

The Human Body: An Orientation Part B

Anatomical Position

- Body erect, feet slightly apart, palms facing forward, thumbs point away from body

Directional Terms

- Superior and inferior – toward and away from the head, respectively
- Anterior and posterior – toward the front and back of the body
- Medial, lateral, and intermediate – toward the midline, away from the midline, and between a more medial and lateral structure
- Proximal and distal – closer to and farther from the origin of the body
- Superficial and deep – toward and away from the body surface

Regional Terms: Anterior View

- Axial – head, neck, and trunk
- Appendicular – appendages or limbs
- Specific regional terminology

Regional Terms: Posterior View

Body Planes

- Sagittal – divides the body into right and left parts
- Midsagittal or medial – sagittal plane that lies on the midline
- Frontal or coronal – divides the body into anterior and posterior parts
- Transverse or horizontal (cross section) – divides the body into superior and inferior parts
- Oblique section – cuts made diagonally

Anatomical Variability

- Humans vary slightly in both external and internal anatomy
- Over 90% of all anatomical structures match textbook descriptions, but:
 - Nerves or blood vessels may be somewhat out of place
 - Small muscles may be missing
- Extreme anatomical variations are seldom seen