Guide to proximity searching

1. Ovid

Syntax:
ADJn (ADJ = adjacency)

Usage:
n specifies the number of words either search term is from the other search term in any order.

Examples:
diabetes ADJ1 health = diabetes health or health diabetes
diabetes ADJ2 health = diabetes x health or diabetes x health
diabetes ADJ3 health = diabetes x x health or health x x diabetes

Notes:
“ADJ0” defaults to “ADJ”. This is the same as searching two words in “inverted commas”, e.g.

diabetes ADJ health = “diabetes health”.

As such, when using ADJ without specifying a number, the order of the search terms is retained.

For more info see: http://site.ovid.com/help/documentation/ospa/en/syntax.htm#operators

2. EBSCO

Syntax:
Nn (N = Near)
Wn (W=Within)

Usage:
N searches for instances of the search terms in any order;
W searches for instances of the search terms in the specified order;
n specifies number of words between the search terms.

Examples:
diabetes N0 health = diabetes health or health diabetes
diabetes N1 health = diabetes x health or health x diabetes
diabetes W1 health = diabetes x health

For more info see: http://support.ebsco.com/knowledge_base/detail.php?id=1095

3. ProQuest

Syntax:
near/n (or n/n)
pre/n (or p/n)

Usage:
“near” searches for instances of the search terms in any order;
“pre” searches for instances of the search terms in the specified order; 
$n$ specifies number of words between the search terms; 
If $n$ isn’t specified it is set to 4 by default.

**Examples:**
- diabetes near/0 health = diabetes health or health diabetes
- diabetes n/0 health = diabetes health or health diabetes
- diabetes near/1 health = diabetes x health or health x diabetes
- diabetes pre/1health = diabetes x health

**Notes:**
When using “near”, although search terms are not kept in the specified order, instances where the search terms are in specified order are prioritised in the search results, i.e. the records with the specified order of search terms will be clustered towards the top of the results.


4. Cochrane library

**Syntax:**
NEAR/$n$
NEXT

**Usage:**
$n$ specifies the number of words either search term is from the other search term in any order; 
If $n$ isn’t specified it is set to 6 by default; 
NEXT searches for instances of the search terms next to each other and in specified order (same as using “inverted commas”).

**Examples:**
- diabetes NEAR/1 health = diabetes health or health diabetes
- diabetes NEAR/2 health = diabetes x health or health x diabetes
- diabetes NEXT health = diabetes health


5. Web of Science

**Syntax:**
near/$n$

**Usage:**
Searches for instances of the search terms in any order; 
$n$ specifies number of words between the search terms; 
If $n$ isn’t specified it is set to 15 by default.

**Examples:**
- diabetes near/0 health = diabetes health or health diabetes
- diabetes near/1 health = diabetes x health or health x diabetes
For more info see: http://images.webofknowledge.com/WOKRS884/help/WOS/hs_search_operators.html#dsy862-TRS_proximity

6. PubMed
PubMed does not offer proximity searching.

For more info see: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK3827/

Simon Briscoe
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