Searching PsycINFO
The Basics

Student Learning Objectives

• Understand which broad and specific topics are included in the database.
• Understand what the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms is and how to use it.
• Perform subject heading, author, and author affiliation searches.
What is PsycINFO?

- A database providing abstracts to scholarly literature and some full text articles too
- It indexes identifiable subjects or if they discuss a relevant aspect of psychology or related disciplines.
- 99% of the journals in the database are peer reviewed

PsycINFO

PsycINFO® is an expansive abstracting and indexing database with more than 3 million records devoted to peer-reviewed literature in the behavioral sciences and mental health, making it an ideal discovery and linking tool for scholarly research in a host of disciplines.
Accessing PsycINFO

Smith Library Homepage
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/smith

Document Types

- Research studies
- Discussion articles
- Bibliographies
- Case studies
- Surveys
- Literature reviews
- Tests
- Apparatus descriptions
- Published conference reports
- Selected dissertations
- Book chapters
- Books
Materials Not Selected

- Popular magazine articles
- Book reviews
- Letter to the editors (unless substantive)
- Obituaries
- Interviews

Different Types of Searches

- Author
- Author Affiliation
- Key Concepts
- Subject Heading
- Text Word
Index terms are controlled vocabulary terms used in database records to make searching easier and more successful.

By standardizing the words or phrases used to represent concepts, you don't need to try and figure out all the ways different authors could refer to the same concept.

Each record in APA's databases contains controlled vocabulary terms from the *Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms*.

- Includes more than 8,200 standard and cross-referenced terms.
- New terms are mapped back to all relevant records in APA’s databases spanning all years.
- Scope notes define the terms.
- Historical notes include information about the historical usage of terms since their introduction.
- Term hierarchies show the relationship to other terms.
- Posting notes tell how many times the term has been used in APA database records when the *Thesaurus* was published.
- The year indicates when the term was added to the Thesaurus.
Use of the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms

The printed index contains these sections:

• Relationship Section
• Rotated Alphabetical Section
• Alphabetical Terms Clustered (and subclustered)
Rotated Alphabetical Section

- Achievement
- Academic Achievement
- Academic Achievement Measures
- Academic Achievement Motivation
- Academic Achievement Potential
- College Academic Achievement
- Mathematics Achievement
  - Need Achievement
  - USE Achievement
  - Motivation
- Reading Achievement

Alphabetical Term Clustered (and subclustered) sample

COMPUTERS CLUSTER
- Applications
- Automation
- Computers & Communication
- Computers & Media
- Education & Training
- Equipment
- Human Machine Systems & Engineering
- Information
Education and Training Subcluster

- Computer assisted instruction
- Computer assisted testing
- Computer literacy
- Computer training
- Educational television
- Teaching machines
- Televised instruction

Sample Subject Search

How is Light Therapy used as a treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD?
Enter First Subject

Mapping to Subject Heading

Select Subject Heading: Seasonal Affective Disorder

- Click on a Subject Heading to view its relevant terms that are more general and more specific.
- Select the Exclude box if you wish to retrieve results using the selected term and all of its more specific terms.
- Select the Focus box if you wish to limit your search to those documents in which your subject heading is considered the major point of the article.
- If your search did not map to a desirable subject heading, select the box Search as Keyword.
- If you select more than one term, you can combine them using a Boolean operator (AND or OR).
- If you wish to see the scope notes for any term or heading, click on the Information box, when available.
Tree Structure for Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD

Scope Note:
A mood disorder characterized by major depression that recurs the same time every year, typically in the winter months.
Results

1. SELF-reported mood sensitivity to pollen, seasonality of mood and depressive symptoms in a college sample. [References].
   [Health, Other Source]
   * View Abstract

2. Seasonal affective disorder. [References].
   * Abstract Reference

3. The relationship between dorsolateral prefrontal activation and speech performance-based social anxiety using functional near infrared spectroscopy. [References].

Second Subject Term

[Search interface for OvidSP with search history and options for searching by keyword, author, title, and journal.]

[Search interface for OvidSP with search history and options for searching by keyword, author, title, and journal.]
Mapping to Subject Heading - Phototherapy

Second Subject Term Result
Boolean Search Operators

Combining Sets AND
Results

Limits

• Focus your search to specific aspects.
• Apply limits to reduce the number of records in your results set.
• Commonly used limits are displayed. These can be edited, by choosing “edit limits”.

G.F. Smith Library of the Health Sciences
PsycARTICLES

- A collection of full text articles from journals published by the American Psychological Association and allied organizations.
- It is available as a subset of the PsycINFO and Journals@Ovid databases.
- Use the limits function to retrieve PsycARTICLES.

Applying Limits PsycARTICLES

[Image: Applying Limits PsycARTICLES diagram]
Additional Limits

Results after applying limits
Search Results in Citation Format

Author Searching

Use the Author button to browse the author index.

Example of a name search

Stephanie Anne Elisabeth Guerlain
Author Search
Using Last and First Name

Author Index
Author Search Using Last Name Only

The $ symbol is used to include any first and middle initials of the author’s name.

Finding Institution Name
## Support

**Ovid Technologies Field Guide PsycINFO**  

**YouTube PsycINFO Channel**  
[www.youtube.com/user/PsycINFO](http://www.youtube.com/user/PsycINFO)

**APA Training Video on PsycINFO**  

**Smith Library Reference Desk**  
973-972-4358