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Formatting

In this section:

Character formatting (typography)

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General guidance

Seven character formatting styles are available for use in the text in Review Manager 5 (RevMan 5): regular, **bold**, *italic*, ***bold italic***, underline, subscript, and superscript.

Avoid using font styles other than 'regular' for emphasis; instead, use an alternative sentence structure or intensify the adjectives and adverbs to achieve this.

Bold

Bold may be used to indicate letters used to form an acronym or abbreviation (see [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)). It may also be used to distinguish primary from secondary information (see [Lists](#)).

Italic

Italic may be applied to titles and subtitles of books and journals, and genus and species names. There are also situations in which to avoid using italic; for example, non-English words that have become naturalized into English (these should be in 'regular' style). Punctuation around any text in italic, such as quotation marks, semicolons, and colons, should be in 'regular' style.

	Correct	Incorrect
Titles of books and journals in the text of reviews	We looked through <i>Brain Injury</i> . Note: 'The' should have an initial capital and be in italic if it forms part of the title (e.g. we looked through <i>The Lancet</i>).	We looked through Brain Injury.
	We searched the <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i> for a particular review. Note: among the Cochrane Library databases, only <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i> is italicized.	We searched The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews for a particular review.
Genus and species names	<i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> Note: the genus name starts with an upper-case letter, and the species name is all lower case. Note: once an organism's name has been mentioned in full, use the abbreviated form, e.g. <i>P falciparum</i> , <i>S aureus</i> . Note: for more information see Virus names .	Plasmodium falciparum <i>P. falciparum</i> Staphylococcus Aureus S. Aureus
Gene and protein names and abbreviated names	The gene under investigation is insulin-like growth factor 1 (<i>IGF1</i>).	The gene under investigation is IGF1. The epidermal growth factor

	<p>The <i>IGF1</i> gene is responsible for producing the IGF1 protein.</p> <p>Note: when the gene name is written in full it is not italicized.</p> <p>Note: the full gene name should be provided, with the abbreviated form in brackets, before the abbreviated version is used.</p> <p>Note: when the gene and protein names are abbreviated, the gene name is italicized, while that of the protein is not. Abbreviated names for RNA and complementary DNA (cDNA) genes and proteins will usually follow the same convention. Further information about formatting these names can be found at: www.biosciencewriters.com/Guidelines-for-Formatting-Gene-and-Protein-Names.aspx, and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_nomenclature</p> <p>Note: although these formatting conventions are implemented across species types, the composition of the letters and numbers that make up the abbreviated names of genes and proteins, and their capitalization, varies between different types of organism. For more information consult: human: www.genenames.org; rat: rgd.mcw.edu; mouse: www.informatics.jax.org; ; flies: flybase.org; worms: www.wormbase.org; <i>Escherichia coli</i> (<i>E. coli</i>): cgsc2.biology.yale.edu/index.php.</p>	<p>receptor (<i>EGFR</i>) is a protein found on cells that plays a vital role in promoting cell growth.</p>
Words naturalized into the English language	<p>in vitro</p> <p>in vivo</p> <p>a priori</p> <p>et al</p>	<p><i>in vitro</i></p> <p><i>in vivo</i></p> <p><i>a priori</i></p> <p><i>et al</i></p>
GRADE levels of evidence	Use of the cream improved dryness (RR 1.40, 95% CI 1.14 to 1.71; 1 study, 128 participants; moderate-quality evidence).	Use of the cream improved dryness (RR 1.40, 95% CI 1.14 to 1.71; 1 study, 128 participants; <i>moderate-quality evidence</i>).

Underline

Avoid underlining words. Underlined text can be confused with internet links.

Subscript and superscript

Subscript and superscript have specific uses. Some examples are displayed below.

	Correct	Incorrect
Subscript	Member of chemical group: vitamin D ₃	vitamin D3
	Number of atoms: H ₂ O	H2O
Superscript	l ²	l2
	Mass number: ¹⁴ C	14C
	Metres squared: 12 m ²	12 m2
	See also: Footnotes	

Indentation

Indentation of text is not supported in Cochrane Reviews.

Bulleted and ordered lists can be used to create hierarchies (nested lists); see [Bulleted and ordered lists](#).

Ligatures

Avoid using ligatures (i.e. joining two or more characters in a single character). Examples include: œ, æ, fl, and ß.

Ligatures disrupt automated spellchecking and cause problems with the display of published articles.

Lists

In this section: [General guidance](#) | [Lists within paragraphs](#) | [Bulleted and ordered lists](#)

General guidance

There are different ways of formatting lists. The choice of format should be based on the clearest way to display the information.

Lists may form parts of sentences [within paragraphs](#), or different levels within a list may be differentiated using bullet points (bulleted lists), or numbers with or without letters (ordered lists).

