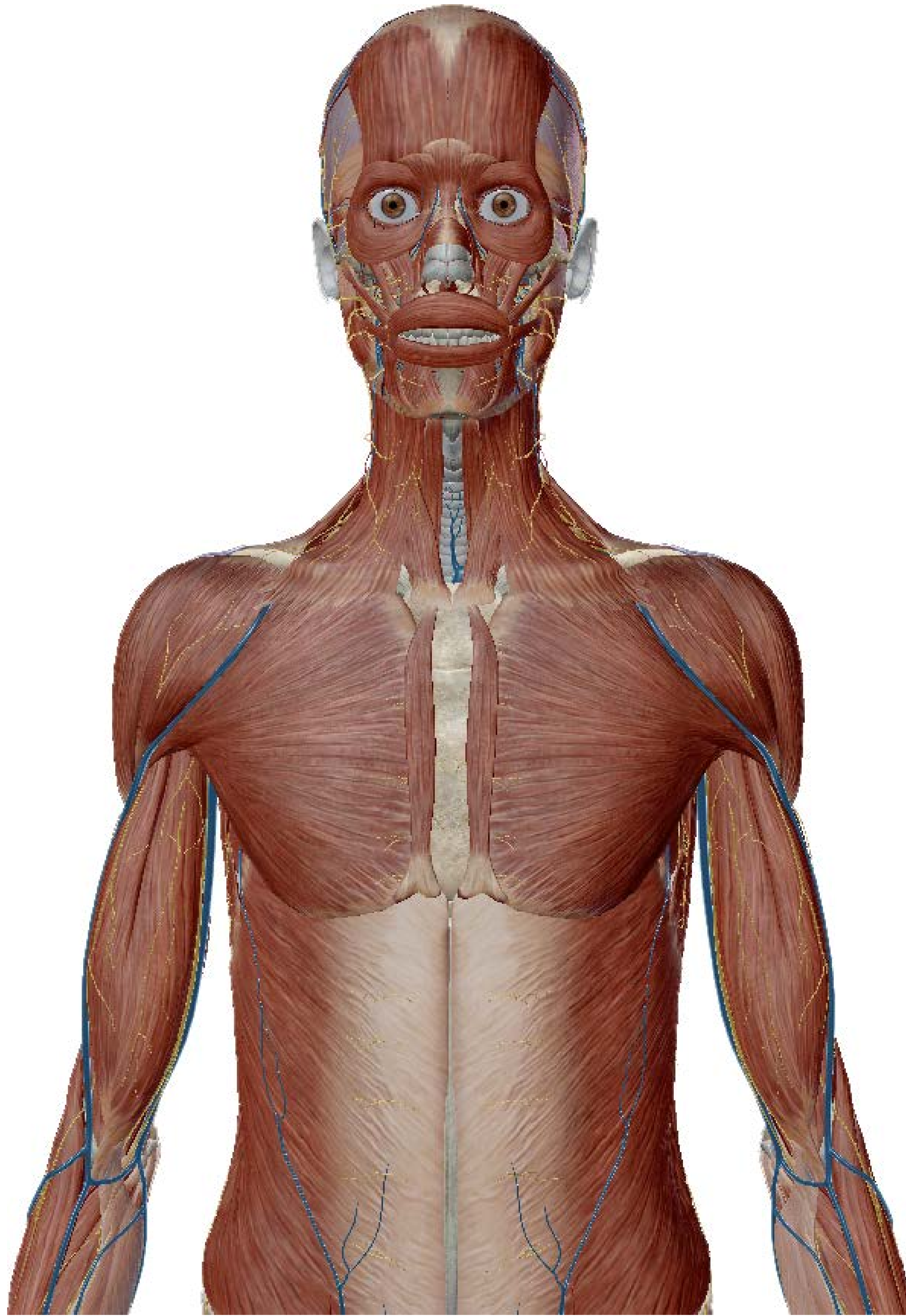


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# Planes and Positions

Most A&P courses, before delving into the good stuff, teach positions and planes. We've put together a quick guide to help you better understand them.

