

ANATOMICAL POSITION AND TERMS OF DIRECTION

When studying the human body, it is important to place the body in anatomical position. Anatomical position is described as the body facing you, feet placed together and flat on the floor. The head is held erect, arms straight by the side with palms facing forward. All references to the body are made as if the body is in this position, so when you describe something as being above something else, it is always with respect to the body being in anatomical position.

The relative positions of the parts of the human body have specific terms. **Superior** means above while **inferior** means below. **Medial** refers to being close to the midline while **lateral** means to the side. **Anterior** or **ventral** is to the front while **posterior** or **dorsal** is to the back. **Superficial** is near the surface while **deep** means to the core of the body. When working with the limbs, **proximal** means closer to the trunk while **distal** is toward the ends of the extremities. Write the directional terms in the spaces provided and color in the arrows in reference to these terms. Note that these terms are somewhat different for four-legged animals.

Answer Key: a. Superior, b. Inferior, c. Lateral, d. Medial, e. Proximal, f. Distal, g. Anatomical position, h. Posterior, i. Anterior, j. Dorsal, k. Ventral

