

## How to start a Patent Search and more

- How to search for existing patents:
  - Access a United States Patent Depository Library by visiting one personally or online at [WWW.USPTO.GOV](http://WWW.USPTO.GOV) You will need to develop an understanding of the cataloging system used but here is a helpful morsel to get you started. Before going, try to locate a product that is as similar to your own as you can. Check the package to determine if a patent number is listed. Now that you have this number, use it as a starting point. Review the patent and if it has pertinent information, check the references cited. Expand your search in this way. You must realize this is just to help get you started but it can be a very worthwhile strategy. Remember, if you do not have the time nor inclination, there are professionals who will assist you for a fee.
  - Boolean Search: Using key descriptive words, you can perform a patent search but beware. It is easy to overlook essential aspects of a patent that a patent examiner may review. Try this to determine if obvious knowledge is known but realize a professional search will very likely find additional patents.
- How to Protect your ideas while seeking outside help:
  - Intellectual Property (patents, trademarks, copyrights) can be very valuable but not always essential. Using a Confidentiality Agreement, Non Compete Agreement, or Non Disclosure Agreement can provide you with an additional layer of security.
  - Even if you are patent pending, consider the extra layer of protection with a Confidentiality Agreement. Think about what might happen if your patent application does not get approved! You can 'buy' extra time with this agreement in place.

Membership to the EIA provides you with the opportunity to review samples.

How To Define what is new and unique about your invention.

How To Get a second opinion on your ideas.

How to Protect your ideas while seeking outside help.

How To Find help for the things that you don't know how to do yourself.

Now the hard work members, we need members to step to the plate and write some stuff to put on this page. Contribute something on any subject with which you have experience, not just the ones above. The Board of Directors will approve and post it.

Submitted by Marshajene Schaaf of [DoubleDeckerStroller](#)