ATSU | National Center for Osteopathic Principles and Practice Education

Introduction to OMM for MDs, DOs & PhDs

- May 18, 2026 – May 21, 2026, Kirksville, MO
- NCOPPE & KCOM

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FIRST IN WHOLE PERSON HEALTHCARE

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Segmental Diagnosis: Thoracic

By Billy Strait, DO, C-AOBNMM

Billy Strait, DO

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TOPICS:

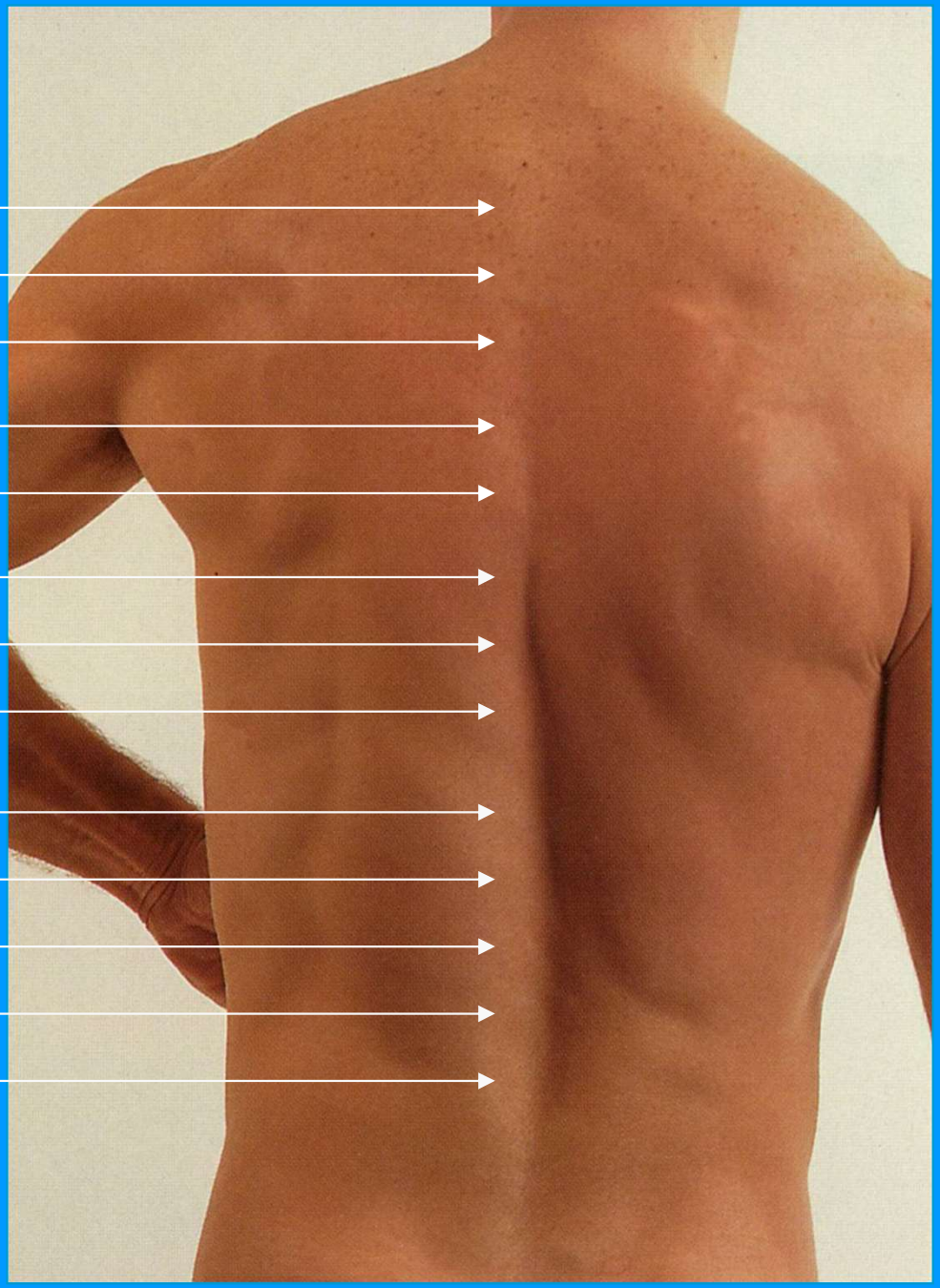
- Discuss the Osteopathic Examination
- Review Functional Anatomy & Spinal Landmarks including “Rule of Three’s” for the Thoracic Spine
- Practice Screening for Normal Motion and Somatic Dysfunction of the Thoracic Spine
- Describe How to Name Vertebral Motion & Somatic Dysfunction
- Demonstrate how to Perform Passive Testing for Rotation, Sidebending, & Flexion/Extension

Integrated Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Examination

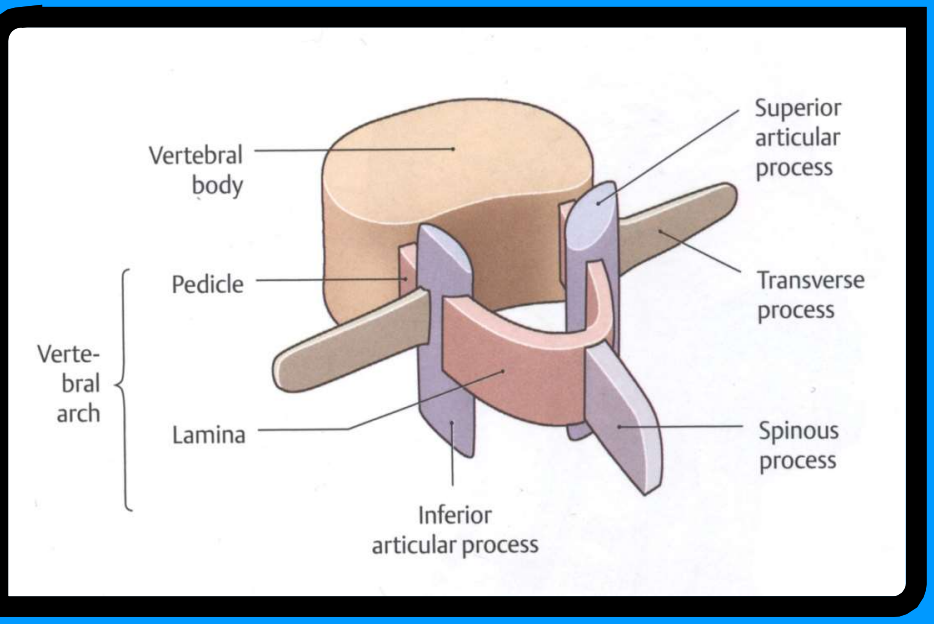
- Links structure and function
  - Provides information for primary musculoskeletal dysfunction
  - Provides info for systemic disease
- Expanded data base for Dx and Tx
- Allows for host support (Homeostasis)

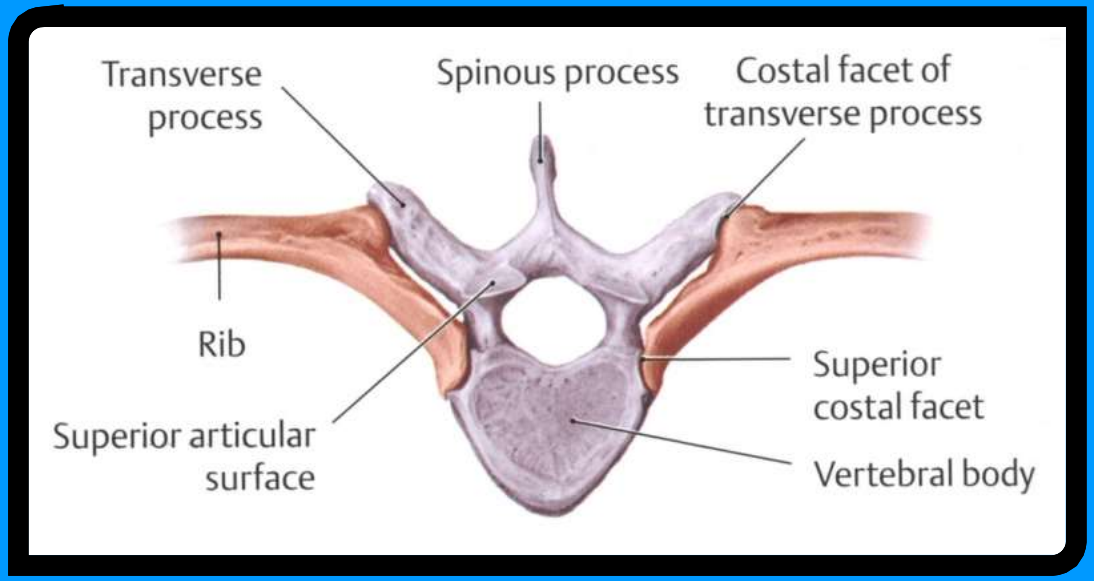
Somatotopic Relationships to Sympathetic Function

- T1-4 Head and Neck
- T1-6 Heart, Lungs
- T2-8 Upper Extremity
- T2-8 Esophagus
- T5-9 Upper GI System
- T10-11 Mid GI System
- T10-Kidney
- T 10-11-Ovaries, Testes
- T11-L1 Upper Ureter
- T12-L2 Bladder
- T12-L2 Lower GI System
- T12-L2 Uterus, Prostate
- T11-L2 Lower Extremity



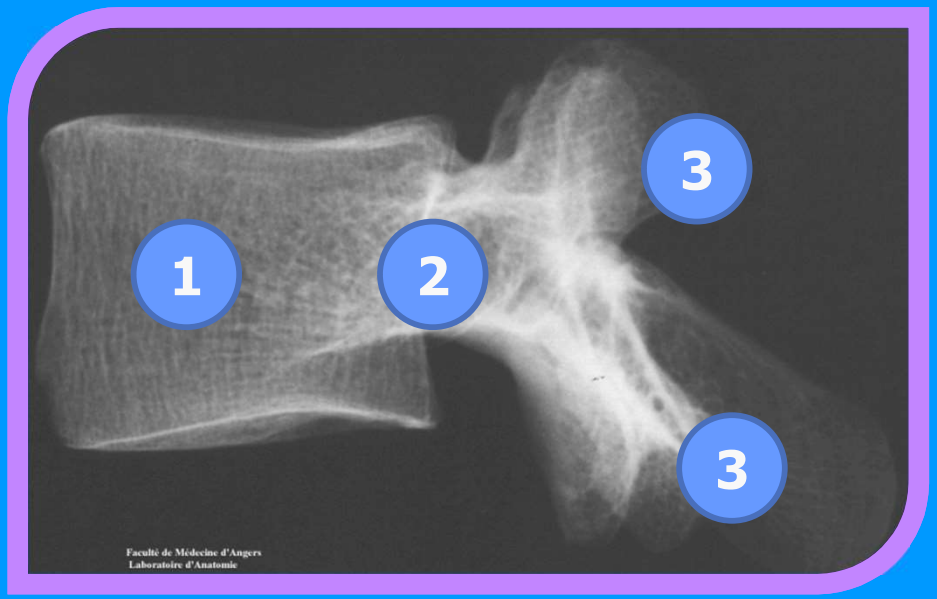
The Structure and Components of the Thoracic Vertebra





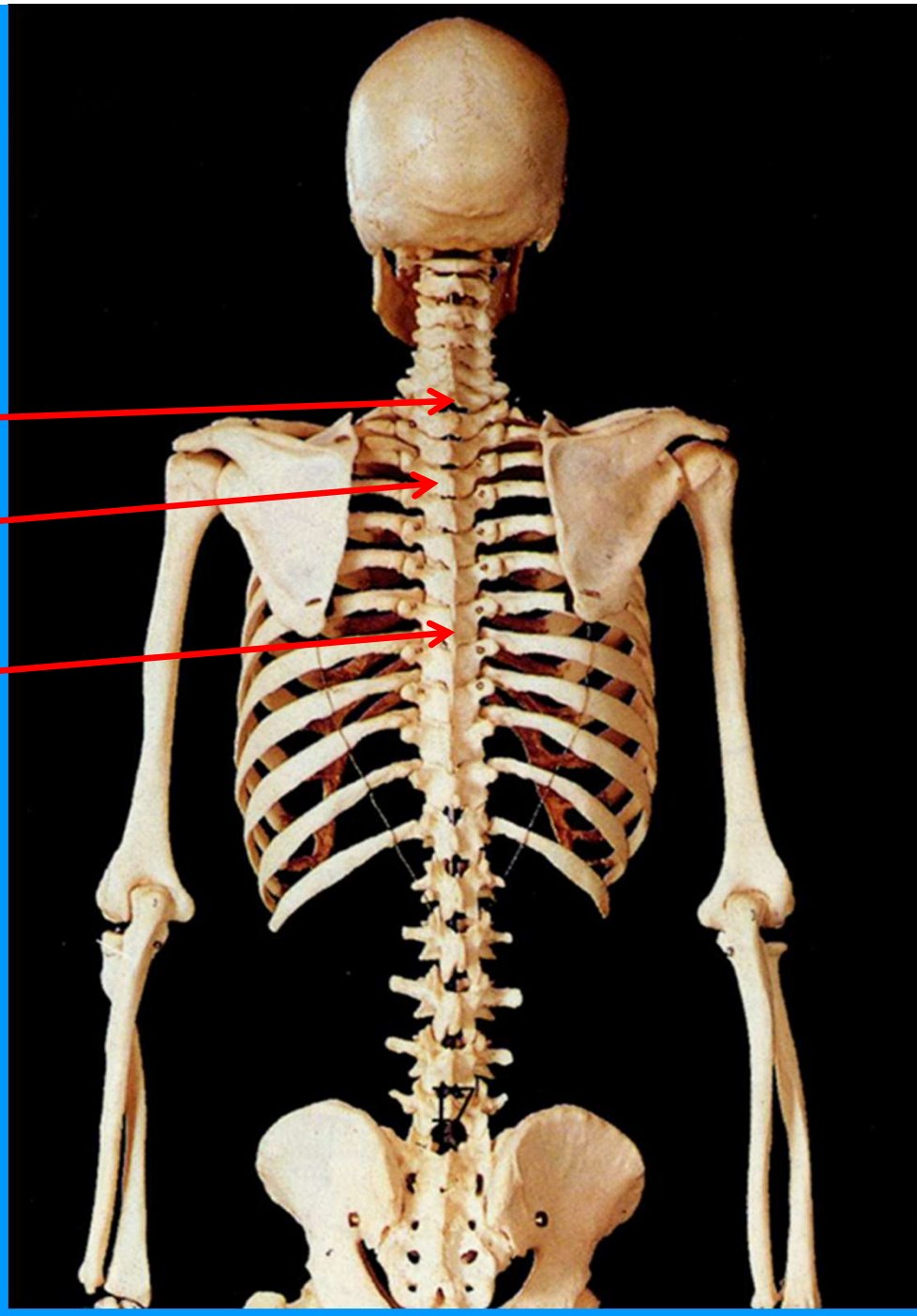
Functional Components of a Typical Vertebra

1. Vertebral body - load-bearing.
2. Pedicles – transmit forces from the posterior elements to the vertebral bodies and encase the spinal cord
3. Posterior elements – inferior facets lock into superior facets below to resist forward sliding and rotation.