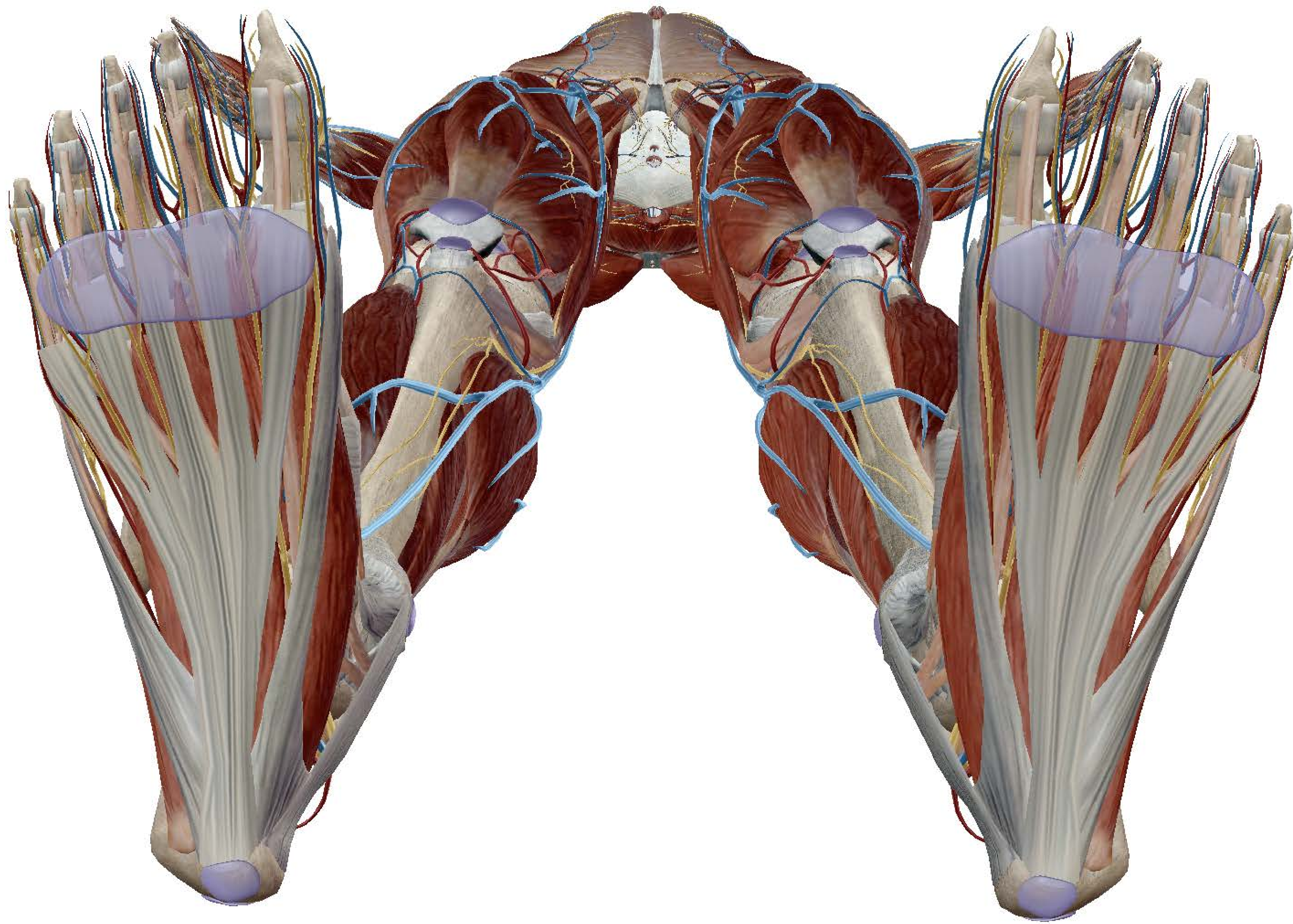




**A description of any region or part of the body in a specific stance is called the *anatomical position*.**

In the anatomical position, the body is upright, directly facing the observer, feet flat and directed forward. The upper limbs are at the body's sides with the palms facing forward.





If the body is lying face up, it is in the **supine position**.

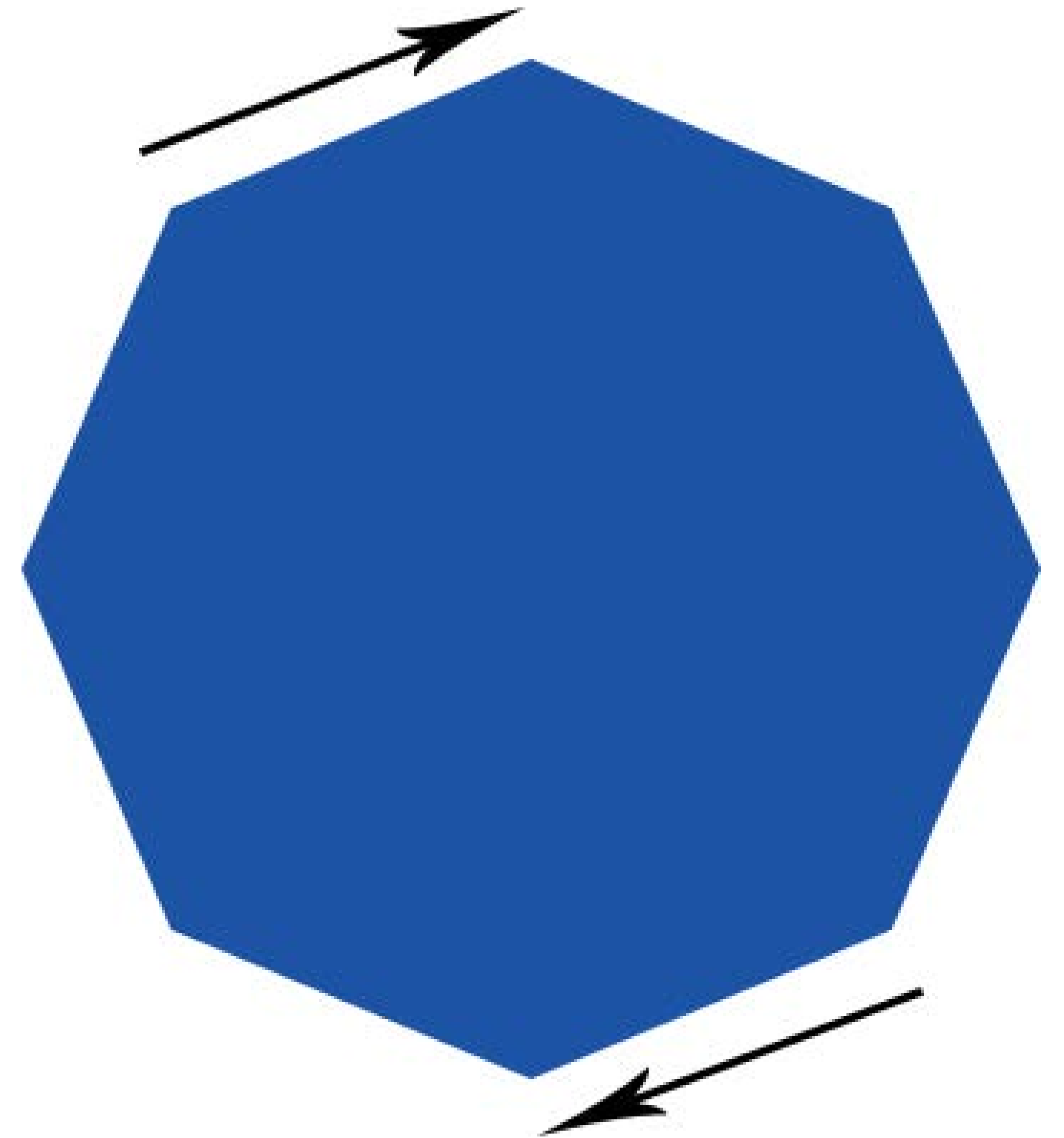


If the body is lying face down, it is in the **prone position**.

