

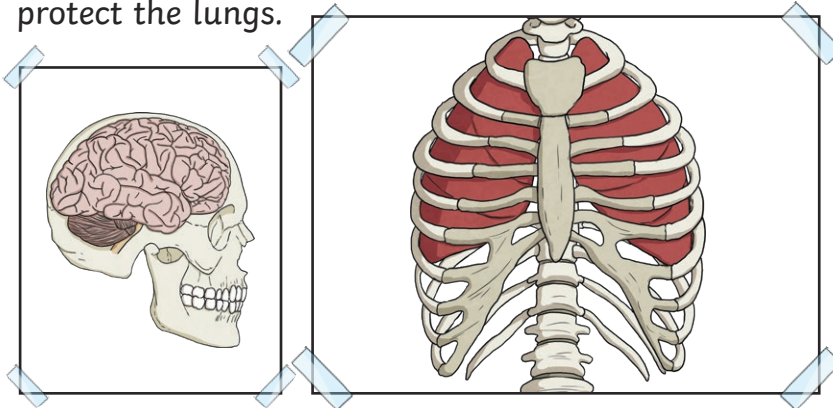
The Skeleton Fact File

All humans have a skeleton that is made up of many bones. The adult human skeleton is made up of 206 different bones.

What is the function of the skeleton?

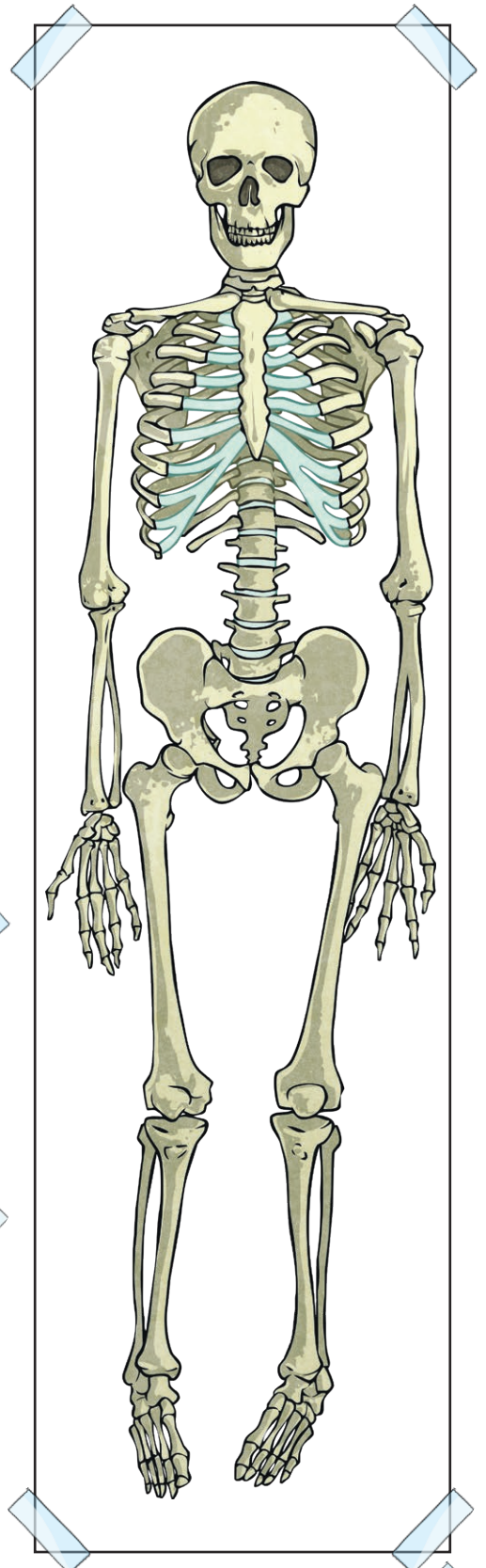
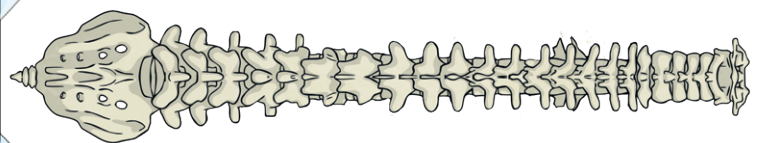
The skeleton has many different functions. The bones of the skeleton give the body structure. The way in which the skeleton is structured gives the body its shape. The skeleton also helps the body to move. Where the different bones meet is called a joint. The joints help our limbs and body to move in different ways.

The skeleton also serves another very important function. It protects the organs of the body. For example, the skull protects the brain, the vertebrae in the spine protect the spinal cord and the ribs protect the lungs.



What are bones made of?

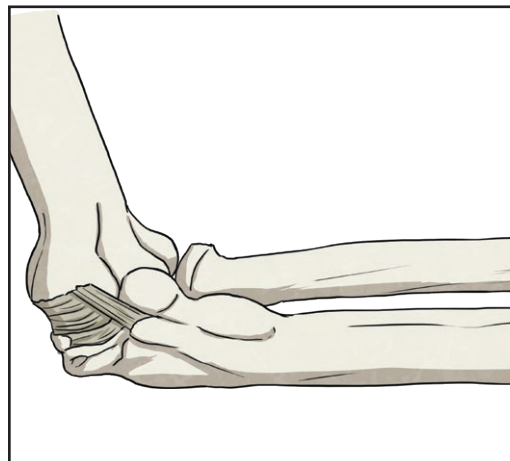
Bones are made up of many different layers. The outer layer is called the periosteum. It is thin and contains nerves and blood vessels. These nourish the bones. The next layer is called compact bone and it is smooth and very hard. Inside the compact bone are layers of bone called cancellous bone. It looks a bit like a sponge.



What is a joint?

A joint is where two bones meet. Bones are held together by strong bands called ligaments. Some joints can move and some cannot.

Moving joints help you to bend, kick, swim, write and move in all the different ways you need every day. The knee joint and the elbow joint are examples of moving joints. There are joints in the skull called sutures, which are examples of joints which don't move.



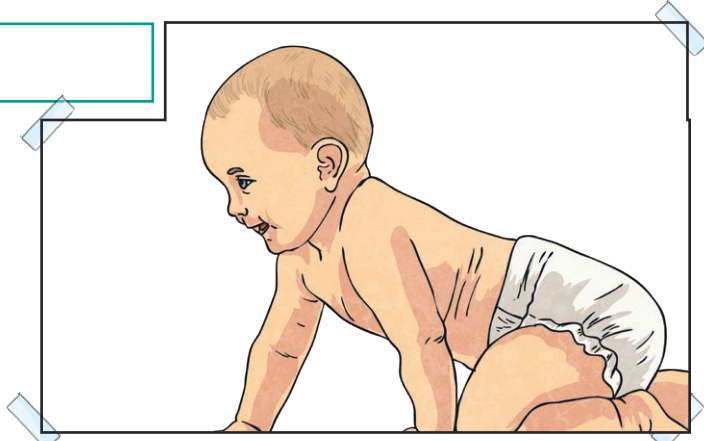
How can we look after our bones?

- Protect your skull, and the brain inside it, by always wearing a helmet when cycling/hurling etc.
- Keep your bones strong by eating dairy products which contain lots of calcium.
- Make sure to get lots of exercise, such as running, dancing and playing sports which helps to strengthen your bones.



Did you know?

Little babies are born with around 300 bones. Some of these bones fuse together and adults only have 206 bones. Many of the bones a baby has are made of cartilage which is a special material that is soft and flexible. The cartilage is replaced by bone as they grow.



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