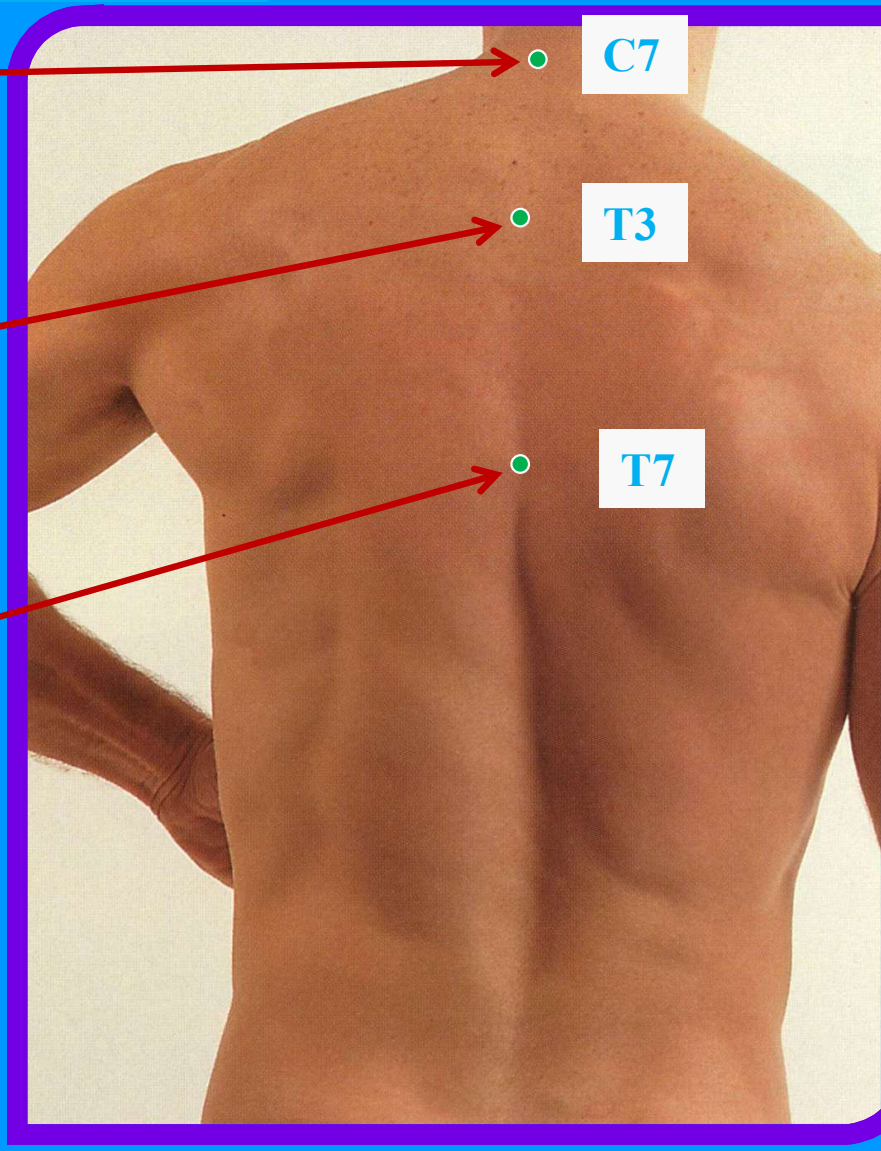
Spinal Anatomy Landmarks and Surface Anatomy Relationships

- Vertebra Prominens: C7
- Scapular Spine: T3
- Inferior Angle of the Scapula: T7



Demo: Identify Landmarks

1. Vertebra Prominens: C7 (pt. seated; rotate head L. & R. to find motion, T1 no motion)
2. Scapular Spine: level w/ T3 (pt. prone)
3. Inferior Angle of the Scapula: level w/ T7 (T8) (pt. prone)

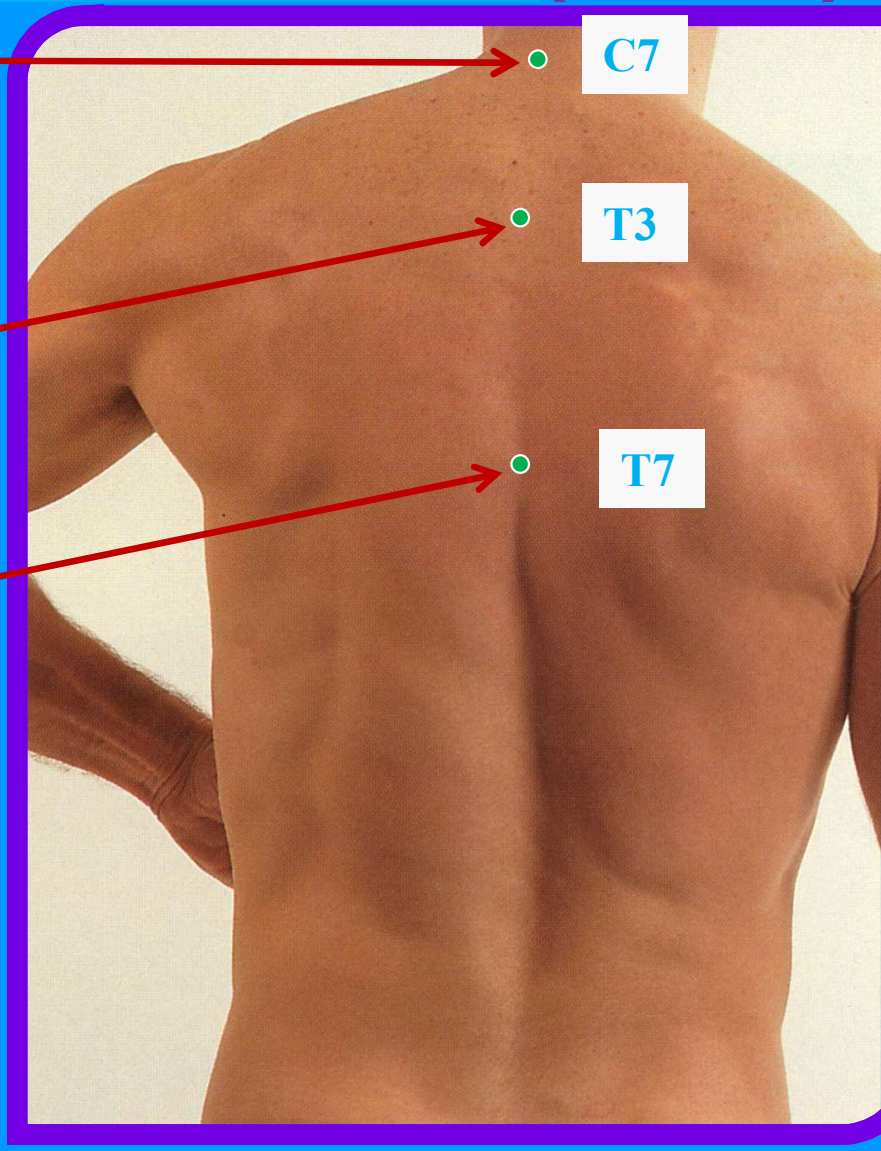


Practice: Identify Landmarks

(3:30)

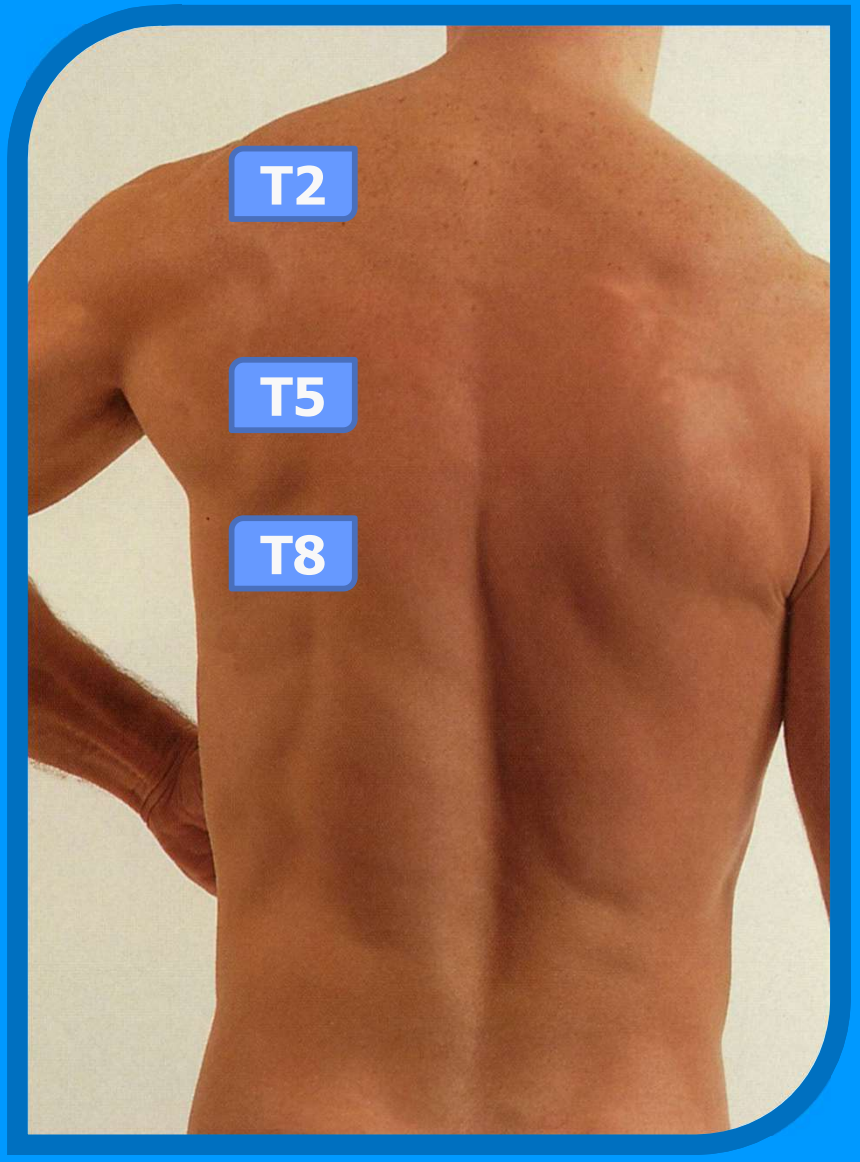
(Doctor 2)

1. Vertebra Prominens: C7 (pt. seated; rotate head L. & R. to find motion, T1 no motion)
2. Scapular Spine: level w/ T3 (pt. prone)
3. Inferior Angle of the Scapula: level w/ T7 (T8) (pt. prone)



Relationships of the Spinous Processes (SP) to the Transverse Processes (TP)