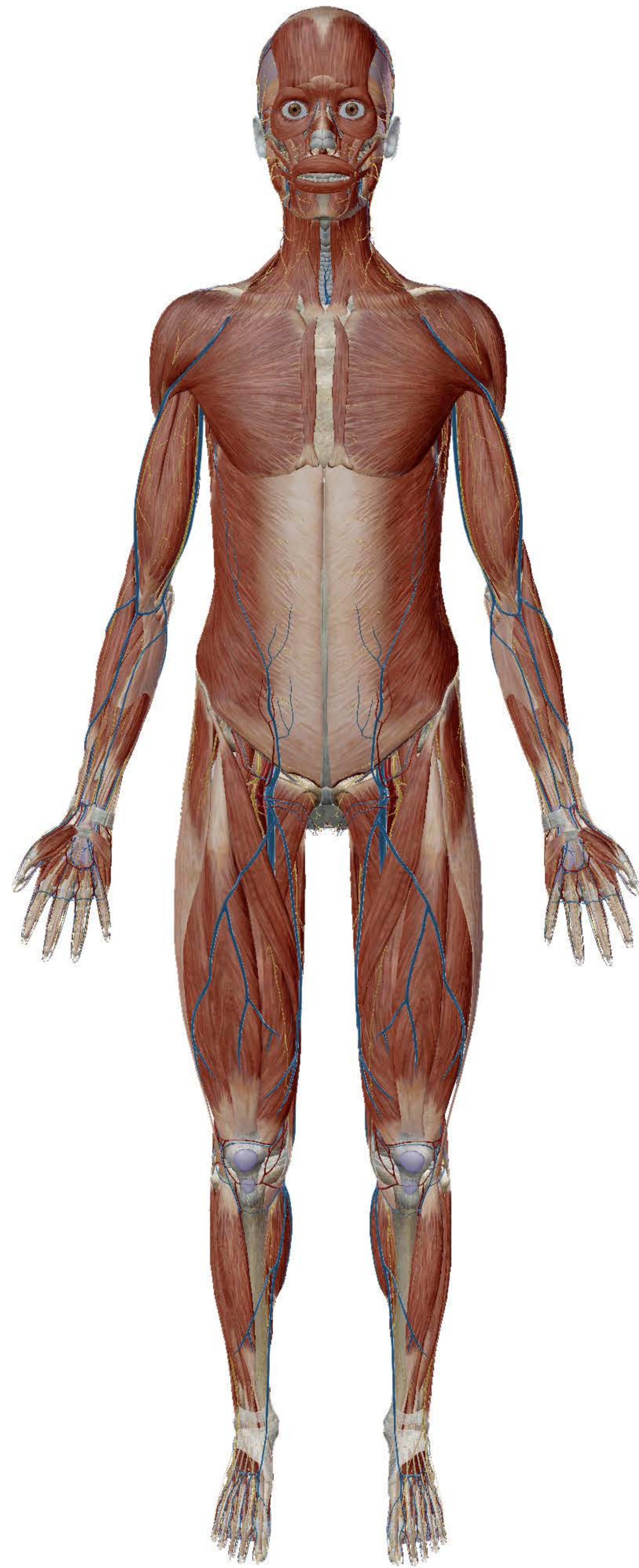


***Directional terms* are words used to describe the position of one body relative to another.**

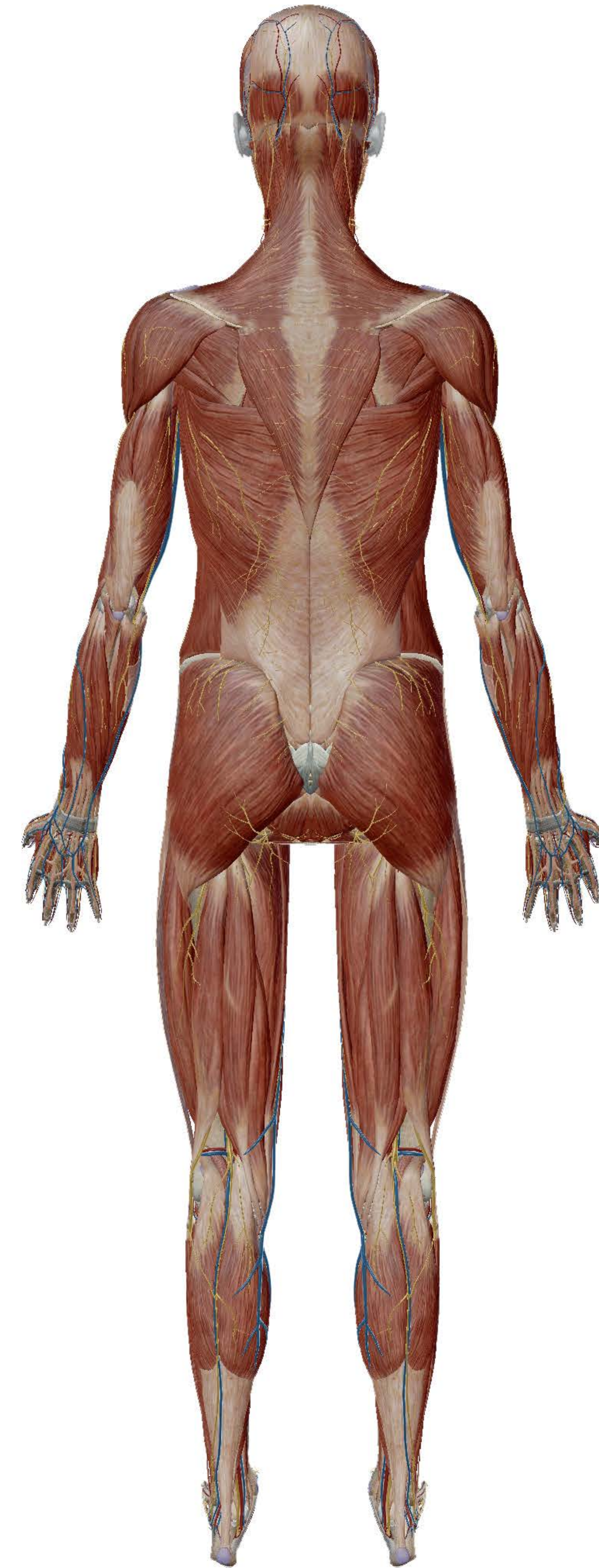
Many directional terms are grouped in pairs that have opposite meanings (ex: anterior-posterior), or are grouped together to have combined meanings (ex: anterosuperior).







