

**Key Words & Concepts Notes & Reference Sheet**  
Medical Terminology, Body Planes, & Directions  
(Dr. Kingsland)

Name: _____
Period: _____
Date: _____

**Anatomic Position**

-in humans, this refers to a person who is standing with feet together and arms at their sides, palms facing forward.

**Anterior**

- nearer to the front of the body or organ

**Posterior**

- nearer to the back of the body or organ

**Superior**

- toward the head (also called cranial, toward the cranium, or cephalad, toward the brain)

**Inferior**

- toward the feet

**Rostral**

(from the Latin, Rostrum, meaning beak)

- toward the beak or head

- same meaning as cranial (toward the cranium, or skull)

**Caudal**

(from the Latin, Cauda, meaning tail)

- toward the tail, or distal end of the spinal cord

**Dorsal**

(from the Latin, Dorsalis, meaning the back)

- the side towards the back

- in veterinary science, the upper side of the animal

**Ventral**

(from the Latin, Venter, meaning belly)

- the side towards the belly

- in veterinary science, the underside of the animal

**Proximal**

(from the Latin, Proximus, meaning next to)

- closer to the midtorso

- nearer to the attachment of a limb or structure

- shoulder is more proximal than the elbow, which is more proximal than the wrist, for example.

**Distal**

(from the Latin, Distans, meaning distant)

- farther away from the midtorso

- farther from the attachment of a limb or structure

- ankle is more distal than the knee, which is more distal than the hip, for example.