- Rule of Three's for Thoracic Vertebrae



Rule of Threes for the Thoracic Vertebrae

-T1-3: transverse process at same level of spinous process

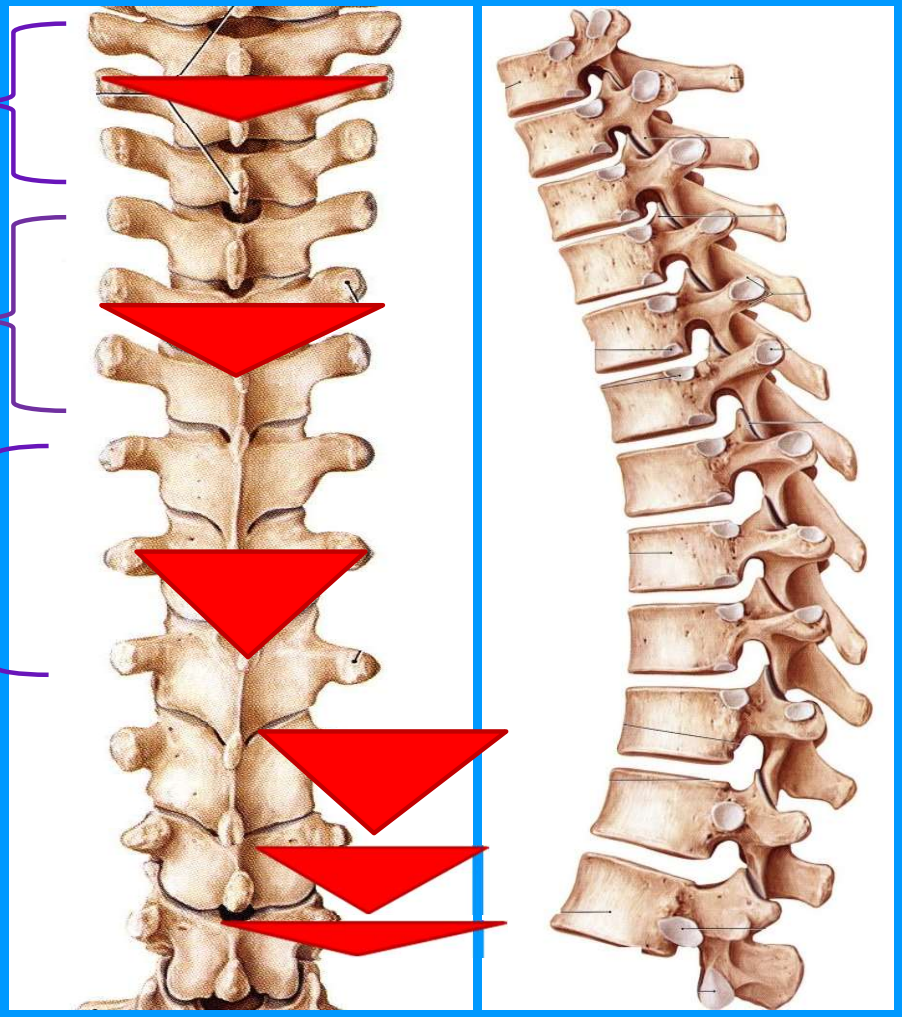
-T4-6: TP ½ level superior to SP

-T7-9: TP 1 level superior to SP

-T10: TP 1 level superior

-T11: TP ½ level superior

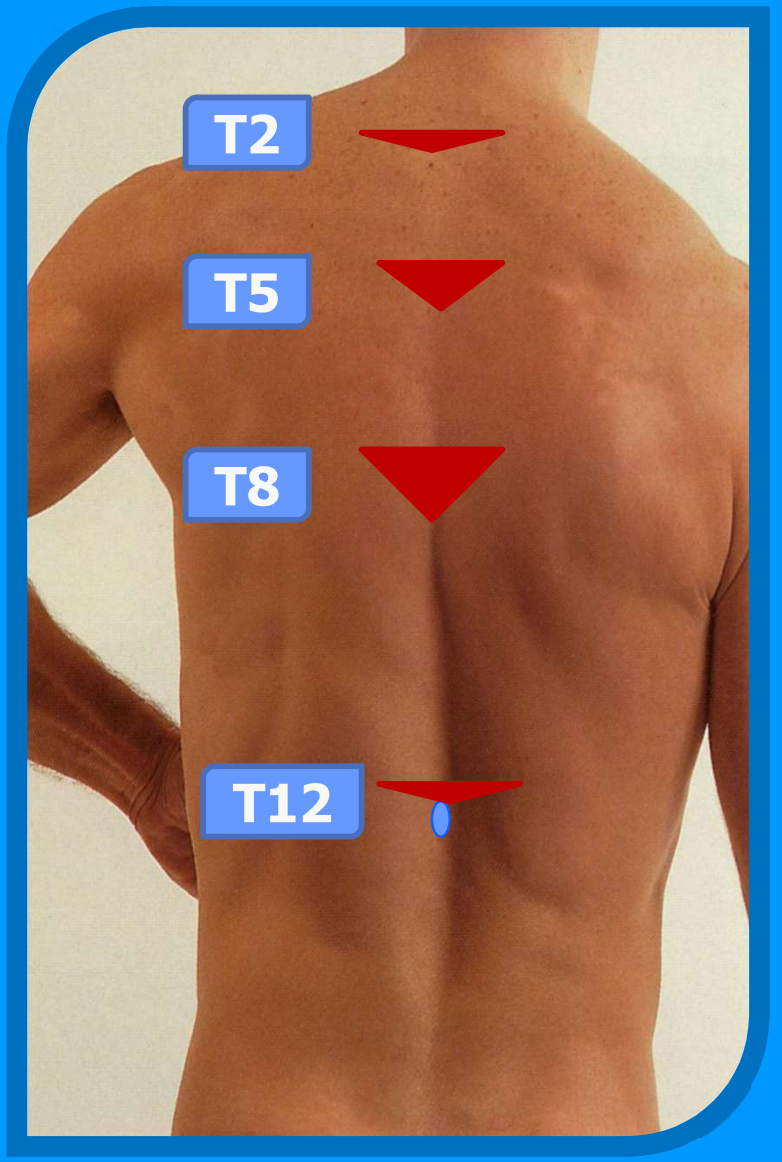
-T12: TP at same level of SP



See Magee pp 472, 73

Demo: Rule of 3's (patient prone)

- T1-3: transverse process at same level as spinous process
- T4-6: transverse process ½ level superior to spinous process
- T7-9: transverse process 1 level superior to spinous process
- T10: transverse process 1 level sup
- T11: transverse process ½ level sup
- T12: transverse process same level

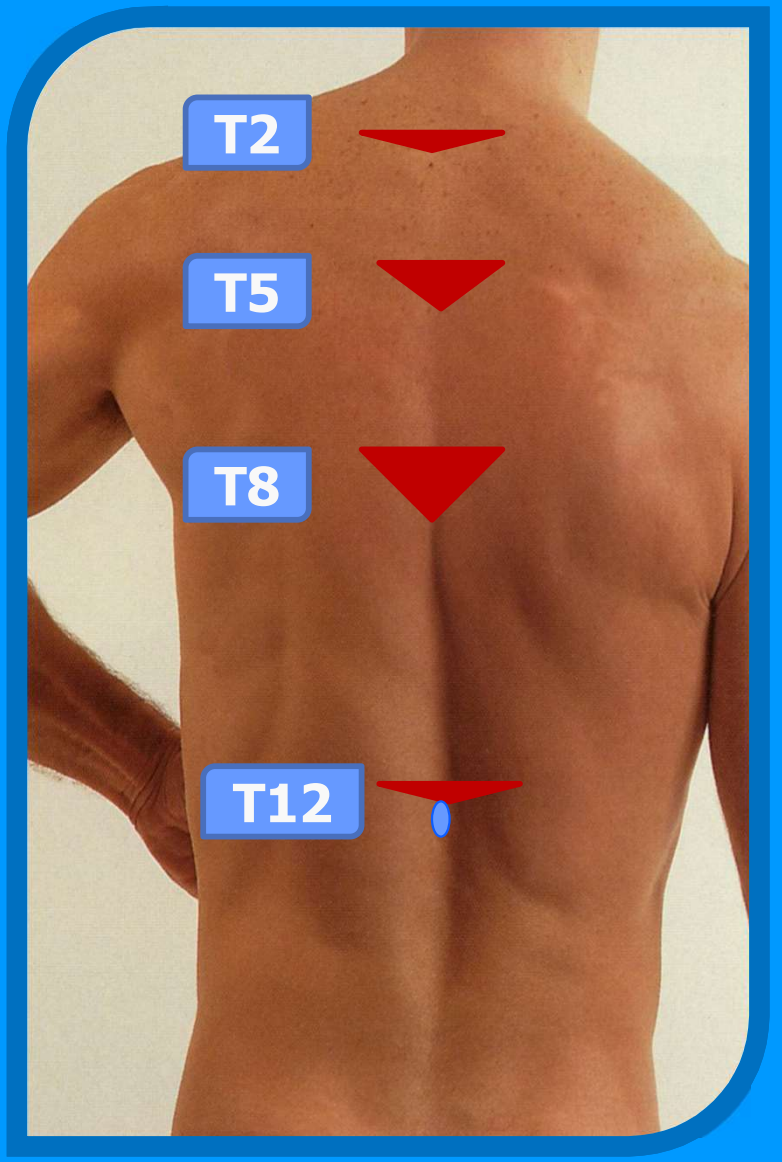


Practice: Rule of 3's (pt. prone)

(5:00)

(Doctor 1)

- **T1-3: transverse process at same level as spinous process**
- **T4-6: transverse process ½ level superior to spinous process**
- **T7-9: transverse process 1 level superior to spinous process**
- **T10: transverse process 1 level sup**
- **T11: transverse process ½ level sup**
- **T12: transverse process same level**



SCREENING TOOLS FOR SOMATIC DYSFUNCTION

-Tissue Texture Abnormalities

-Prone Springing

-Seated Rotation

-Seated Sidebending

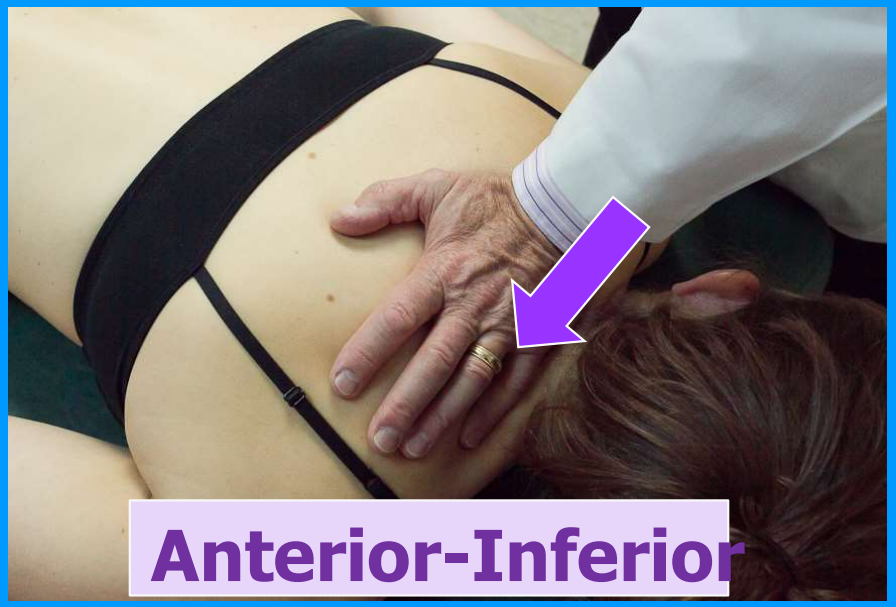
--Other…

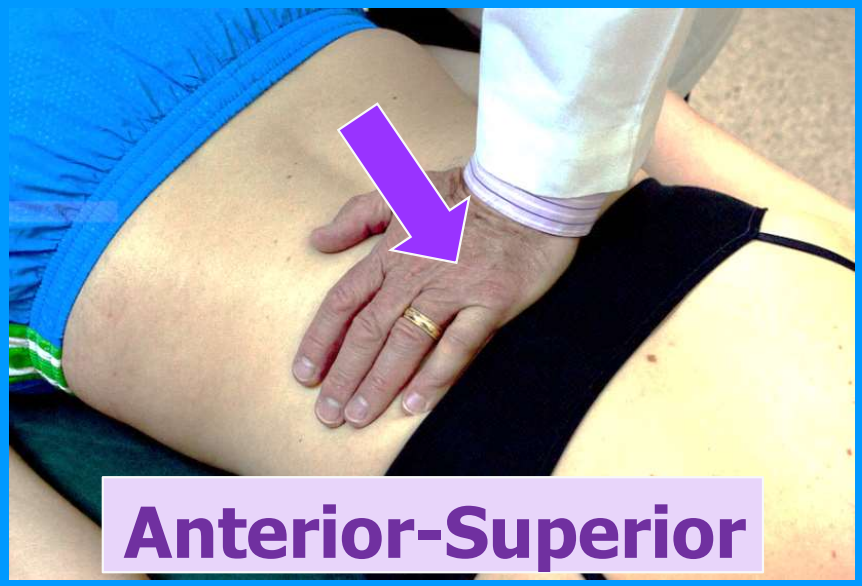
Screening for Simple Motion or Sagittal Plane Motion: Spinal Spring Test

- Patient prone
- Spring perpendicular to spinal segments
- Identify areas of resistance or enhanced motion

Demo: Spinal Spring Test

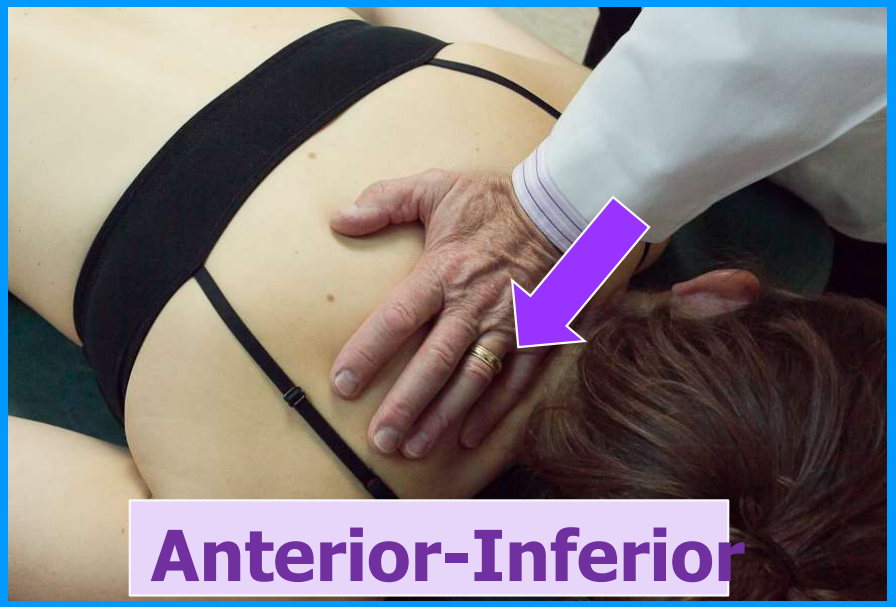
(spring at 90 deg. to curve & look for areas of resistance & name levels)