**Anterior view:** At or near the front of the body.



**Posterior view:** At or near the back of the body.

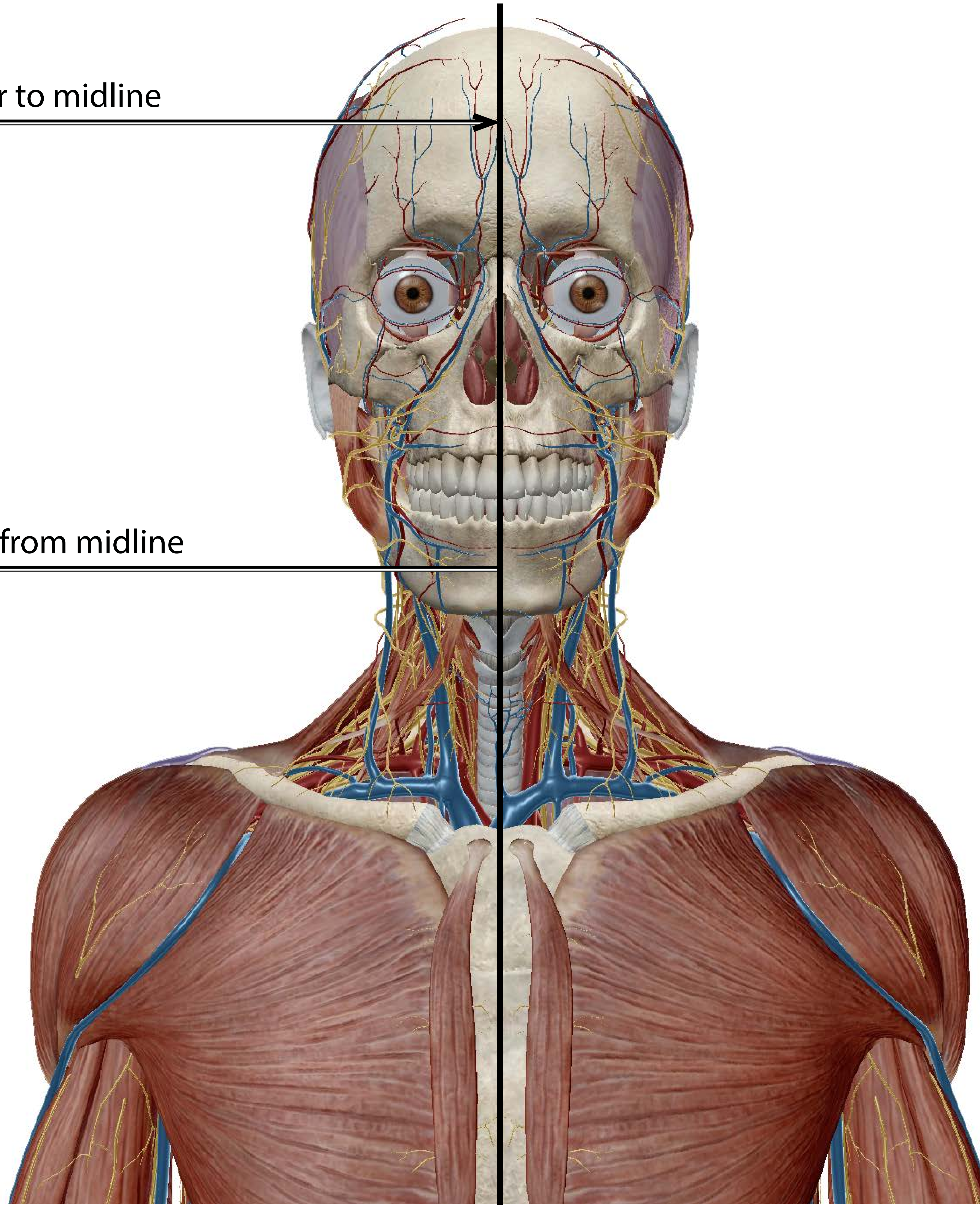


**Midline:** the imaginary line that divides the body into right and left halves.

**Medial:** Nearer to midline



**Lateral:** Away from midline







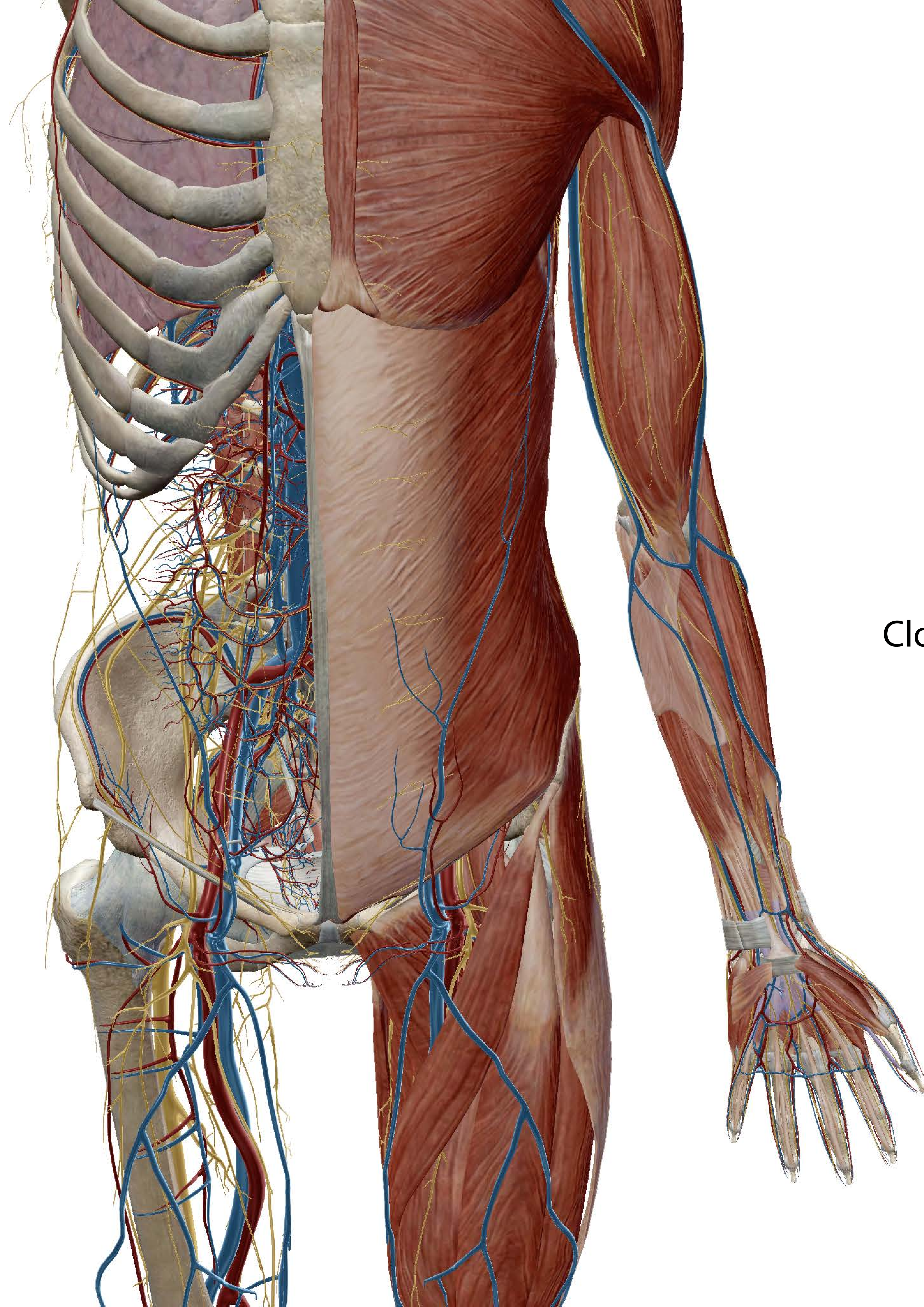
**Superior view:** Situated toward the head and further away from the feet; the upper part of a structure.