In general, the choice of formatting (i.e. bulleted or ordered lists) and numbering should be consistent within a single document.

Occasionally, a mixture of ordered and bulleted lists can be used in a review, with ordered lists used to present items according to their priority or sequence, and bulleted lists used for items where the order of presentation is unimportant. However, the purpose of the numbered points must be made clear in the text that precedes the ordered lists.

Within paragraphs

Guidance	Example
Separate each item with a comma. Note: the comma or semicolon before the 'and' is optional (see Punctuation).	Risk factors include a previous history of macrosomia, maternal obesity, maternal weight gain during pregnancy, multiparity, and male fetus.
In complex sentences, such as those including several long phrases, introduce the list with a colon and separate each item with a semicolon. Items in the list should be parallel in form (all nouns or all phrases, etc.).	The conference included several topics: preparing a protocol; searching databases and trial registers; and drafting a Methods section.

Bulleted and ordered lists

Bulleted and ordered lists, in which each item is displayed on a separate line, can be set out in a number of ways. Bulleted and ordered lists can go to three levels within a single list (nested lists), as shown below. Nested lists can be constructed using the indent buttons in Review Manager 5 (RevMan 5) to adjust the level of list items. Do not attempt to format the list by using spaces to indent the items because the formatting changes during the publication process and the published result may look unsatisfactory. The 'and' before the final item in the list is optional (see [Punctuation](#)).

Guidance	Example
Platform phrase and list items are a single sentence	The programme aims to help you: 1.learn about systematic reviews; 2.develop your protocol; and 3.learn how to develop your search strategy.
	The programme aims to help you: • learn about systematic reviews; • develop your protocol; and • learn how to develop your search strategy.
Platform phrase with a full stop before starting the list	The programme aims to help you with the following. 1.Learn about systematic reviews. 2.Develop your protocol. 3.Learn how to develop your search strategy.
	The programme aims to help you with the following. • Learn about systematic reviews. • Develop your protocol. • Learn how to develop your search strategy.
Independent list with no platform phrase Only use full stops for full sentences. Nested lists can be constructed using the indent buttons in RevMan 5 to adjust the level of list items.	1.Australia (country) 1.South Australia (state) i. Adelaide (city) ii. Port Augusta (city) 2.Western Australia (state) i. Fremantle (city) ii. Perth (city) 2.USA (Country) 1.California (state) i. Anaheim (city) ii. Los Angeles (city) 2.Illinois (state) i. Chicago (city)
	• Australia (country) ◦ South Australia (state) - Adelaide (city) - Port Augusta (city) ◦ Western Australia (state) - Fremantle (city) - Perth (city) • USA (Country) ◦ California (state) - Anaheim (city) - Los Angeles (city) ◦ Illinois (state) - Chicago (city)

	<p>Secondary outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality (measured at approximately one month after the start of therapy) • Return to work (by end of therapy) • Recurrence (within six months of the end of therapy) • Adverse effects considered to be serious by either the patient or the clinician <p>Secondary outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change (and rate of change) in wound size: adjusted for baseline size where change or rate of change in wound size was reported without adjustment for baseline size • Participant health-related quality of life/health status: measured using a standardized generic questionnaire, such as EQ-5D, SF-36, SF-12 or SF-6. Ad hoc measures of quality of life that were not validated and were not be common to multiple trials were not eligible. • Wound infection: as defined by author • Mean pain scores: we included this information only where the data were reported as either a presence or absence of pain, or as a continuous outcome using a validated scale, such as a visual analogue scale. • Resource use: including measurements such as number of dressing changes, nurse visits, length of hospital stay, readmission and reoperation/intervention • Costs: any costs applied to resource use • Wound recurrence: as defined by study author
<p>When a list does not form a proper sentence either write it as a proper sentence, or as a numbered/bulleted list without punctuation. Chose the most appropriate structure for each instance, aiming for consistency where possible.</p>	<p>Control group: this could include placebo or sham acupuncture; other sham procedure (e.g. sham TENS); no specific treatment; other active treatment (RCTs using different active treatment comparators were analyzed separately); or other treatment alone (compared with acupuncture as an addition to the other treatment).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Control group <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. placebo or sham acupuncture b. other sham procedure (e.g. sham TENS) c. no specific treatment d. other active treatment (RCTs using different active treatment comparators were analyzed separately) e. other treatment alone (compared with acupuncture as an addition to the other treatment)

Paragraph break

RevMan Web automatically creates a new paragraph when the 'Enter' or 'Return' key is pressed once, so, there is no need to include a blank line between paragraphs. The spacing between paragraphs in RevMan Web cannot be modified.

