

# Anatomical Terminology

When referring to the body, three planes are used as reference; the coronal, saggital (or median) and transverse planes:

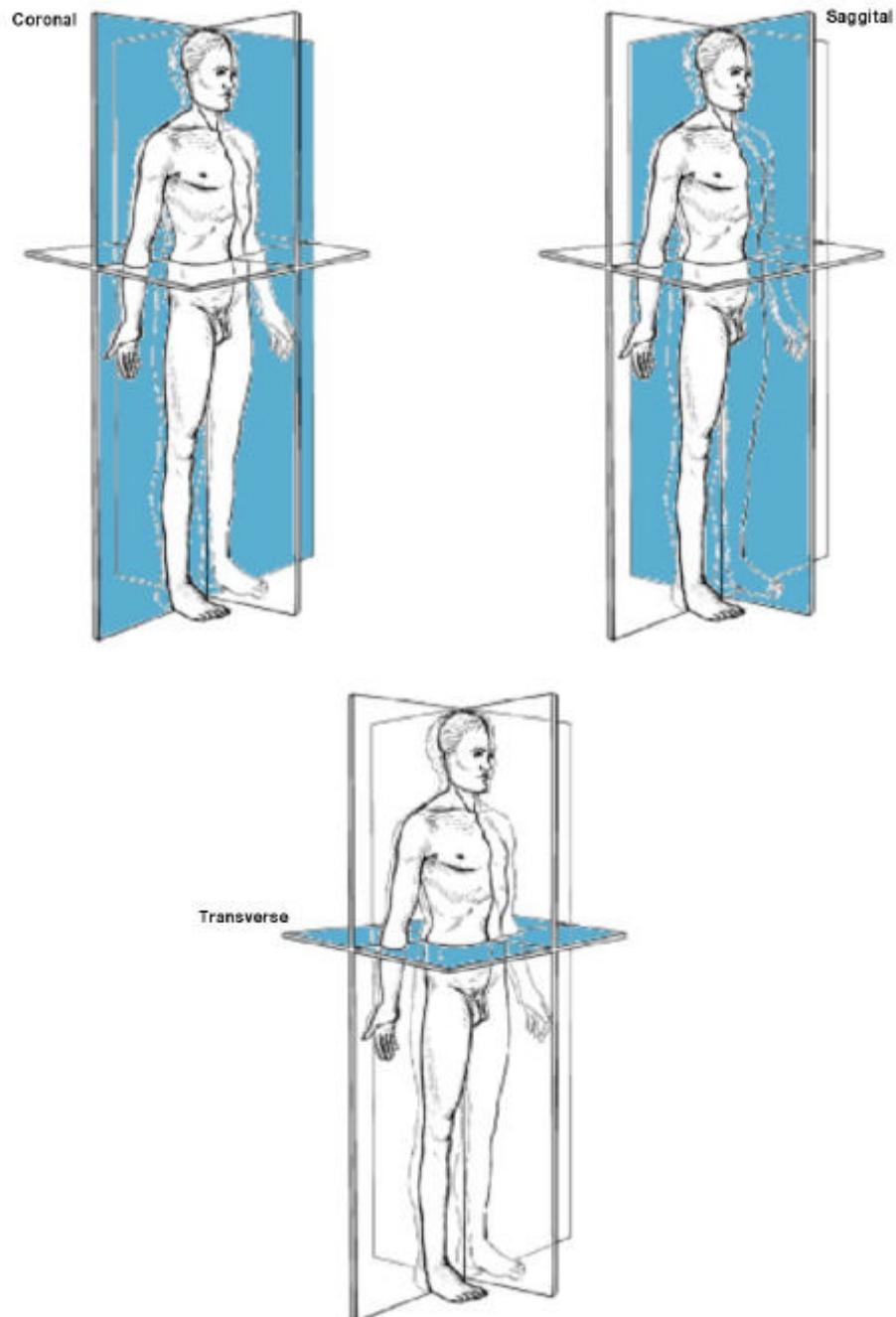


Fig.1 Anatomical Planes.

