

## View Orientation and Anatomical Planes

**Anterior** Toward the front of the body.

**Distal** Toward the end of an extremity.

**Dorsal** Toward the back of the body in the trunk, but superiorly in the head. The difference is due to the fact that the dorsum is defined relative to the axis of the nervous system, which bends at the midbrain in humans.

**Dorsal surface** (of foot or hand) The top of the foot or back of the hand.

**Frontal (coronal) plane** The anatomical plane that divides the body into front and back parts.

**Inferior** Toward the feet or downward.

**Lateral** Toward the side of the body.

**Medial** Toward the midline of the body.

**Palmar surface** The anterior surface (palm) of the hand.

**Plantar surface** The inferior surface (sole) of the foot.

**Posterior** Toward the back of the body.

**Proximal** Toward the attachment of a limb to the trunk, or toward the beginning of a tubular structure.

**Sagittal plane** A family of planes that divide the body into left and right parts. One of the planes is in the midline (mid-sagittal or median) and divides the body into two equal halves. The remaining members of the family (para-sagittal or para-median) divide the body into unequal left and right halves.

**Sagittal (mid-sagittal or median) plane** The plane that divides the body into two equal halves.

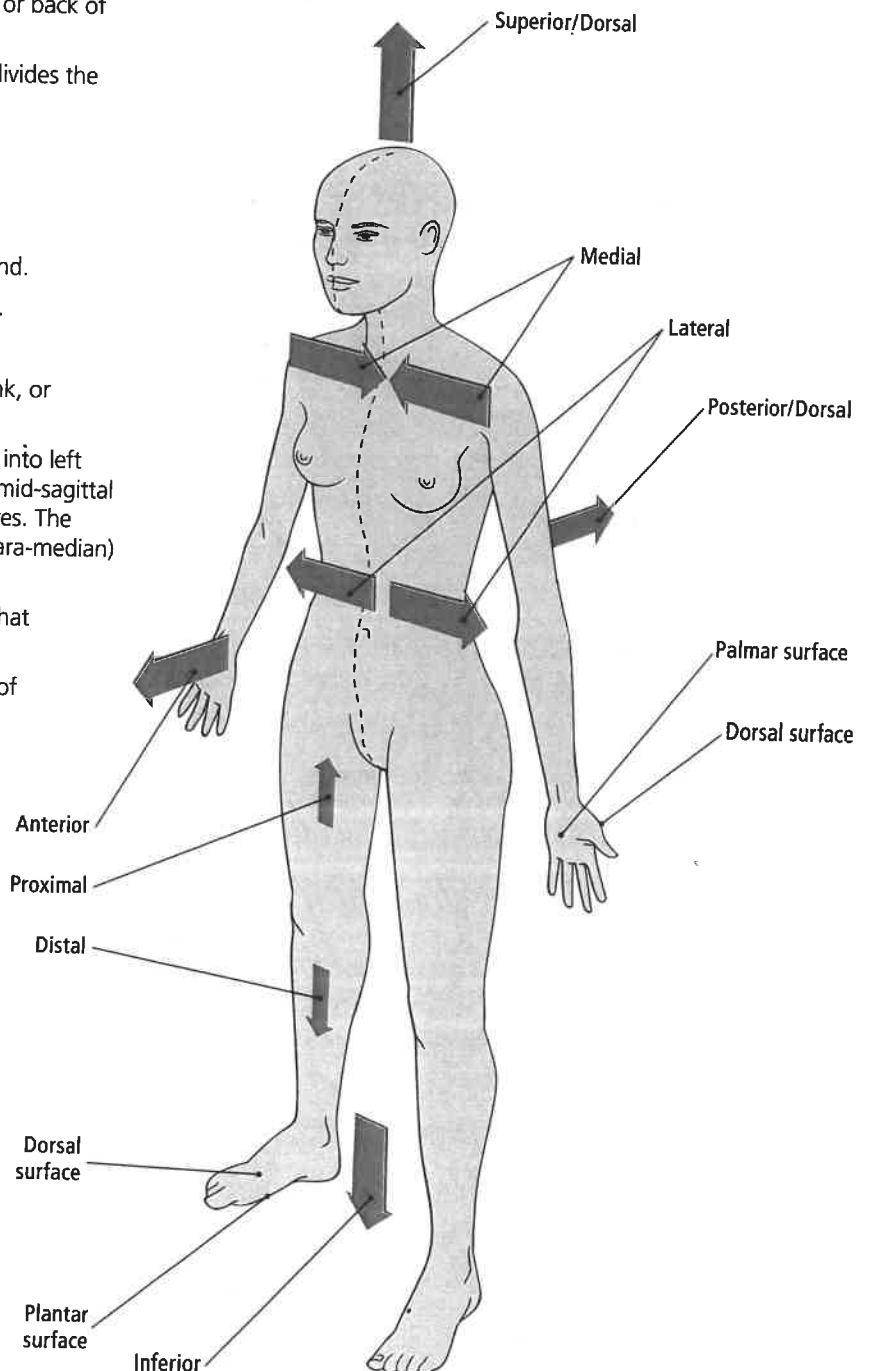
**Sagittal (para-sagittal or para-median) plane** One of a family of planes parallel to the midline.

**Superior** Toward the upper end of the body.

**Transverse (axial) plane** The family of planes that divide the body into upper and lower parts.

### Anatomical View Orientation

This is the standard position used for the description of body parts: the head is erect and the palms face forward. Based on this position, specific terms describe the orientation of the body and its parts.



### Anatomical Planes

Three families of planes at right angles to each other are used to divide the body: frontal (coronal), transverse (axial or horizontal), and sagittal (para-sagittal or para-median; mid-sagittal or median).

