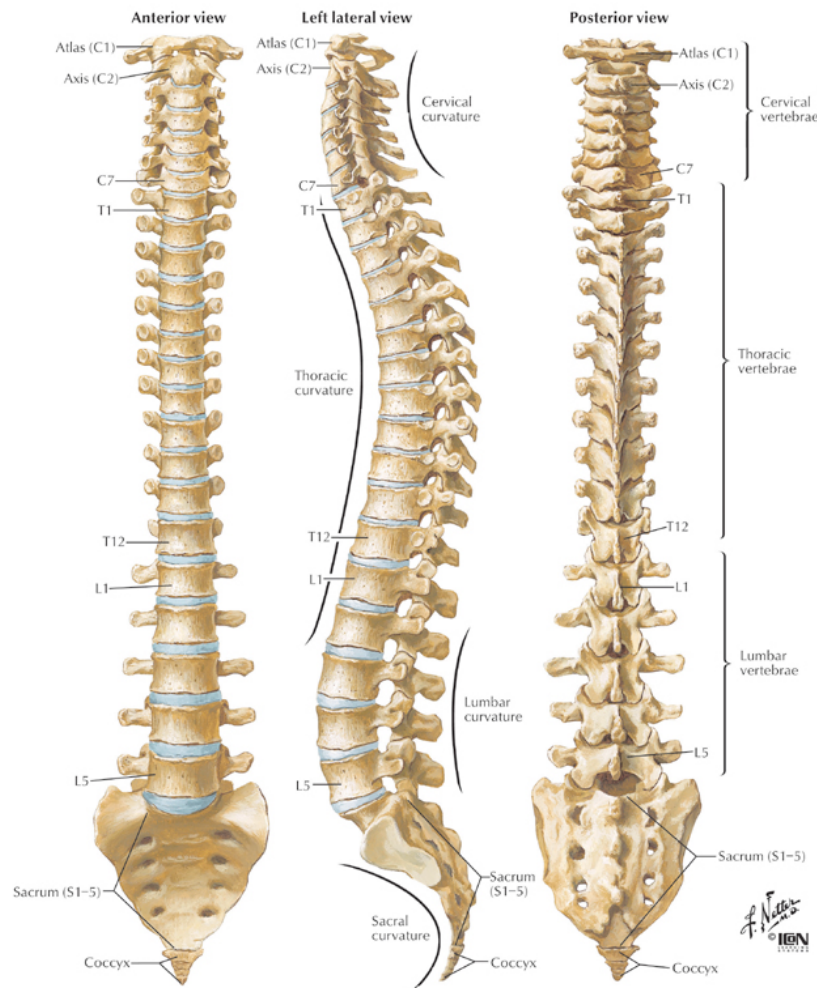


Understanding Your Spine

The normal spine is composed of vertebrae and disc. The vertebrae are made of bone and have three normal curves: seven cervical (neck) vertebrae; twelve thoracic (upper-back) vertebrae; and five lumbar (lower back) vertebrae. The discs act as cushions between the vertebrae.



The function of the spine is to support your body, protect the spinal cord, and provide stability and mobility to the trunk. Muscles in your neck, abdomen, back, buttocks and thighs help support and maintain the three curvatures. Keeping these muscles strong and flexible help them do their job. The discs between the vertebrae act as shock absorbers and provide flexibility.