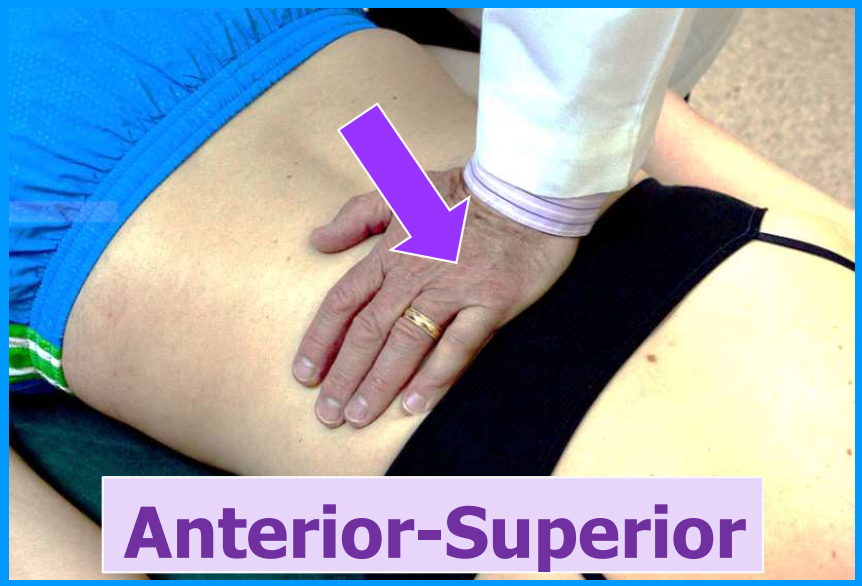




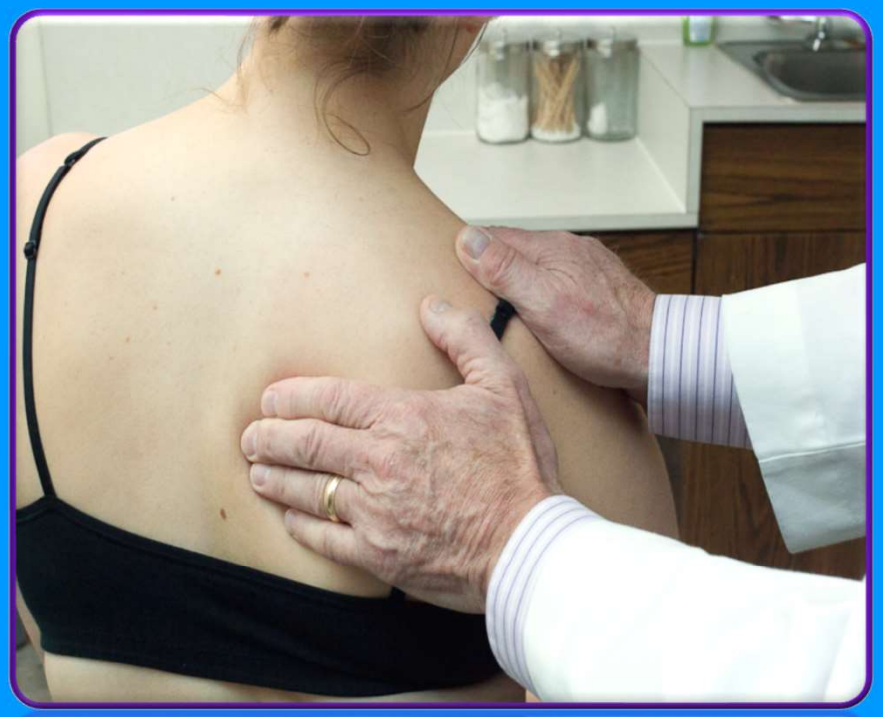
Practice: Spinal Spring Test (4:00)

(spring at 90 deg. to curve & look for areas of resistance & name levels) (Doctor 1)



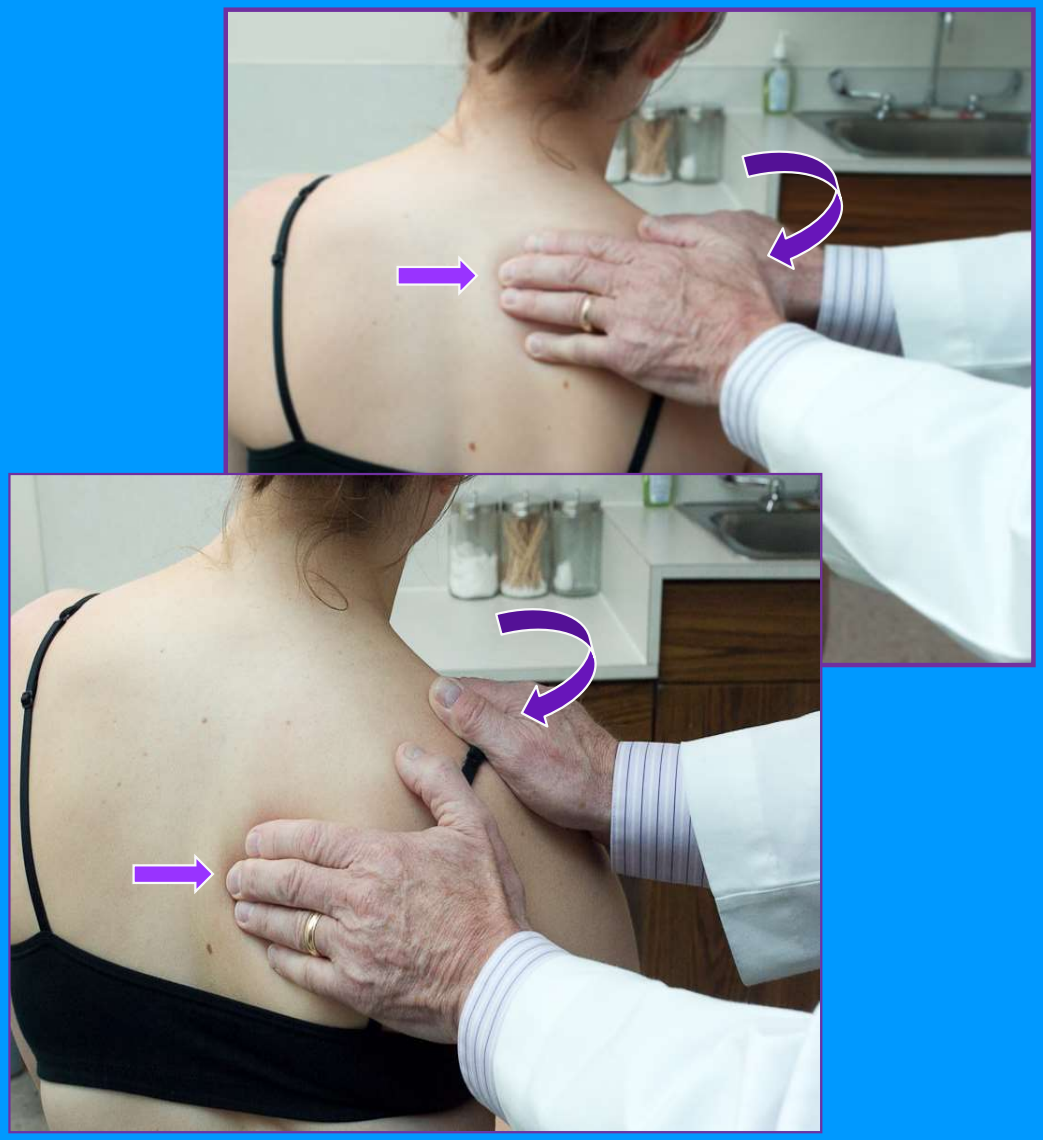


Screening for Compound Motion: Palpation Screen for Rotation



- Patient is seated in a natural posture
- Contact shoulder with superior hand, other hand palpating for rotation of the spine
- Direct rotation to segments being evaluated
- Identify areas of freedom or resistance to motion

Demo: Rotation Screen

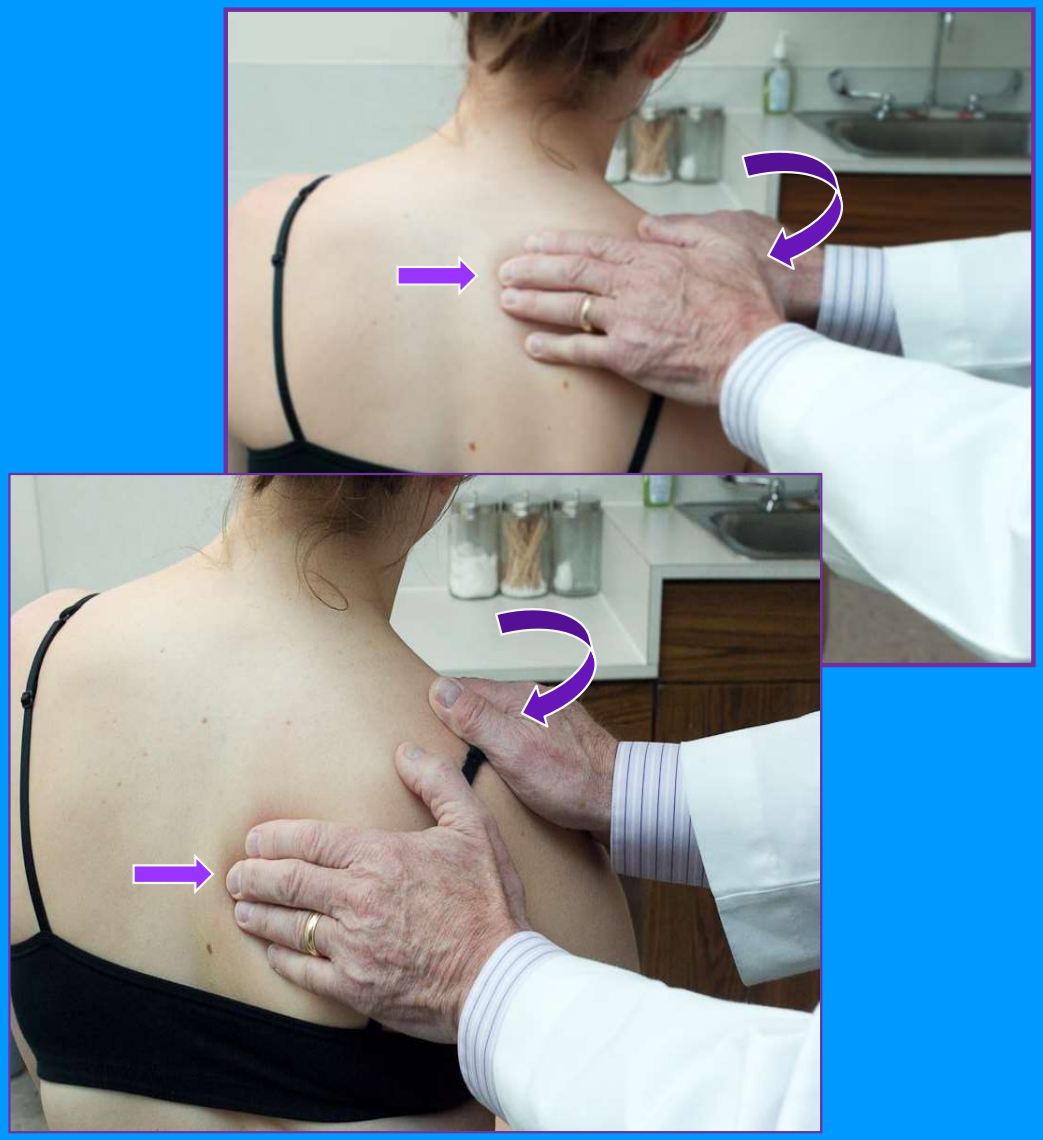


1. Superior hand directs rotation to segments being evaluated
2. other hand palpates for rotation along the ipsilateral spine at the SP or TP—is there resistance to motion?
3. Check both sides

Practice: Rotation Screen

(4:00)

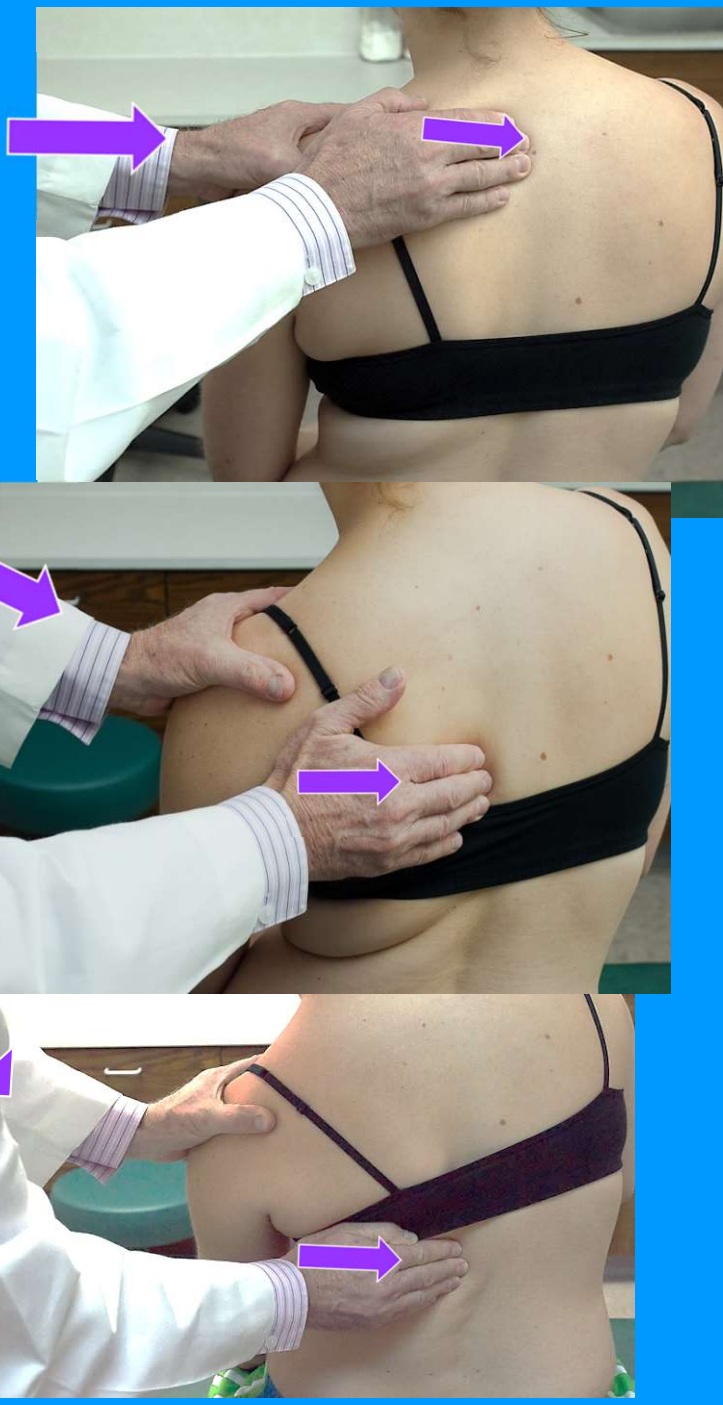
(Doctor 1)