**Inferior view:** Situated nearer to the feet than the head; the lower part of a structure.







**Deep**

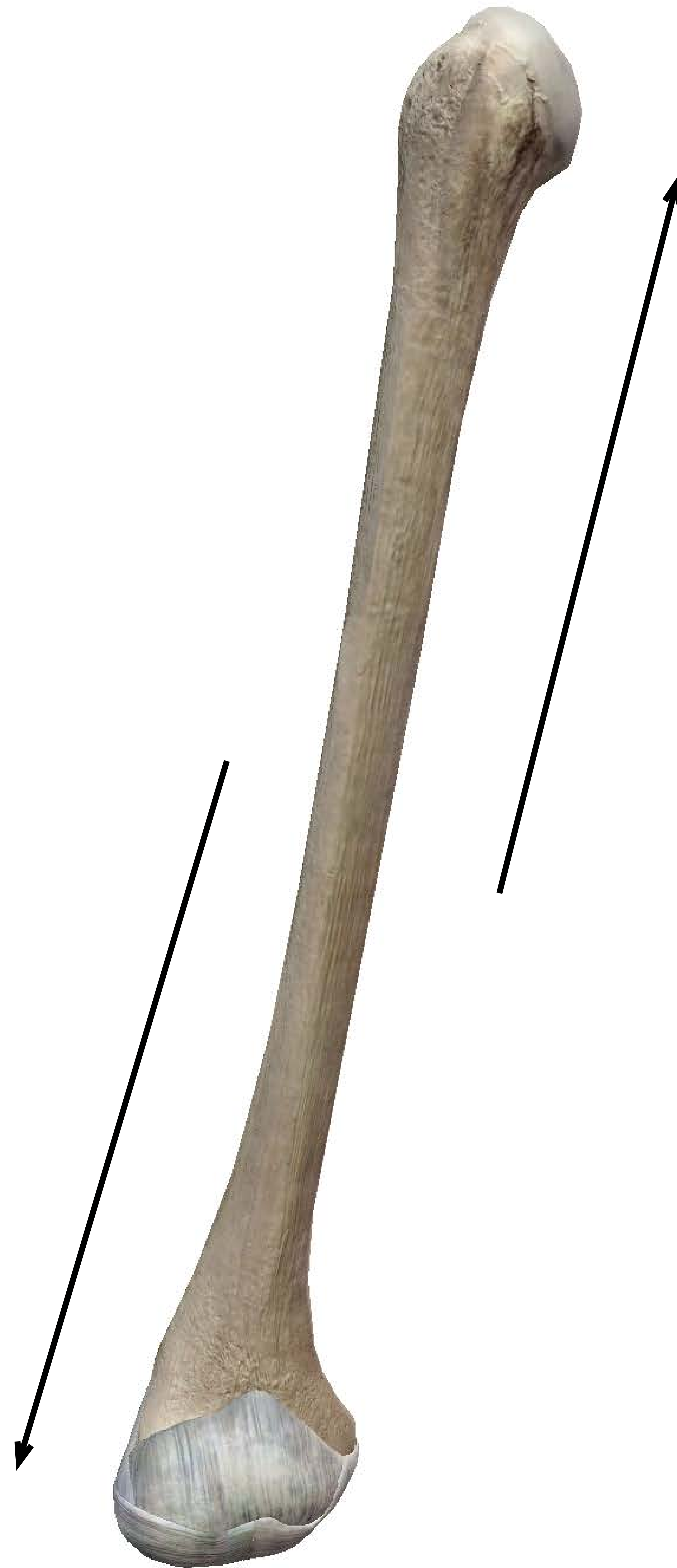
Away from the surface  
of the body

**Superficial**

Close to the surface  
of the body



**Distal**  
Farther from the origination  
of a structure.



**Proximal**  
Nearer to the origination  
of a structure.

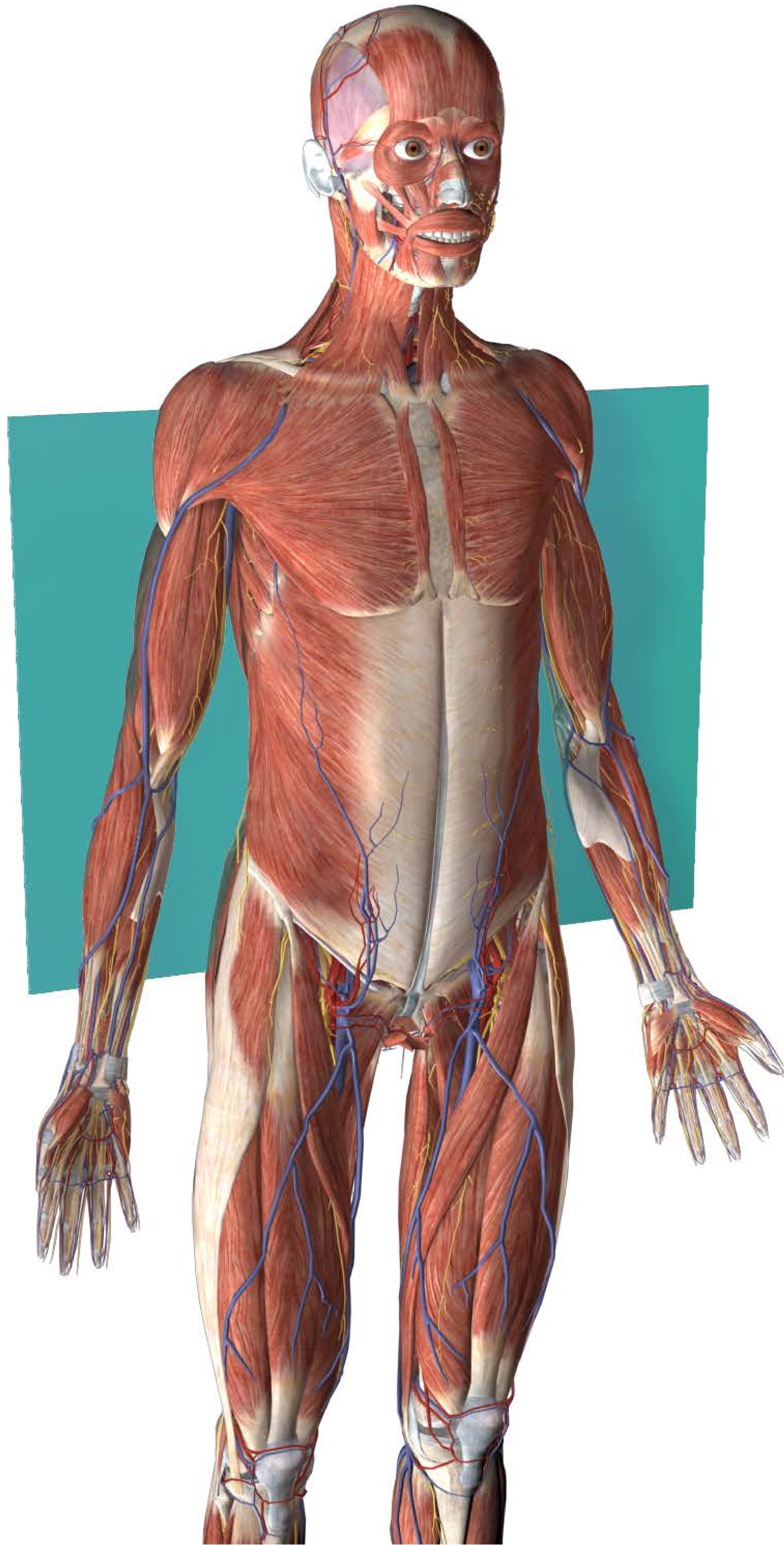


When we study the parts of the body, we also study their relativity to planes. *Planes* are imaginary flat surfaces that pass through parts of the body.

We also study parts of the body in **sections**, which are cuts along a certain plane.