The anatomical position refers to the body placed in the position illustrated to the left below:

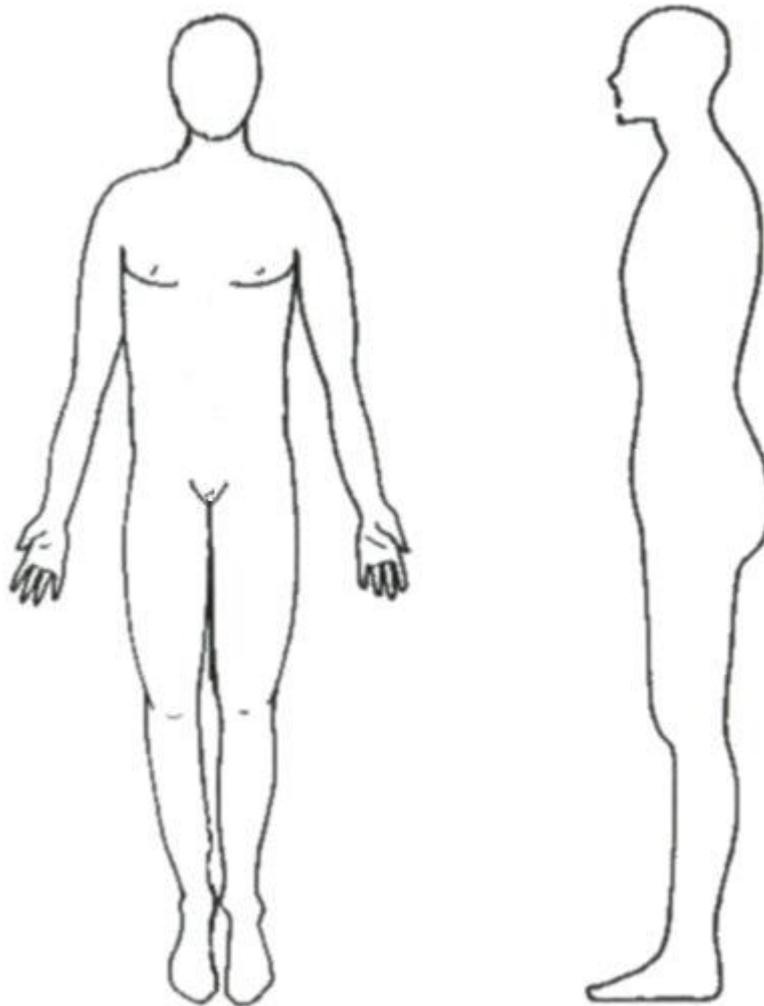
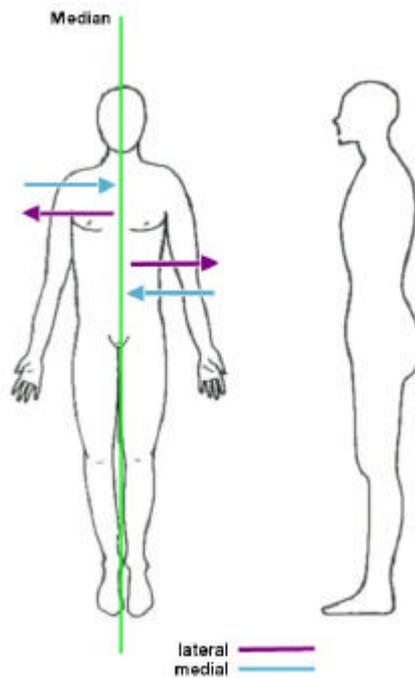


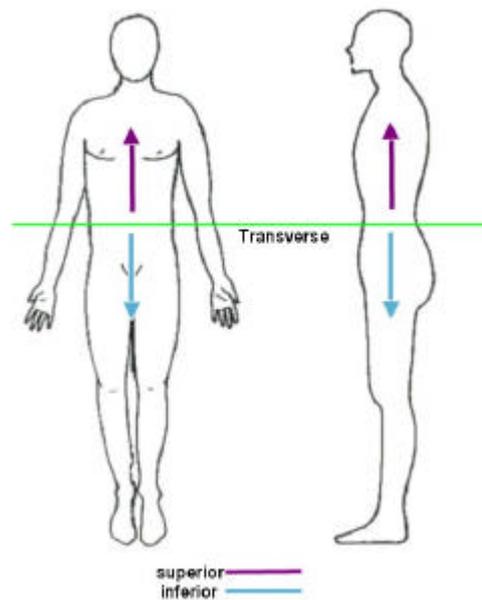
Fig.2 The Anatomical Position.

The planes are absolute terms. When referring to a part of the body, it can be referred to *relative* to another part of the body.

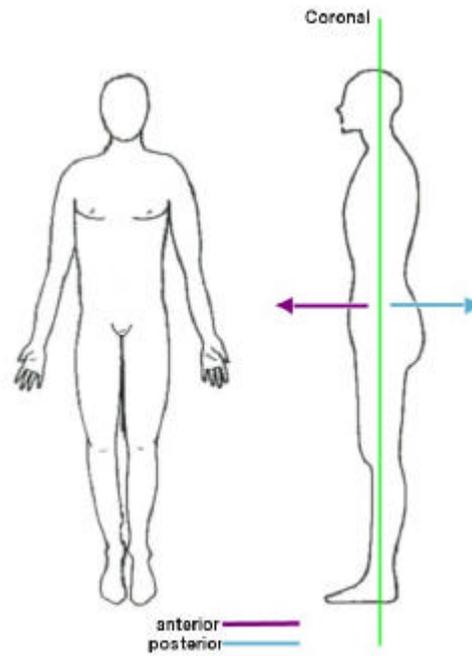
The terms *Lateral* and *Medial* are relative to the Median (the *Sagittal Plane*).