1. Superior hand directs rotation to segments being evaluated
2. other hand palpates for rotation along the ipsilateral spine at the SP or TP—is there resistance to motion?
3. Check both sides

Demo:
Seated Sidebending Screen

1. Superior hand directs sidebending vectors progressively inferior
2. The other hand palpates for sidebending along the ipsilateral spinous process area
3. Vertebral segments approximate on the concave side and separate on the convex side
4. Identify areas of resistance to motion; repeat on other side



Practice:

(Doctor 1) (3:30)

Seated Sidebending Screen

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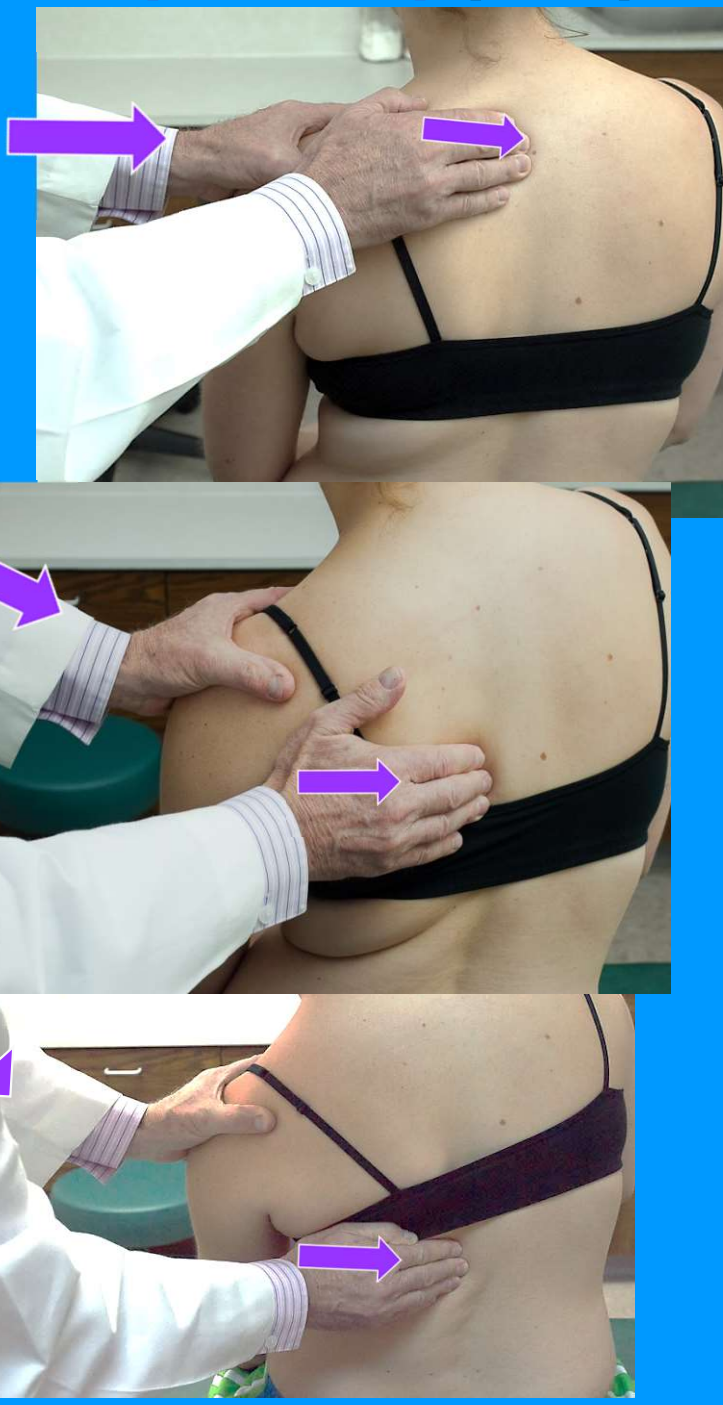
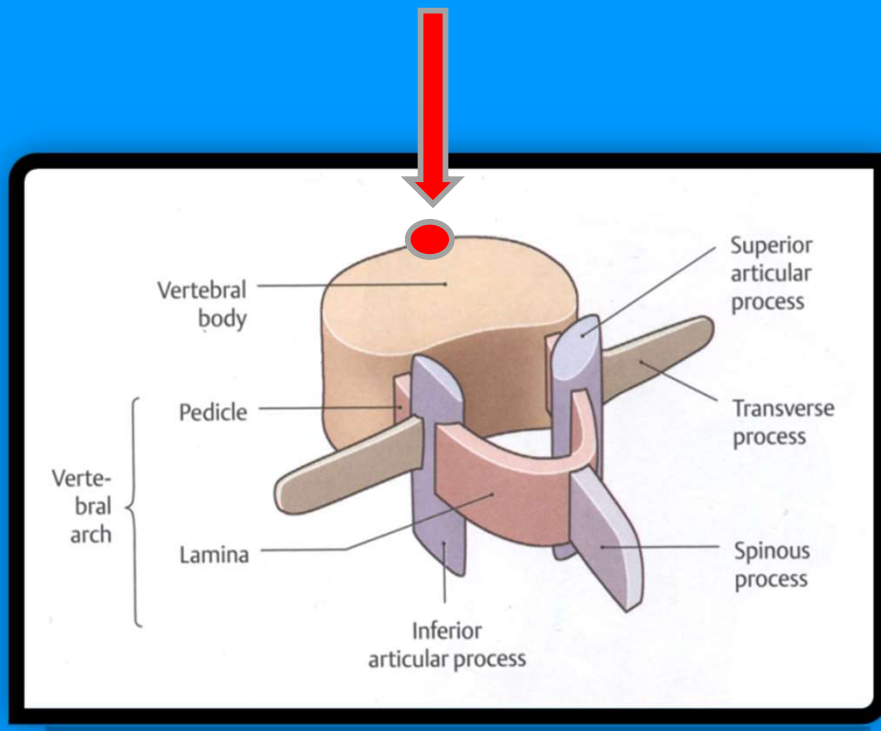
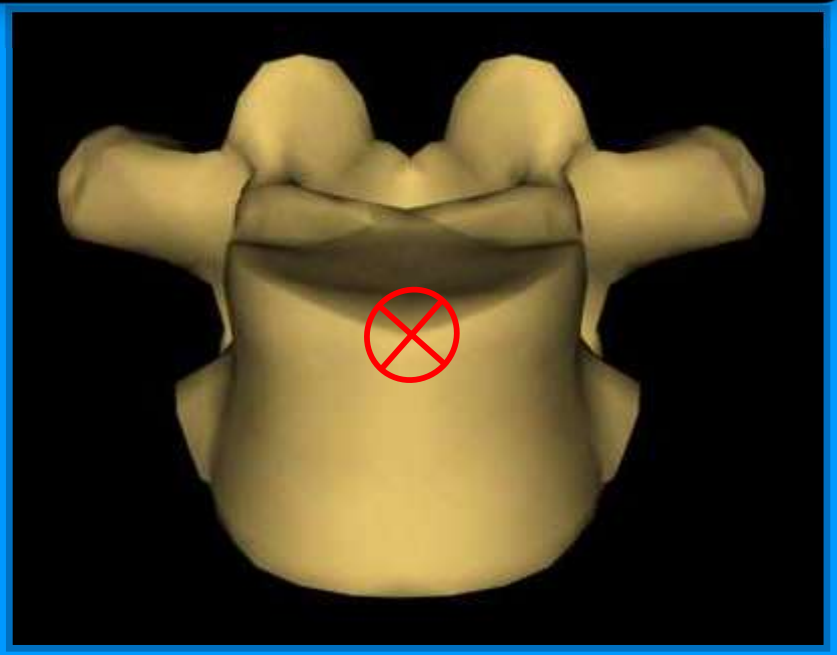


NOMENCLATURE

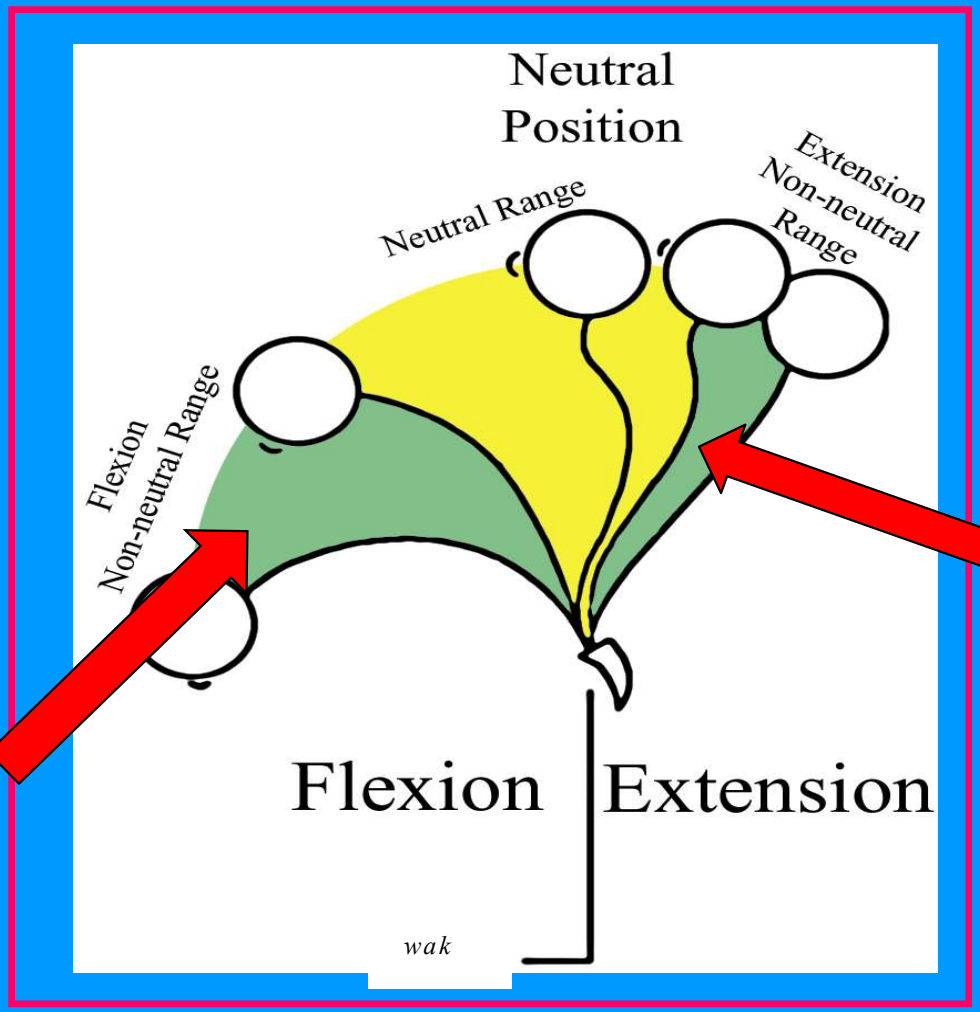
- In Osteopathic terminology and record keeping, motion of a bone is described from Anatomic Position
- Vertebral motion is named for a point on the most **SUPERIOR AND ANTERIOR** portion of the vertebral body
- Important for naming motion & somatic dysfunction





NEUTRAL & NON-NEUTRAL RANGES OF BODY POSITIONS:

FLEXION, NEUTRAL, EXTENSION

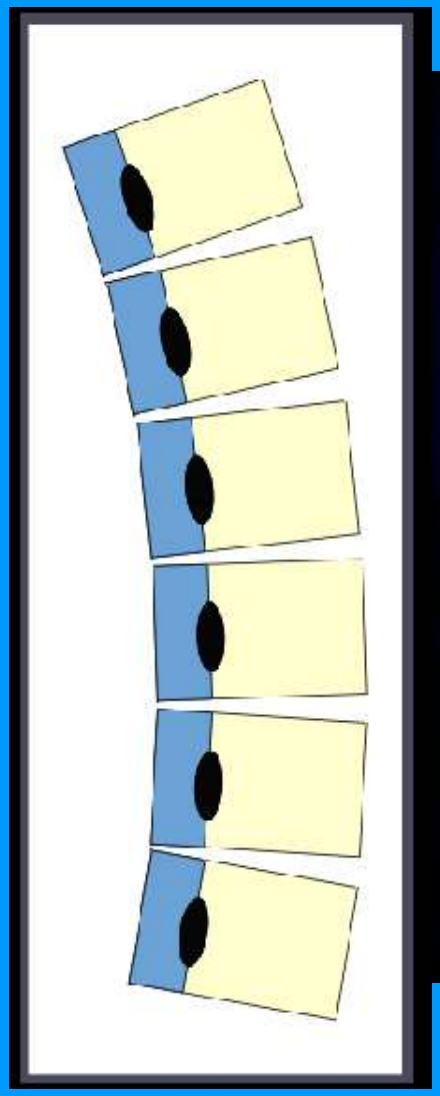


Non-neutral Flexion

Non-neutral Extension

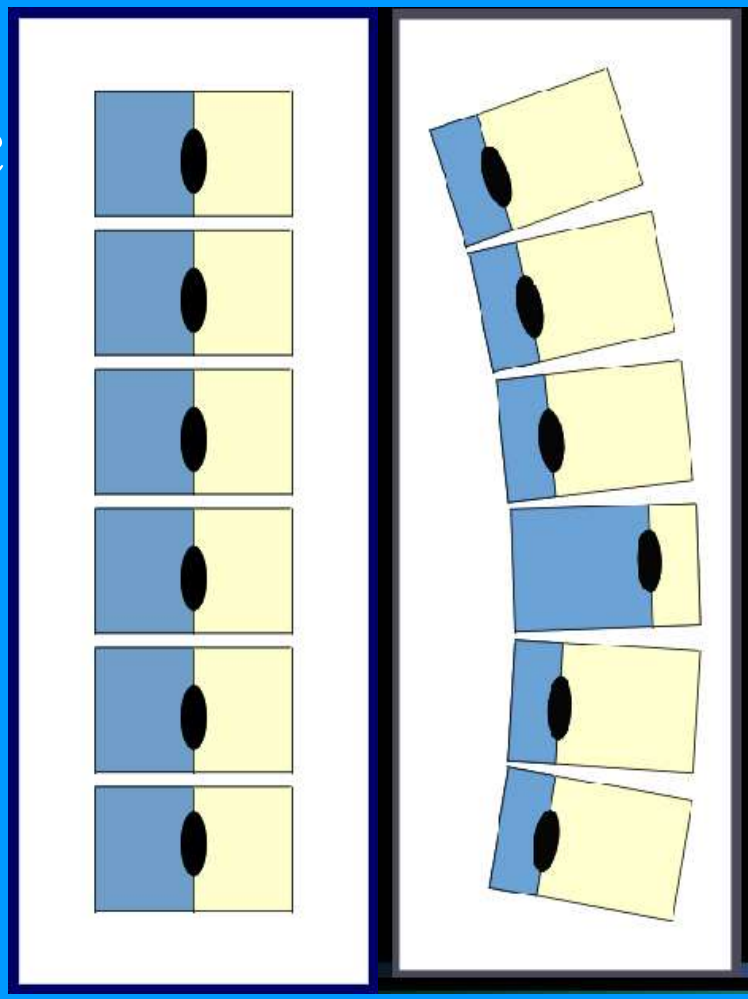
Normal Spinal Motion: Principle 1- Neutral Motion, Type I

- The figure depicts articulated spinal vertebrae displaying Neutral, Type I physiologic motion
- Sidebending and rotation occur in opposite directions-NS_LR_R



Normal Spinal Motion: Principle 2- Non-Neutral Motion, Type II

- The figure depicts articulated spinal vertebrae displaying Nonneutral, Type II physiologic motion
- When sagittal plane enters nonneutral range, rotation and sidebending occur in the same directions & commonly occur with a single segment located at the apex of the curve--FR_LS_L



MOTION TESTING - OVERVIEW

- **Passive Testing - evaluates sagittal, coronal, and horizontal plane motion with the spine in neutral position; (Pt. prone & doesn't move, you move the pt.)**

STEPS FOR SEGMENTAL MOTION TESTING

- Observe thoracic and lumbar spine
- Evaluate tissue texture changes, asymmetry, and temperature
- Screen with prone springing
- Passive testing (pt. prone)

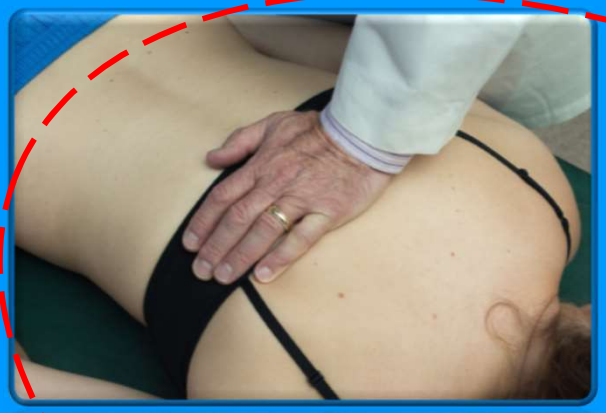
- Record results

MEDICAL RECORD KEEPING FORMAT (REVIEW)

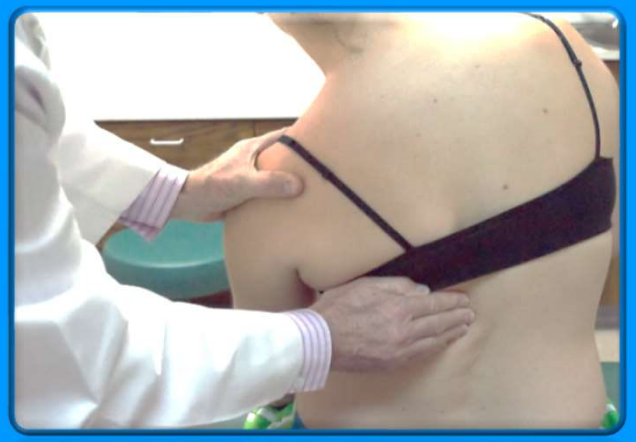
Describe:

- ✓ **Tissue texture changes**
- ✓ **Tenderness**
- ✓ **Vertebral level(s) involved**
- ✓ **Asymmetries of position**
- ✓ **Preference for Rotation, Sidebending and Sagittal plane**
- ✓ **Always include N for neutral preference**

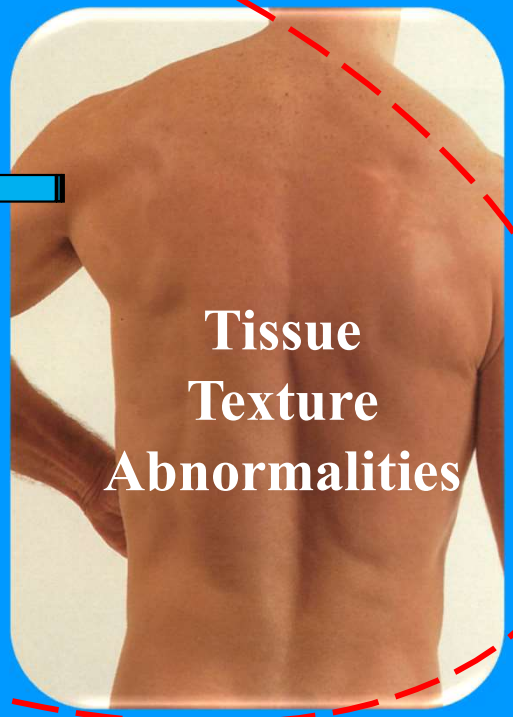
PALPATORY SCREENING FOR THORACIC SPINE--PASSIVE METHOD

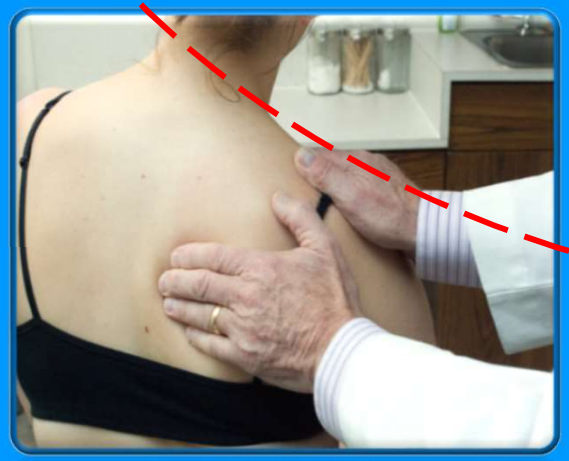


Spinal Spring Test



Sidebending: Thoracic





Rotation: Thoracic

PASSIVE MOTION TESTING FOR SOMATIC DYSFUNCTION

- Simple Motion – Flexion/Extension
- Compound or Coupled Motion – Biaxial or Triaxial

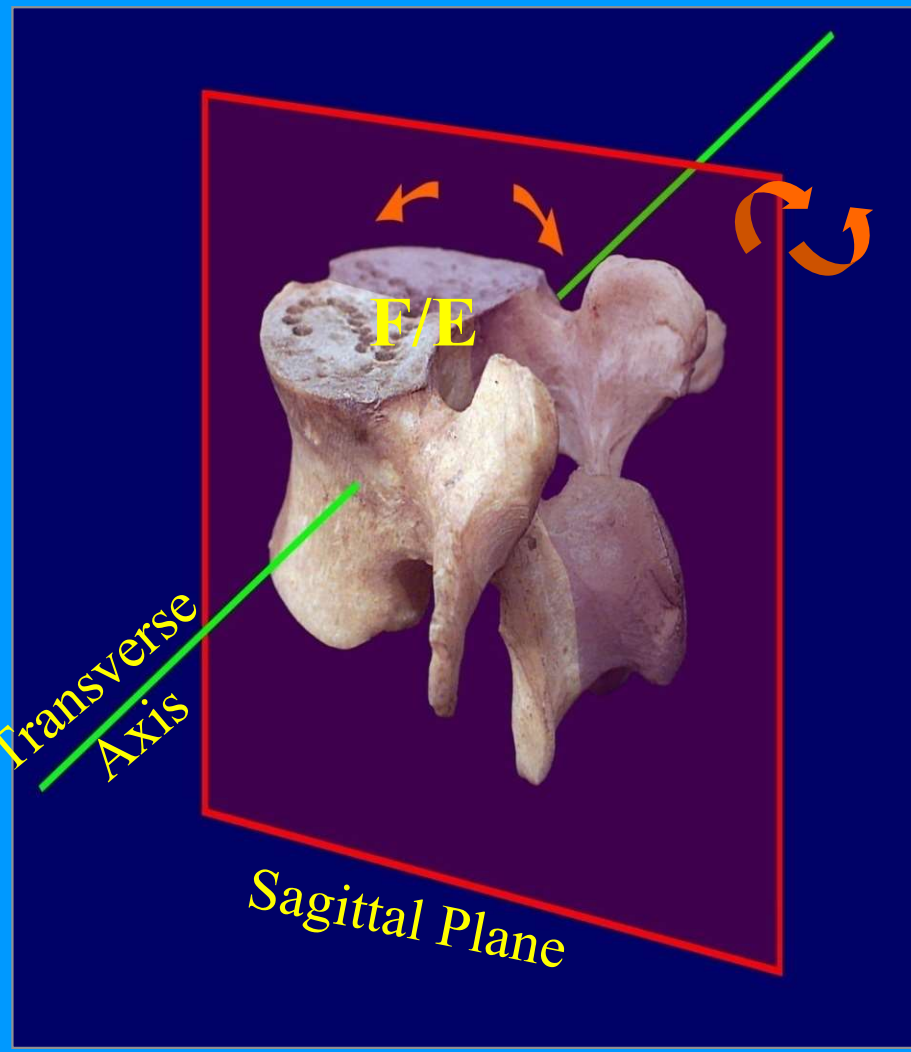
Perform **Passive Motion Testing** (prone pt. doesn't move, you move the pt.):

- Evaluate Flexion/extension (sagittal plane)
- Evaluate Rotation (horizontal plane)
- Evaluate Sidebending (coronal plane)

PASSIVE TESTING: FLEXION/EXTENSION

Evaluate sagittal plane motions (flexion/extension):

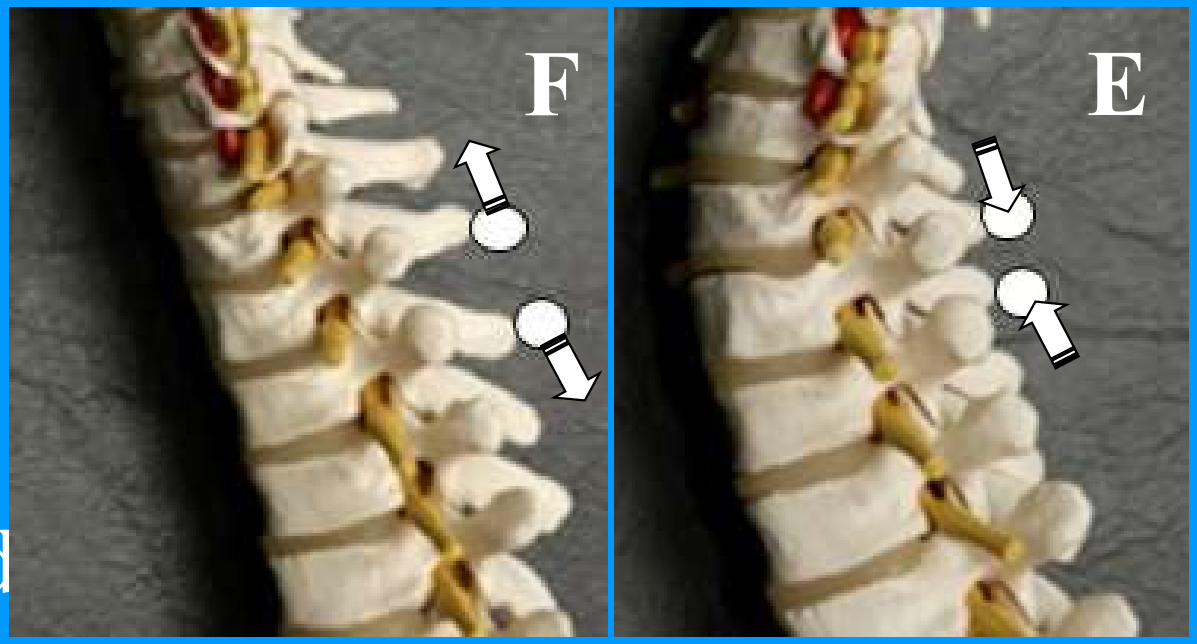
- **Operators finger pads on the tips of spinous processes (or interspaces)**
- **Forward/backward bending is induced and evaluated (sphinx for Thoracics)**
- **Asymmetric motion recorded for the way it likes to go: F or E (N for no preference)**