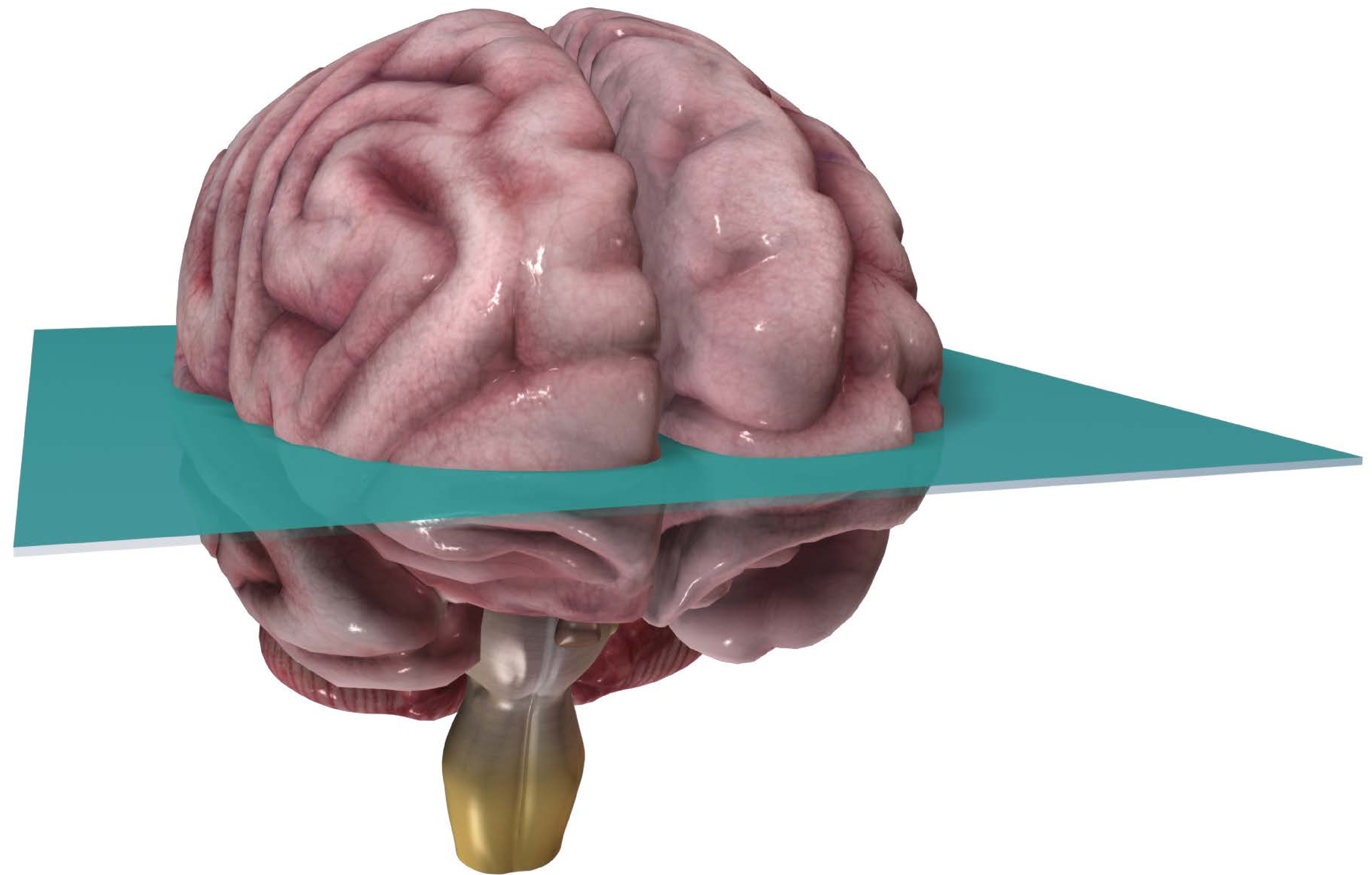




**Frontal (coronal) plane:** Divides the body into front and back portions.

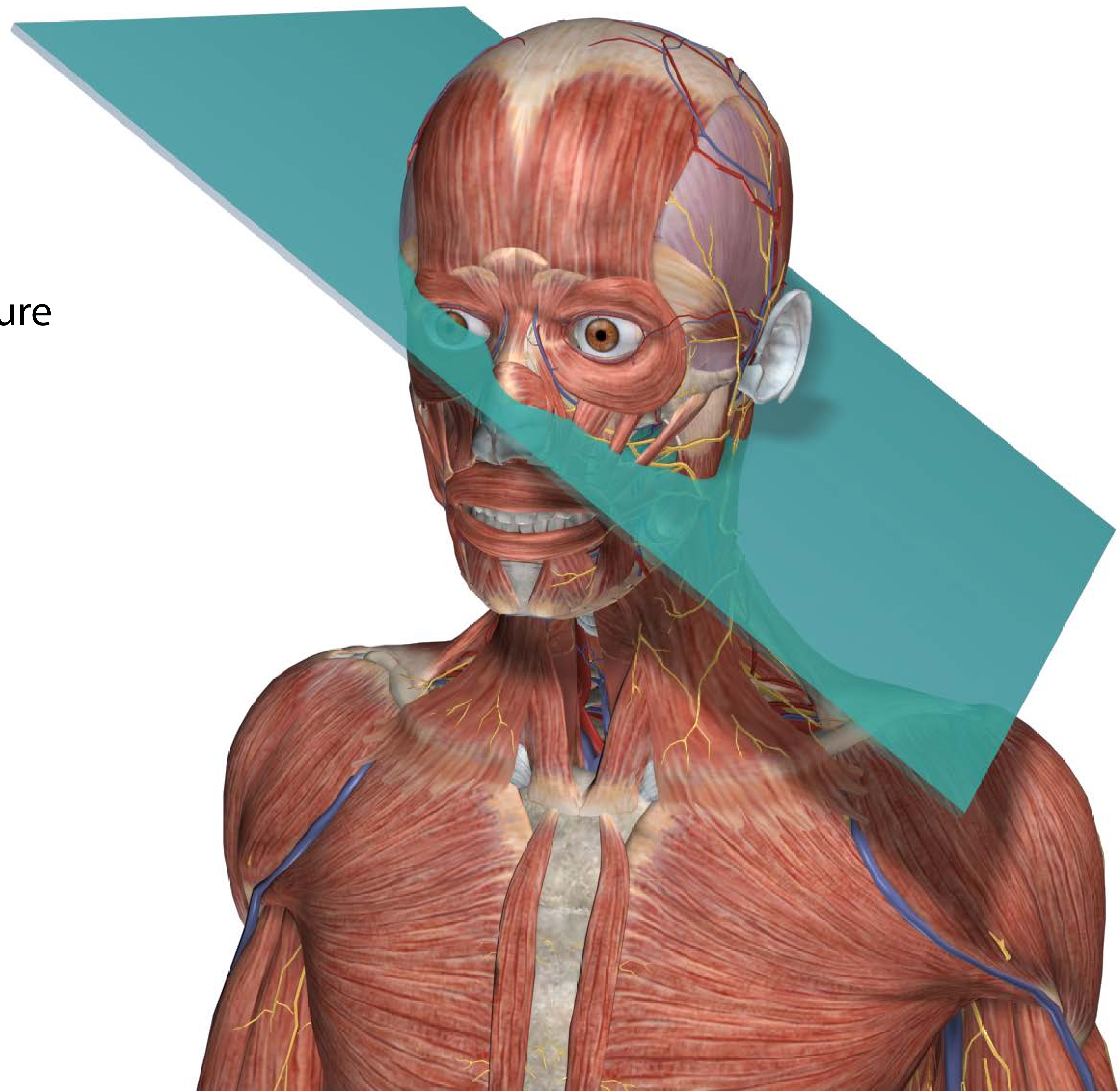


**Tranverse plane:** Divides the body into superior (upper) and inferior (lower) portions.





**Oblique plane:** Passes through a structure or the entire body at an angle.







**Sagittal plane:** Divides a structure or the body vertically into right or left portions.



# Review and Practice

Okay, we've thrown a lot of terms at you over the course of this eBook. Time to see what you remember.

