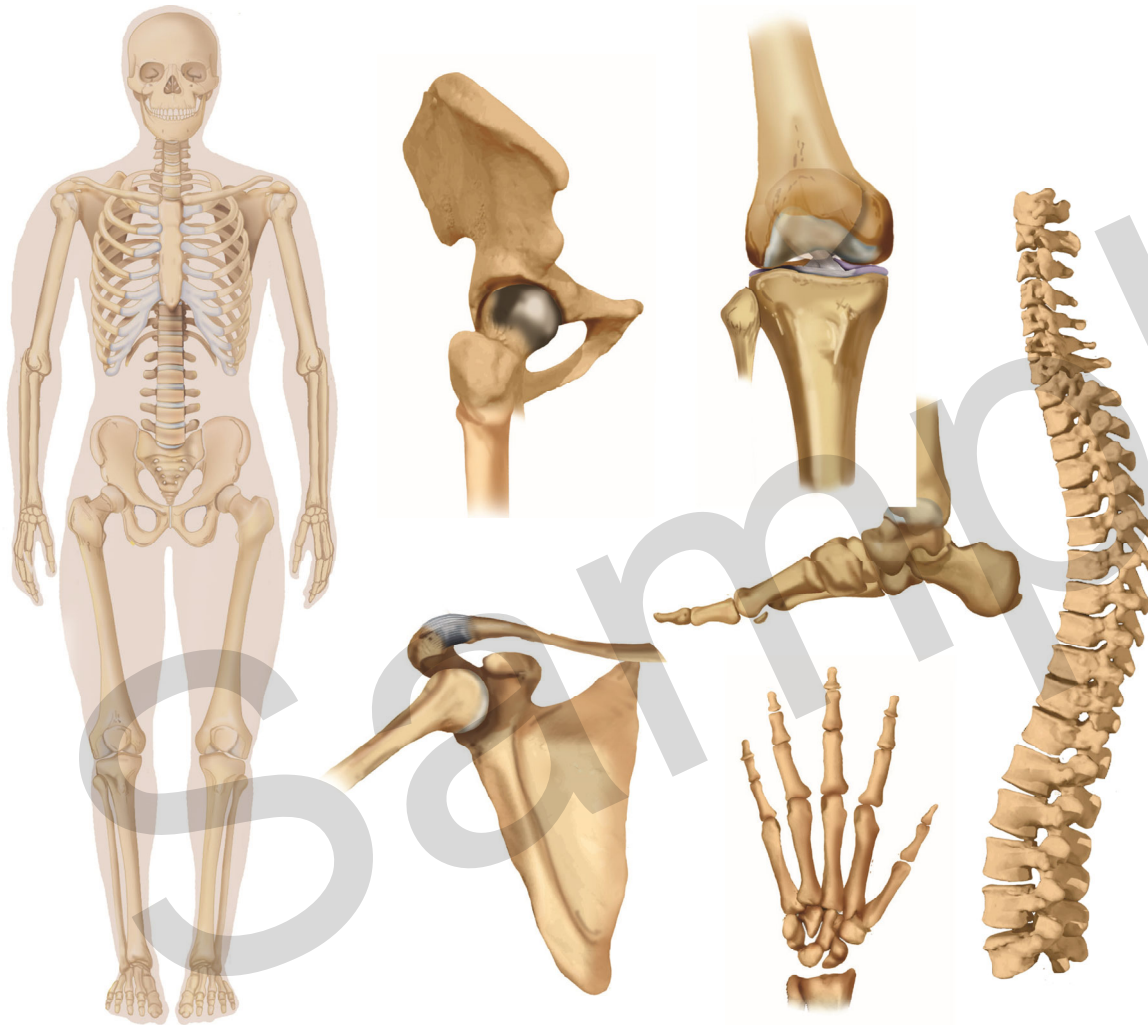


The Skeleton



The human skeleton is made up of the skull, spine, shoulder girdle, ribs, pelvis, arms, and legs. The spine is a column of cervical, thoracic, and lumbar vertebrae that also includes a sacrum, and a coccyx. There are seven cervical vertebrae C1 to C7. C1 is called the atlas and C2 is called the axis. The atlas supports the skull, and when combined with the axis, they allow for cervical rotation. There are twelve thoracic vertebrae T1 to T12. Ribs connect to the thoracic vertebrae and the rib cage houses the heart and lungs.¹

There are five lumbar vertebrae L1 to L5. The lumbar vertebrae are the largest because they support the weight of the entire upper body. The sacrum is made up of five fused vertebrae S1 to S5. The pelvis is formed with the sacrum and the hip joints. The tail bone, or coccyx, is another fusion of vertebrae. These three vertebrae are not differentiated by names.

Each vertebra is separated by intervertebral discs that will absorb shock and allow for motion. Ligaments and muscles connect the vertebrae. The muscles add stability and protection to the spinal column and help with spinal movement.