

# **Bent Out of Shape**

**Anatomy and Alignment  
for Bioenergetic Trainees**

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## Illustrations and Tables

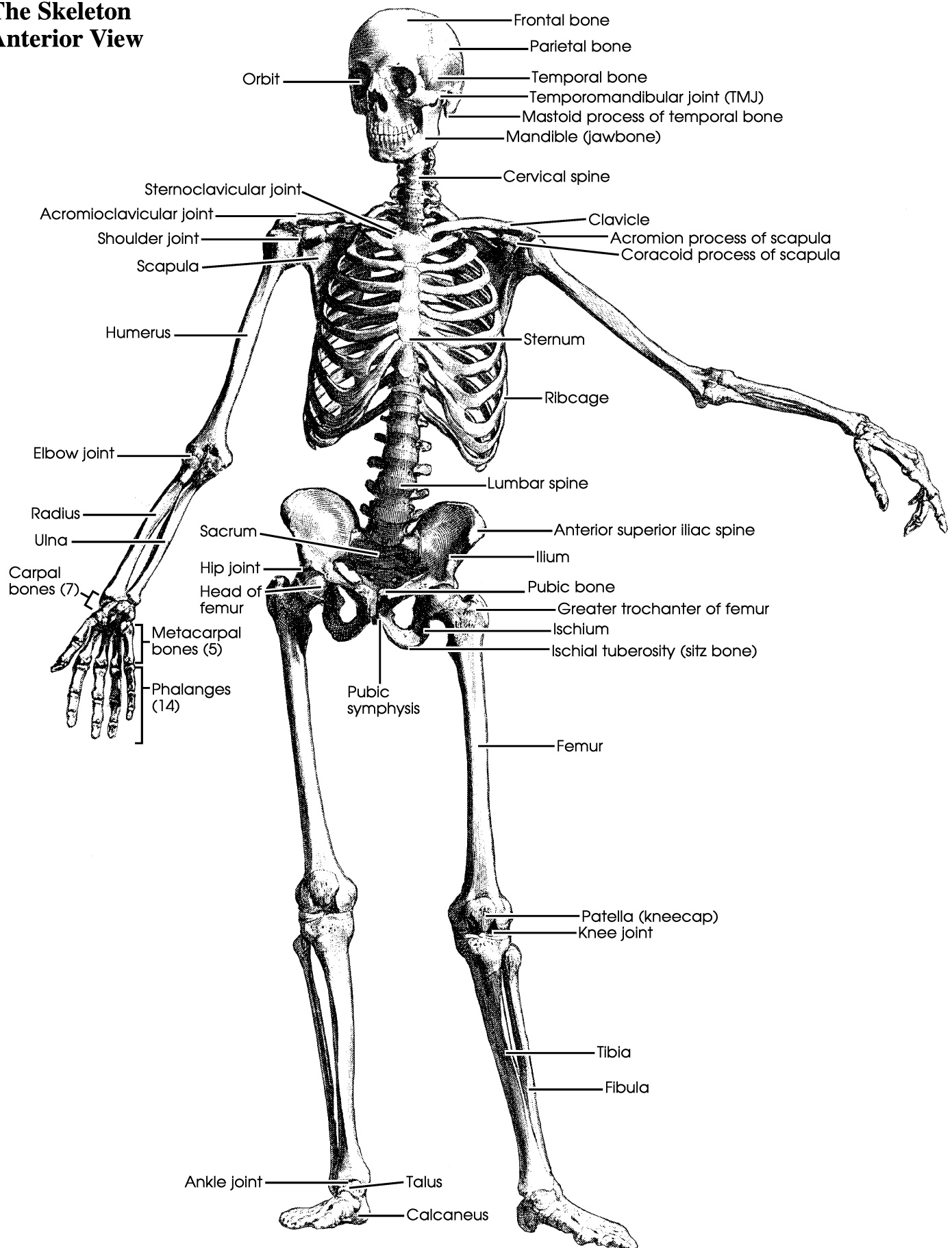
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**Figure 1:**  
**The Skeleton**  
**Anterior View**



## Before Your First Class: An Assignment

In Chapter 1, I will introduce you briefly to some basic concepts about bones, joints and muscles. However, most of the chapter focuses on general alignment of the body, or what we commonly call posture. After you study illustrations of “ideal” alignment—what a person with good alignment looks like, and what the skeleton would look like inside that person’s body—you will find it easier to recognize, as you look at further illustrations and real people, a variety of common misalignments which are important clues to a person’s bioenergetic stance in the world.

Perhaps you already know some anatomy from your professional training, but perhaps you have not thought about bones since high school biology. So that you will be familiar with a few basic words which must be used in any discussion of alignment, I would like you to examine three illustrations before your first anatomy class, or before you read Chapter 1. Please take a bit of time to absorb the illustrations visually. First study Figures 1 and 2, as well as your skeletal model. Be sure you can identify the **skull, vertebral column (spine), scapula, clavicle, humerus, radius, ulna, ribs, pelvis, femur, tibia** and **fibula**. Second, be familiar with the terms for the different sections of the vertebral column: **cervical, thoracic, lumbar** and **sacral** (Fig. 2). In good alignment, the **vertebrae** form a gentle S-curve on side view. Please spend enough time with the right-hand drawing of Figure 5 to form an image of the well-aligned spine in your mind. Tracing the curvature several times with your finger is helpful. If you have this image firmly in mind as a standard, you will get more out of the illustrations of poor spinal alignment which you will soon be examining.

Also look at the pictures of typical vertebrae in Figure 6 and understand which part of a vertebra is the **body**. This is the part of each vertebra which bears weight, so I will be referring to it as we look at alignment.

Helpful readings in *BodyStories* (Olsen 1991) are on pp. 35-41 (“Three Body Weights and Postural Alignment,” “The Nature of Bone”), 49-54 (“Axial Skeleton”), and 113-117 (“Joints”).