## Positions and directionals:

**Anterior:** At or near the front of the body.

**Posterior:** At or near the back of the body.

**Midline:** Imaginary vertical line dividing the body equally.

**Superior:** Toward the head, upper part of a structure.

**Inferior:** Away from the head, lower part of a structure.

**Lateral:** Farther from midline.

**Medial:** Nearer to midline.

**Proximal:** Nearer to the origination of a structure.

**Distal:** Farther from the origination of a structure.

**Superficial:** Close to the surface of the body.

**Deep:** Away from the surface of the body.

## Commonly used planes:

**Frontal (or coronal):** Divides the body into anterior (front) and posterior (back) portions.

**Transverse (or horizontal):** Divides the body into superior (upper) and inferior (lower) portions.

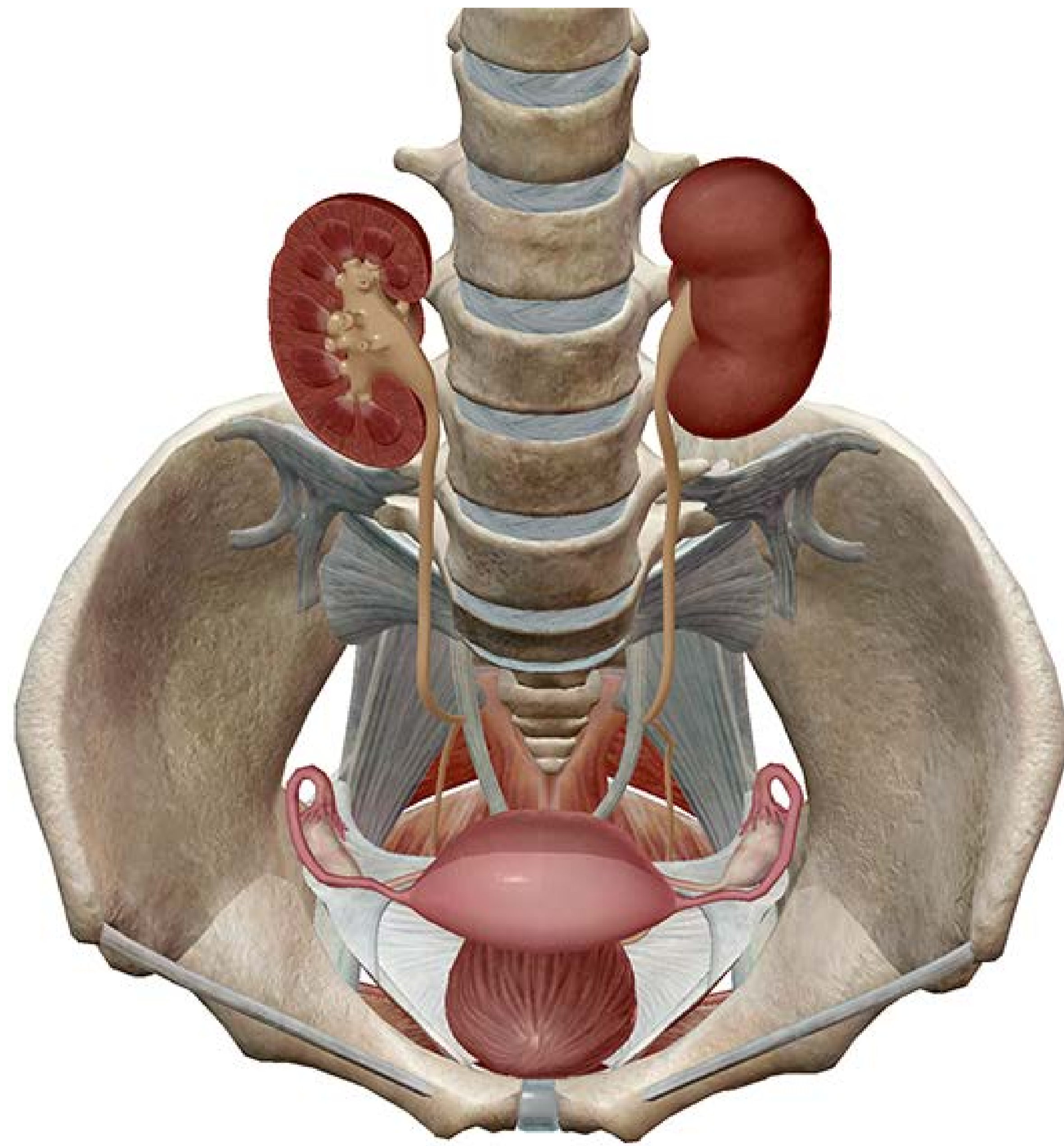
