clicking on the **Records** button in the menu bar.

Rules for Searches

When conducting a search using more than one word, several rules apply:

1. All text is searched unless restrictions are set (using the refine your search link under the search phrase window).
2. Case is ignored.
3. Stopwords are ignored (see the Help files within the library for a list of current stopwords).
4. All terms that begin with a number are ignored, but terms that begin with a character and then continue with numbers will be searched on.
5. Punctuation at the beginning and end of words is ignored.
6. Asterisks (*) are wildcards.
7. The search is 'read' from left to right, however, terms within brackets are searched for first.
8. Phrases are selected as if the words are joined by the operator NEXT. For example, *stroke unit* is equivalent to *stroke next unit*.

MeSH

MeSH terms are indexing terms taken from the MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) thesaurus, which is created, maintained and provided by the US National Library of Medicine. MeSH indexing is not used in all databases within *The Cochrane Library*: no MeSH terms are included in the CDSR Protocols, CDMR or CMR databases. In the CENTRAL database, MeSH indexing is only included in the records taken from MEDLINE. Full details of the searching for MeSH terms is given in the Help files, or by clicking the **MeSH** button on the menu bar.

Feedback

The Cochrane Library includes a system for submitting comments and criticisms on documents within many of the included databases.

After reading a document in The Cochrane Library, click on the send a comment link at the top of the document. Follow the instructions and explanations on the screen.

How to cite from *The Cochrane Library*

The various databases on *The Cochrane Library* have set forms of citation as follows:

- e.g. **Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews –** "*The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.* In *The Cochrane Library*, Issue 2, 2003. Oxford: Update Software. Updated quarterly."
- **Citing a review or protocol:** – "Authors. Title (Cochrane Review). In: *The Cochrane Library,* Issue2, 2003. Oxford: Update Software."

Always click the **Exit** button on the right hand side of the menu bar to leave *The Cochrane Library.*

More in–depth information about how to use *The Cochrane Library* can be found in the library help files. These can be accessed by clicking on the Help button in the menu bar.