Soft returns (i.e. holding the 'Shift' key when pressing 'Enter') are recommended in footnotes.

Symbols and special characters

In this section: [General guidance on symbols](#) | [Guidance on spacing around commonly used symbols](#) | [Selecting and adding symbols and characters](#) | [Symbols to avoid](#)

General guidance on using symbols and special characters

In general symbols should be avoided in text, with use reserved for within brackets or tables or wherever brevity is important. Symbols should be used when expressing dosages (e.g. 5 mg/kg/day) or in mathematical equations. See also [guidance on usage of common symbols](#).

Special characters should be used, where available, to represent names or words accurately (e.g. Marušić 2010).

Only symbols and special characters available in RevMan Web can be used in a Cochrane Review. Some symbols and special characters should be avoided (See [Symbols to avoid](#).)

Guidance on usage and presentation of commonly used symbols

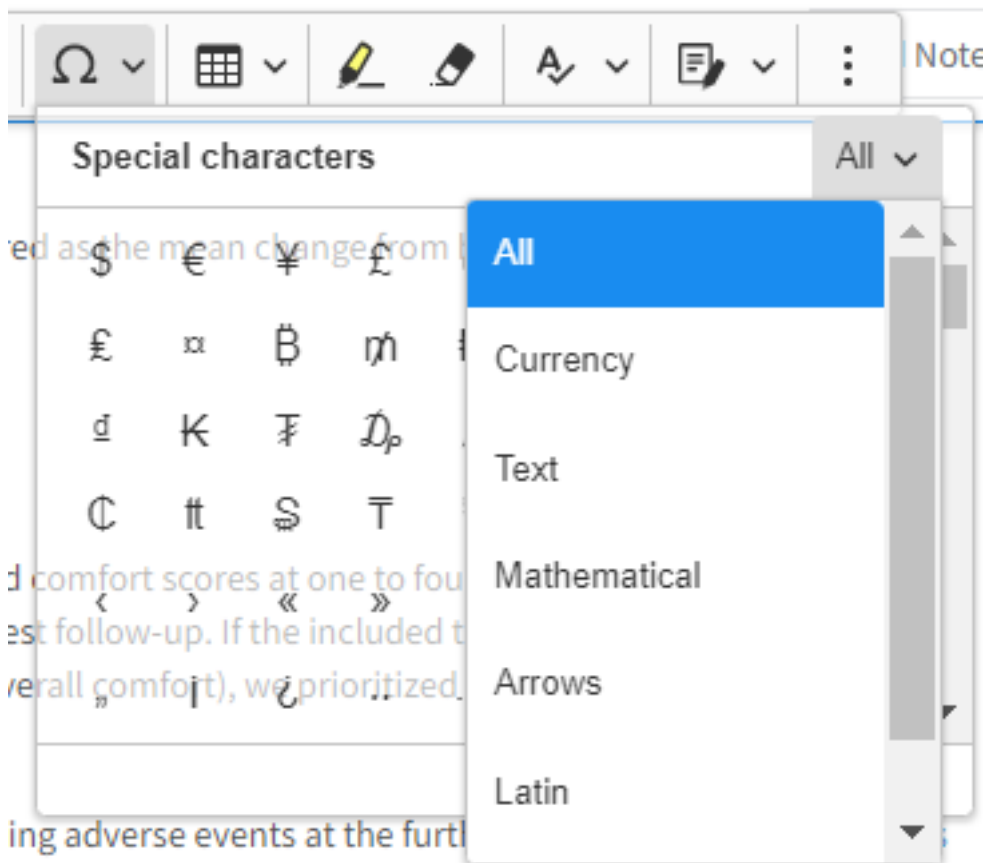
Symbol	Description	Usage	Spacing
+	plus, and		One space either side
–	minus Note: the minus symbol is different to the dash available on most keyboards. The minus sign is available as a symbol in RevMan 5 (Unicode decimal code: 2212).		One space either side in mathematical equations, but no space between the minus sign and the number for a negative number e.g. Standard negative pressure rates range from –50 mmHg to –125 mmHg. Note: for equations, see Statistical and mathematical presentation .
/	per or divided by	Use '/' instead of 'per' where 'per' is otherwise cumbersome 10 mg/kg (not 10 mg per kg)	No space on either side, e.g. 10 g/L
<	less than (e.g. for percentages) fewer than (e.g. for people)		One space either side
>	greater than more than		One space either side
=	equals		One space either side
&	and	The ampersand symbol should only be used if it is part	One space either side