The terms *Superior* and *Inferior* are relative to the *Transverse Plane*



The terms *Anterior* and *Posterior* are relative to the *Coronal Plane*



For example: the chest is inferior to the head, but superior to the abdomen and lower limb.

## **Movement**

The following terms are used when referring to movement in the limbs:

### **Abduction**

Abduction refers to movement in the *coronal* plane away from the body. A limb further away from the median is regarded as abducted.

### **Adduction**

Adduction refers to movement in the *coronal* plane towards the body. A limb in the anatomical position is regarded as adducted.

### **Proximal**

Proximal is a relative term describing the position of one part of a limb relative to the body. If a part of the limb is proximal, it is regarded as being nearer the body, i.e. the elbow is proximal to the wrist.

### **Distal**

Distal is a relative term describing the position of one part of a limb relative to the body. If a part of the limb is distal, it is regarded as being further from body, i.e. the elbow is distal to the shoulder.

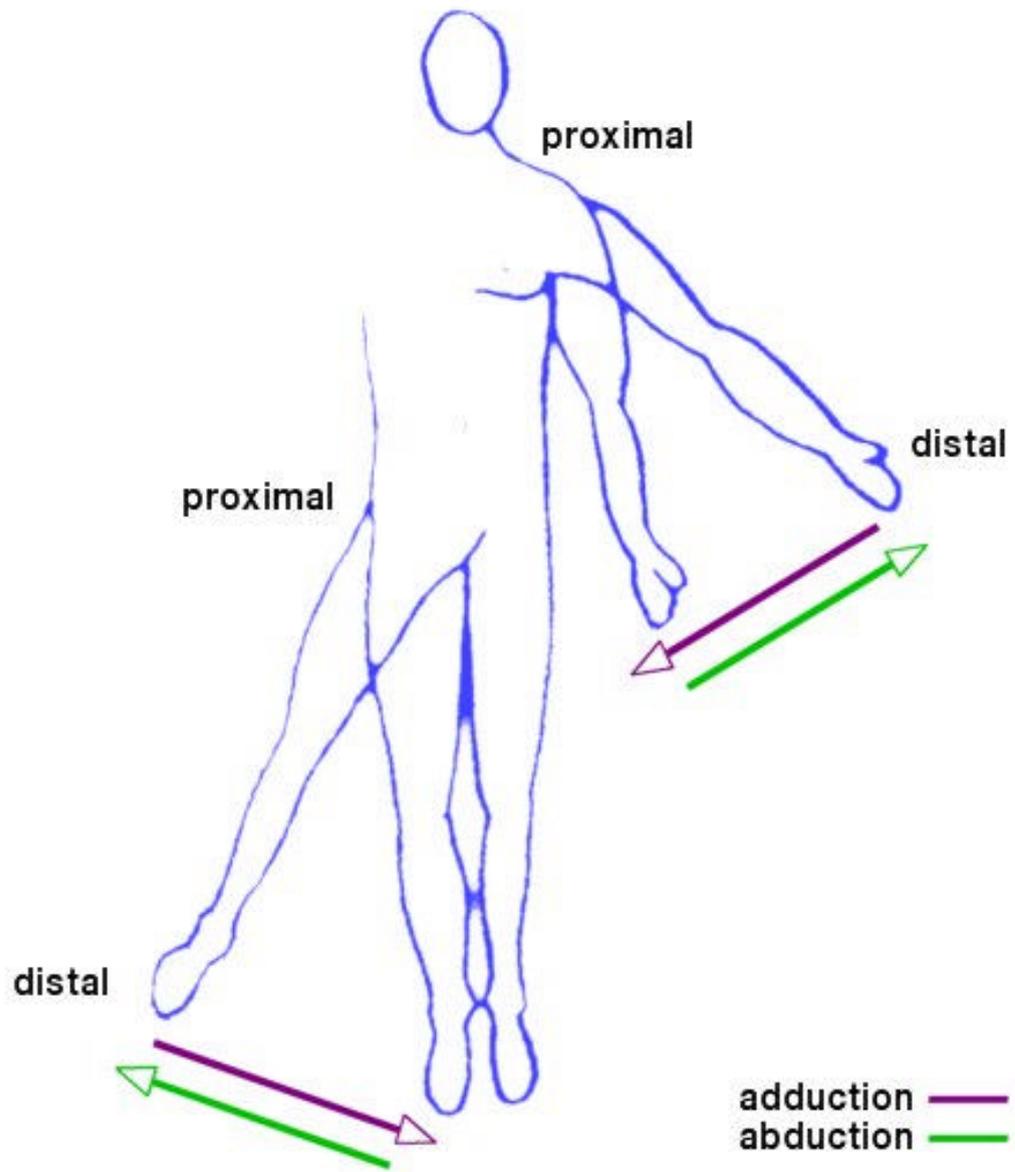


Fig.3 Movement of the limbs.