Demo:

Passive Motion Testing for Flexion/Extension

1. Operator's finger pads on the tips of spinous processes (or interspaces)
2. Forward/backward bending is induced and evaluated (sphinx for Thoracics)
3. Asymmetric motion recorded for the way it likes to go: F, E (N for no preference)



Practice:

(4:00)
(Doctor 1)

Passive Motion Testing for Flexion/Extension

1. Operator's finger pads on the tips of spinous processes (or interspaces)
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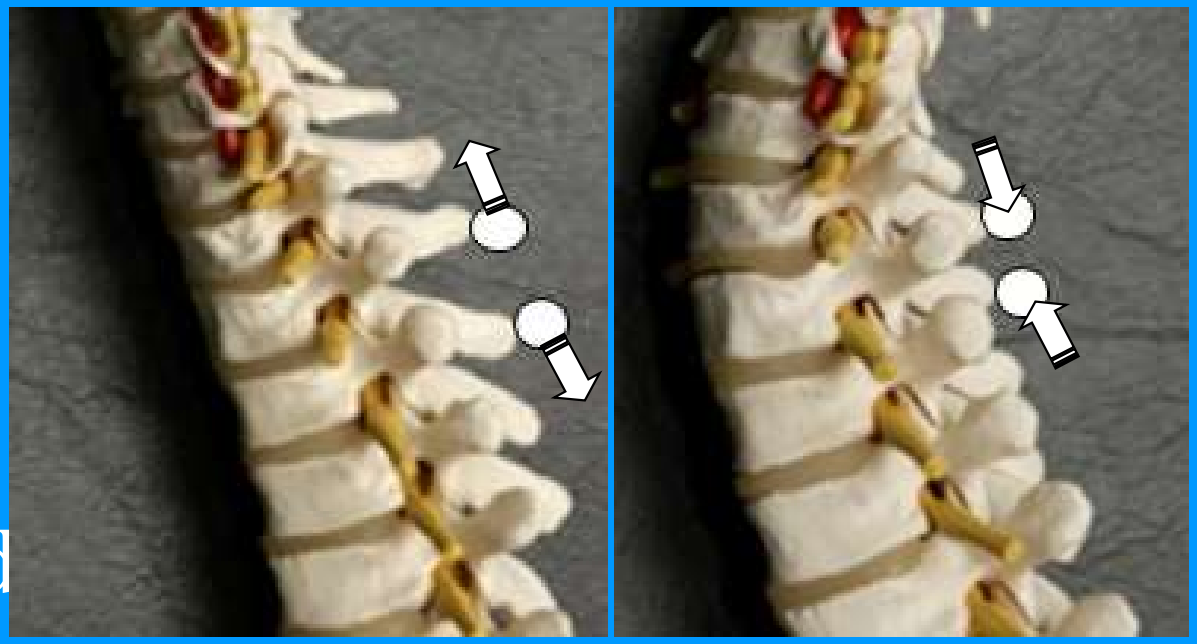
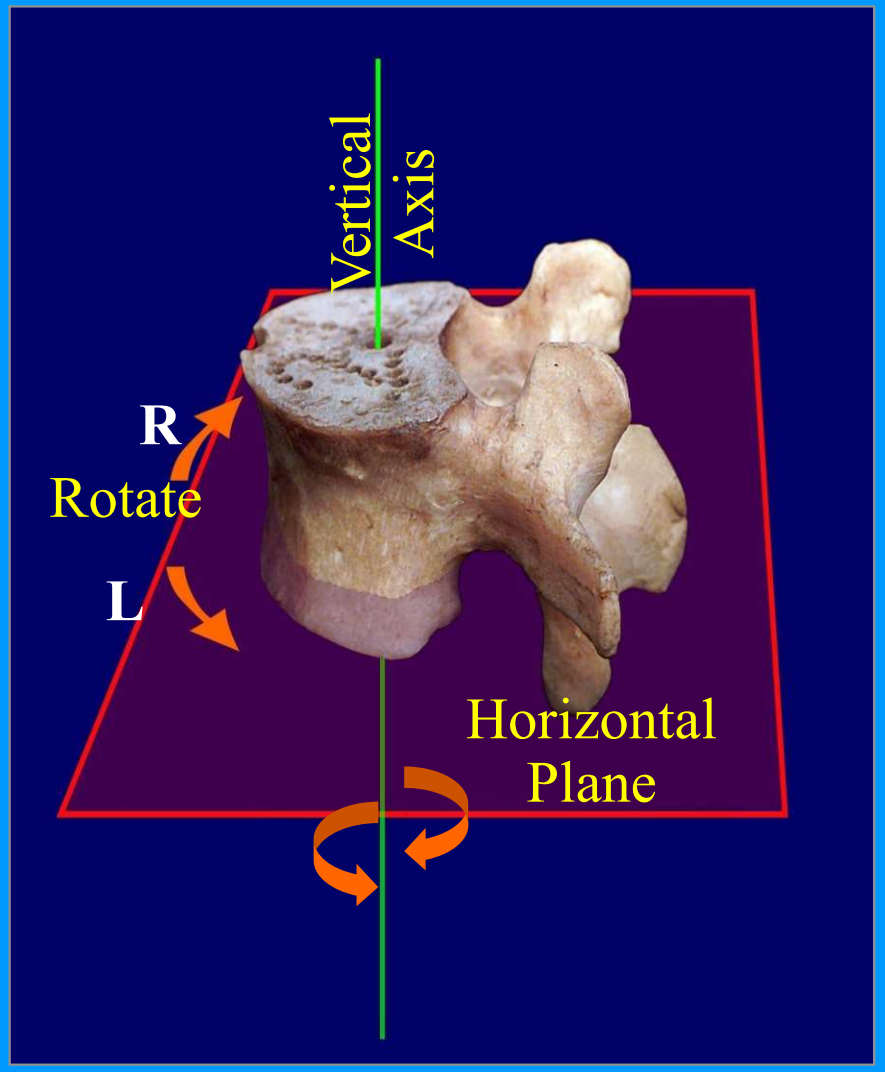


PASSIVE TESTING: ROTATION

To evaluate horizontal plane motions (rotation):

- **Operator's thumbs contact transverse processes**
- **Alternately press anteriorly to induce left and right rotation**
- **Asymmetric motion is recorded for the way it likes to go: R_R or R_L**



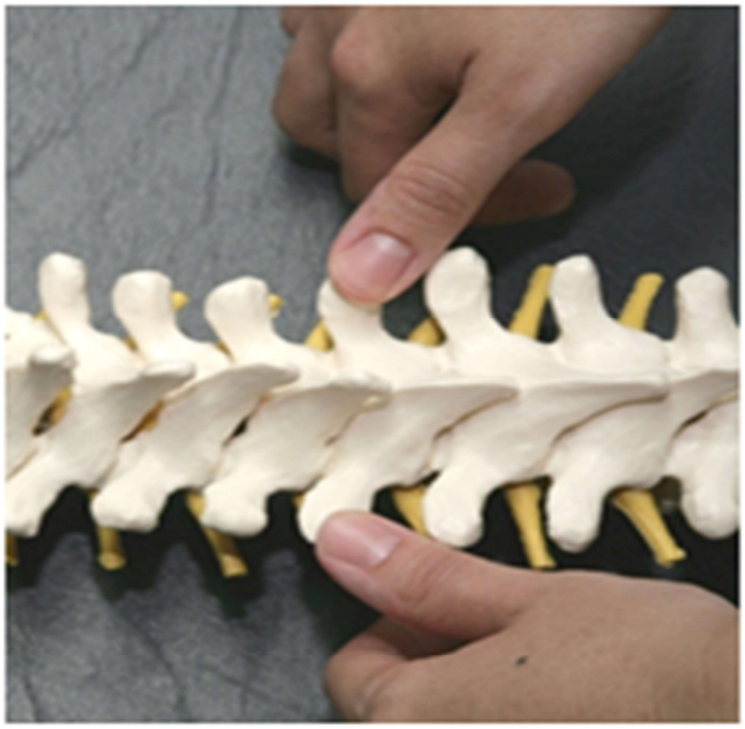
Demo:

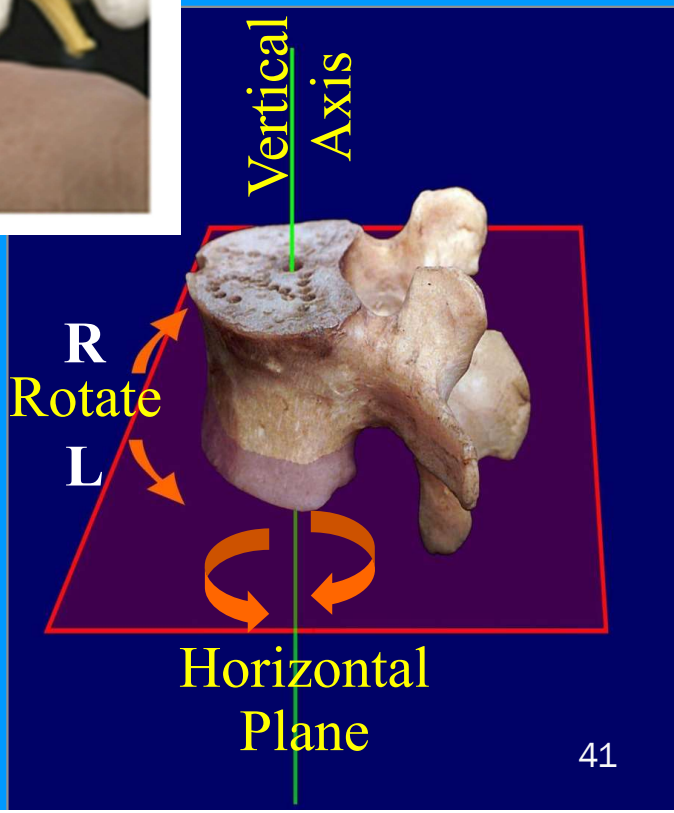
Passive (Prone) Testing for Rotation: R_R or R_L

1. Operator's thumbs contact transverse processes found in screening

2. Alternately press anteriorly to induce left and right rotation

3. Asymmetric motion is recorded for the way it likes to go: R_R or R_L





Practice:

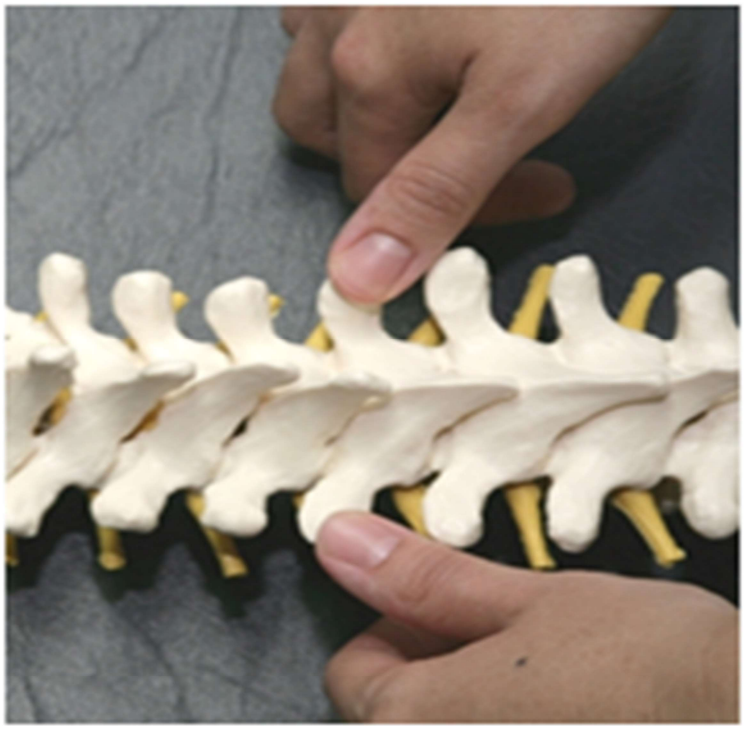
(5:00)
(Doctor 1)

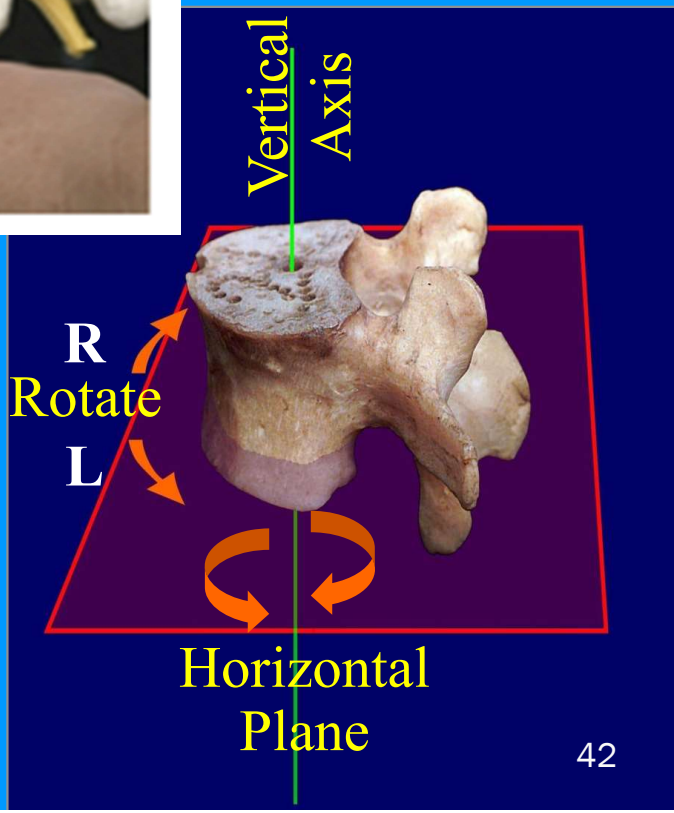
Passive (Prone) Testing for Rotation: R_R or R_L

