

AN INTRODUCTION TO VERTEBRAE



The vertebral column

- Made up of vertebrae and intervertebral discs.
- Makes approximately 1/4 of the total body length
- Extends from the cranium to the coccyx



The back: posterior part of the trunk.
Inferior to the neck and superior to the gluteal region

Function of the Vertebral Column

1. **Protection** of the spinal cord and the cauda equina
2. **Support** the weight of the body above the pelvis
3. **Posture and movement:** bones, IV discs and ligaments are highly flexible
4. **Haemopoiesis:** red bone marrow

Nerve roots at the end of the spinal chord.
Control sensation within & below the pelvis

Formation of red blood cells and platelets in the bone marrow

Function of the Vertebral Column

Typically 33 vertebrae:

- 7 cervical
- 12 thoracic
- 5 lumbar
- 5 sacral
- 4 coccygeal

Mobility of vertabrae

Very mobile: cervical and lumbar
Relatively immobile: thoracic

More wear and tear (degenerative changes) occur when vertebrae are more mobile