Bending and stretching are known as flexion and extension respectively:

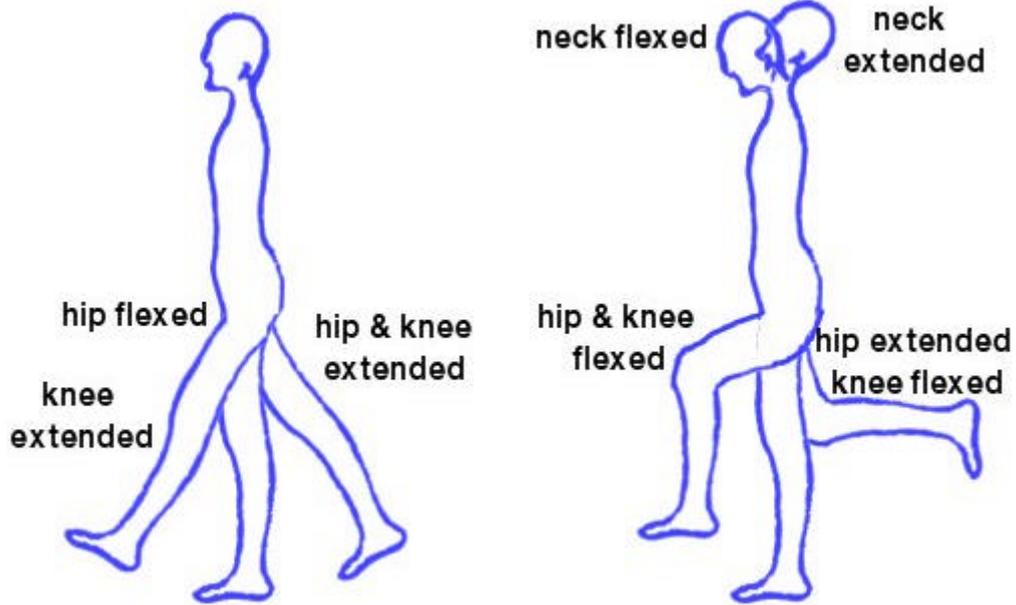


Fig.4 Hip, knee and neck.

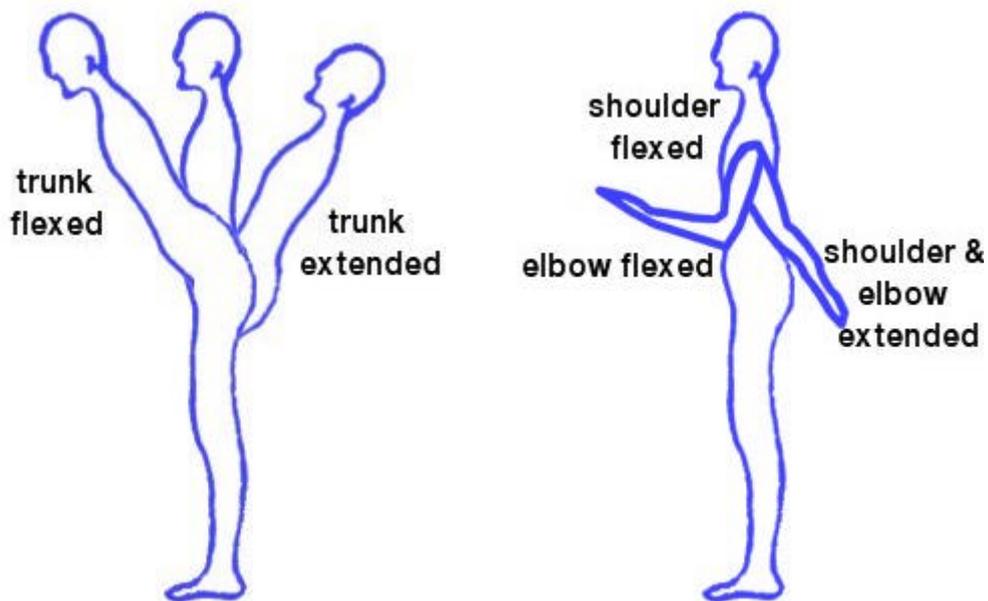


Fig.5 Trunk, shoulder and elbow.