**Sagittal:** Divides the body vertically into right and left sides.

**Midsagittal:** Divides the body vertically into equal right and left sides.

**Parasagittal:** Divides the body vertically into unequal right and left sides.

**Oblique:** Passes through the body at an angle.





This is a \_\_\_\_\_ view.

- a. posterosuperior
- b. anterosuperior
- c. superior
- d. midsagittal

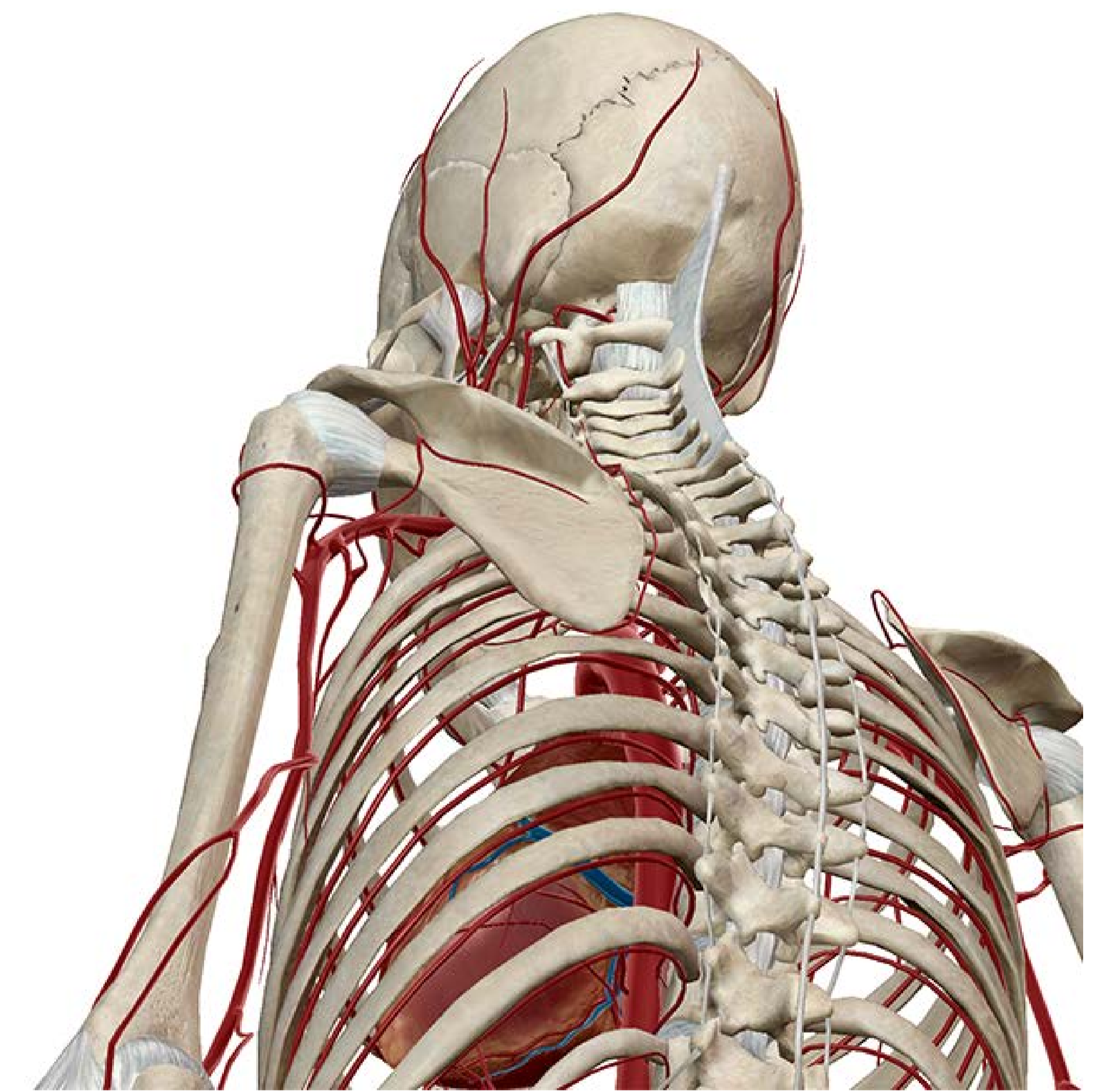
Answer: b



This is a \_\_\_\_\_ view.

- a. frontal
- b. parasagittal
- c. midsagittal
- d. transverse

Answer: d



This is a \_\_\_\_\_ view.

- a. inferior back
- b. posterosuperior
- c. posteroinferior
- d. midline

Answer: c





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