1. Operator's thumbs contact transverse processes found in screening

2. Alternately press anteriorly to induce left and right rotation

3. Asymmetric motion is recorded for the way it likes to go: R_R or R_L

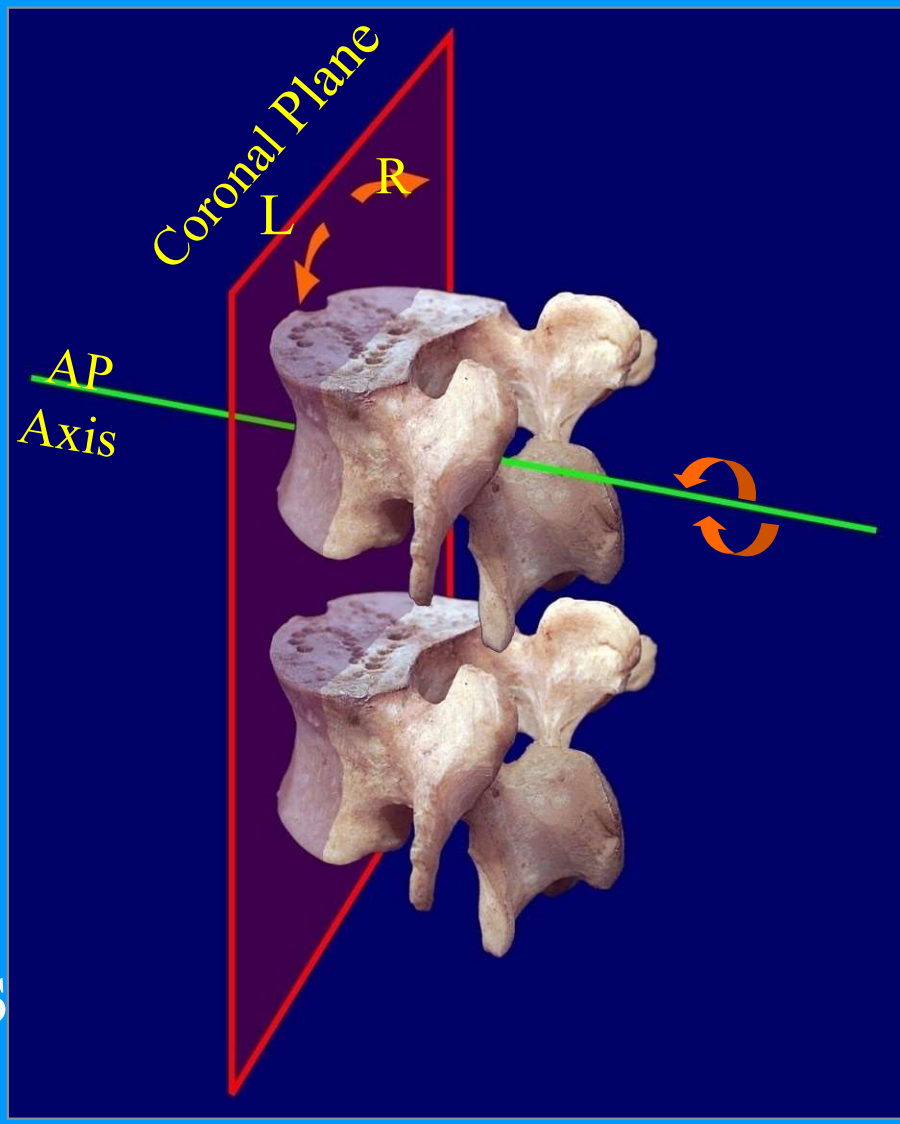




PASSIVE TESTING: SIDEBENDING

Evaluate coronal plane motions (sidebending):

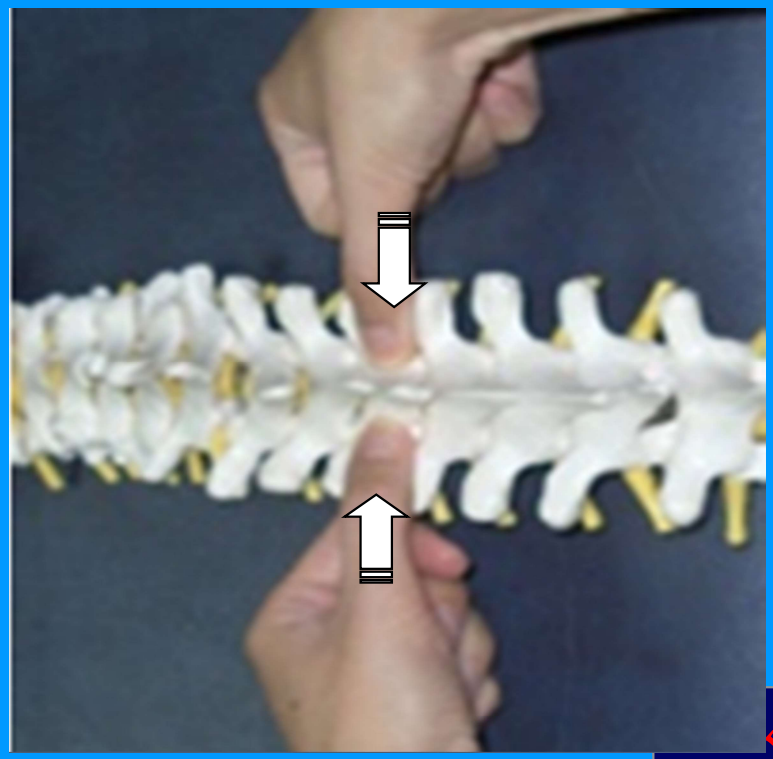
- **The operator's thumbs contact the facet junction (sl. inf. & med. to TP-base of the TP)**
- **Alternately press medially to induce left and right sidebending**
- **Asymmetric motion recorded for the way it likes to go: S_R or S_L**

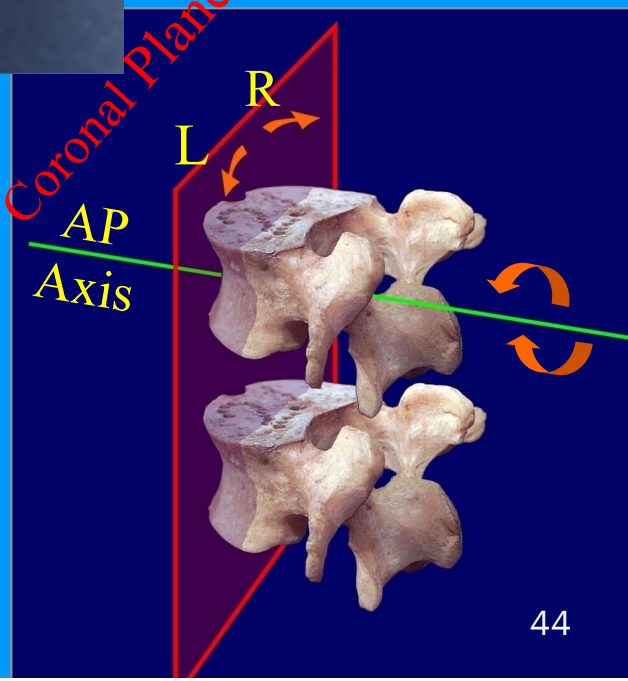


Demo:

Passive Motion Testing for Sidebending: S_R or S_L

1. The operator's thumbs contact the facet junction (sl. inf. & med. to tip of TP-base of the TP)
2. Alternately press medially to induce left and right sidebending
3. Asymmetric motion recorded for the way it likes to go: S_R or S_L



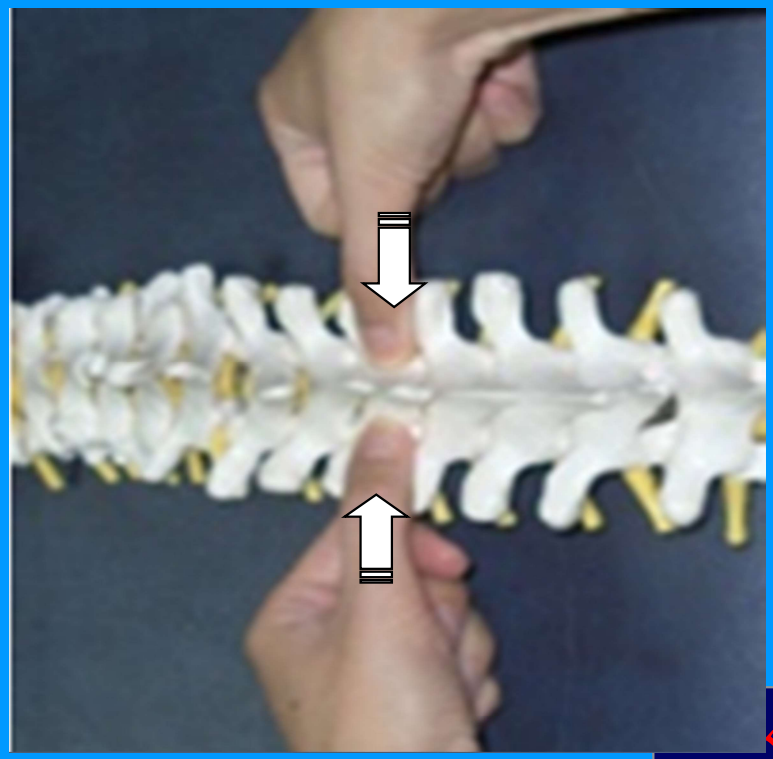


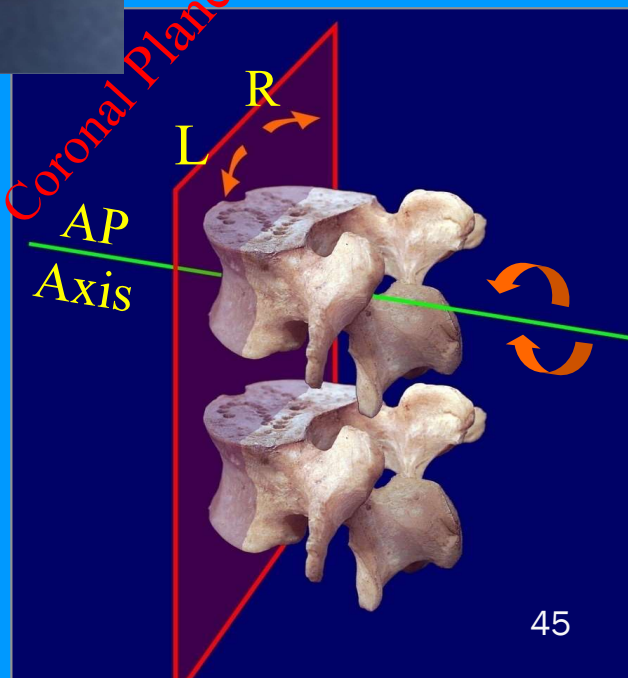
Demo/Practice:

(5:00)
(Doctor 1)

Passive Motion Testing for Sidebending: S_R or S_L

1. The operator's thumbs contact the facet junction (sl. inf. & med. to tip of TP-base of the TP)
2. Alternately press medially to induce left and right sidebending
3. Asymmetric motion recorded for the way it likes to go: S_R or S_L





TYPICAL NOMENCLATURE FOR SOMATIC DYSFUNCTION: PASSIVE TESTING METHOD

- **Type I dysfunction:** ***NSxRy =neutral, sidebent and rotated in opposite directions;***
  eg. NS_RR_L= Neutral, Sidebent Right, Rotated Left; (usually found in groups of 3 or more)
- **Type II dysfunction :** ***(F or E)RxSx=flexed or extended, rotated and sidebent in the same directions;***
  eg. $FR_R\ S_R$ = Flexed, Rotated Right, Sidebent Right; (usually one segment, maybe 2)
- **Sagittal plane dysfunction:** ***F or E=Flexed or extended;*** **eg. T4 Flexed; (one or groups)**

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THESE DIAGNOSES?

- T7 N $R_L S_L$
- F $R_L S_L$
- T9 F $R_L S_R$
- T4-7 N $R_L S_R$

PARTING SHOT

Passive Testing Method:

- *Asymmetry and restriction of motion*, along with tissue texture changes and tenderness indicate dysfunction
- The conclusions of triaxial motion testing are recorded using standard nomenclature
- Both Type I and II dysfunction can be determined
- Type I dysfunction is commonly found, however, Type II dysfunction may be more painful or clinically significant
- All diagnoses named for the way they like to go!!

REFERENCES:

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- Kimberly, P.; Outline of Osteopathic Manipulative Procedures: Kimberly Manual, 2006 Edition (updated 2008)
- Netter, Frank H.: Atlas of Human Anatomy 7th edition, Hoechstetter Printing Company Inc., New York, New York, 2018

Grievance Policy

All grievances should be in writing and should specify the nature of the grievance. Initially, all grievances should be directed to MAOPS Executive Director, who will then forward said grievance to the Education & Convention Committee. All grievances will receive an initial response in writing within 30 days of receipt. If the participant does not receive a satisfactory response, then they can then submit a complaint in writing to the Bureau of Osteopathic Education of the AOA at 142 East Ontario Street, Chicago, IL 60611.