

Body Structure - Anatomic Directions - Body Positions

- **Anatomic Directions**

- **anterior (ventral)**

- toward the front (belly) of the body

- **posterior (dorsal)**

- toward the back of the body

- **medial**

- toward the midline of the body

- **lateral**

- toward the side of the body

- **proximal**

- nearer to the point of attachment or to a given reference point

- **distal**

- farther from the point of attachment or from a given reference point

- **superior**

- above

- **inferior**

- below

- **cranial (cephalic)**

- toward the head

- **caudal**

- toward the lower end of the spine

- **superficial (external)**

- close to surface of the body

- **deep (internal)**

- close to the center of the body

- **frontal plane**

- also called a coronal plane, is made at right angles to the midline and

divides the body into anterior and posterior parts

- **sagittal plane**

passes from front to back and divides the body into right and left portions, if the plane passes through the midline, it is a mid-sagittal or medial plane

- **transverse plane**

passes horizontally dividing the body into superior and inferior parts

- **Body Positions**

- **anatomic position**

standing erect, facing forward, arms at sides, palms forward, legs parallel, and toes pointed forward

- **decubitus position**

lying down, specifically according to the part of the body resting on a flat surface, as in left or right lateral decubitus, or dorsal or ventral decubitus

- **dorsal recumbent position**

on back, with legs bent and separated, feet flat

- **Fowler position**

on back, head of bed raised about 18 inches and knees elevated

- **knee-chest position**

on knees, head and upper chest on table, arms crossed above head

- **left lateral recumbent position**

on left side, right leg drawn up

- **lithotomy position**

on back, legs flexed on abdomen, thighs apart

- **prone**

lying face down

- **Sims position**

on left side, right leg drawn up high and forward, left arm along back, and chest forward resting on bed

- **supine**

lying face up

- **Trendelenburg position**

on back with head lowered by tilting bed back at 45 degree angle