Symbol	Description	Usage	Spacing
		of a brand name (e.g. Procter & Gamble) or the title of a publication (e.g. <i>Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism</i>).	
%	percentage	<p>The percentage sign can be used in a block of text when it is used with a numeral.</p> <p>e.g. Fewer than 90% of the participants completed the study.</p> <p>Use 'per cent' instead of '%' when starting a sentence and when the number is written in full (i.e. not a numeral).</p> <p>e.g. Three per cent of people suffer from . . .</p>	There is no space between the number and the percentage sign, e.g. 15%.
™, ®	Trademark (® for registered; ™ for unregistered)	<p>The trademark symbols are not normally used in Cochrane Reviews.</p> <p>See Pharmaceutical drug names.</p>	If used, the symbols should be written immediately after the brand name they apply to, with no separating space, e.g. Nexium®, Backup Exec™ software.
°	degree symbol	Use to indicate degrees of arc, e.g. when measuring joint flexibility, or temperature.	<p>For degrees of arc, the degree symbol follows the number without any intervening space, e.g. 43°.</p> <p>For temperature, there is a space between the number and the degree symbol, but no space between the degree symbol and the letter that indicates the scale being used, e.g. 100 °C, 212 °F.</p> <p>Note: degree symbols are not used for temperatures measured on the Kelvin scale, e.g. 373.15 K.</p>

Selecting and adding symbols and special characters

Many different symbols and special characters are available for use in RevMan Web. They may be inserted using the 'Insert symbol...' option from the 'Edit' menu or by using codes.

Selecting symbols using the RevMan Web 'Insert Symbol' tool:



The table below includes the codes for most commonly used symbols in RevMan 5. How these codes are entered in RevMan 5 will depend whether you use a PC or a Mac and which operating system you are using. For more information see [Wikipedia: Unicode input](#).

Symbol	Code (decimal)		Code (hex)
≤	8804	2264	
≥	8805	2265	
μ	0181	03BC	
° (degree symbol)	0176	00B0	
² (superscript 2)	0178	00B2	
³ (superscript 3)	0179	00B3	
±	0177	00B1	

Symbols and characters to avoid

Some symbols and characters should be avoided, because they do not render correctly in PDFs.

Code (decimal)	Symbol
64257	fi
351	§
369	ü
8776	≈
8260	/
8764	~

Code (decimal)	Symbol
8734	∞
8197	(four per em space)
9674	◊
8595	↓
8203	(zero width space)
8201	(thin space)
8593	↑
934	Φ
8206	(left-to-right mark)
9201	⌘
923	Λ
8218	,
8592	←
8202	(hair space)
710	^
9827	♣
127	(delete mark)
978	Υ
8250	›
8773	≅
8222	”
8727	*
402	f
8200	(punctuation space)
8240	‰
8706	∂
8800	≠
928	Π
8207	(right-to-left mark)
8719	Π
8733	∞
8736	∠
376	Ÿ
8596	↔
8660	↔
8709	Ø
8721	Σ
8743	^

Website addresses and links

In this section: [Displaying website links](#) | [Adding website links in RevMan Web](#) | [Formatting addresses \(URLs\)](#) | [Formatting displayed text](#)

Displaying website links

Links to websites may be displayed within text.

For example:

We thank Cochrane Hypertension (hypertension.cochrane.org) for their support.

Additional data are available from www.healthdata.gov.

Note that if a website is in fact a reference, it should be entered as a reference, not a link.

Adding websites links in RevMan Web

Links to websites should be entered in RevMan Web using the Insert Link function. Detailed instructions for doing this are provided in the RevMan Web Knowledge Base (<https://documentation.cochrane.org/revman-kb/links-in-the-text-92932967.html>)

Formatting addresses (URLs)

Copy and paste the URL from the website, but remove any unnecessary characters from the end of the URL.

For example:

https://www.researchinformation.info/news/digital-science-opens-russia-subsiary?utm_source=adestra&utm_medium=RINewsline&utm_campaign=RI%20NL%20MAY17

Should be shortened to:

<https://www.researchinformation.info/news/digital-science-opens-russia-subsiary>

Note: In this example the characters following the '?' are related to how you arrived at the link (in this case via a link in an email).

Always test any shortened URLs you enter.

Formatting displayed text

This text should display a shortened version of the URL, not the name of the website, unless the URL has to be very long, in which case do not use the whole URL as the display text, but instead consider using the title of the resource or other explanatory text.

Omit the 'http://' or 'https://' prefix from this field. Do not omit the 'www.' if it is present (although the address will most likely work without it), and do not add 'www.' if it is not included.

Correct	Incorrect
heart.cochrane.org	Cochrane Heart http://heart.cochrane.org www.heart.cochrane.org
www.cochrane.org	Cochrane website http://cochrane.org cochrane.org
www.nih.gov/health-information	https://www.nih.gov/health-information nih.gov/health-information www.nih.gov