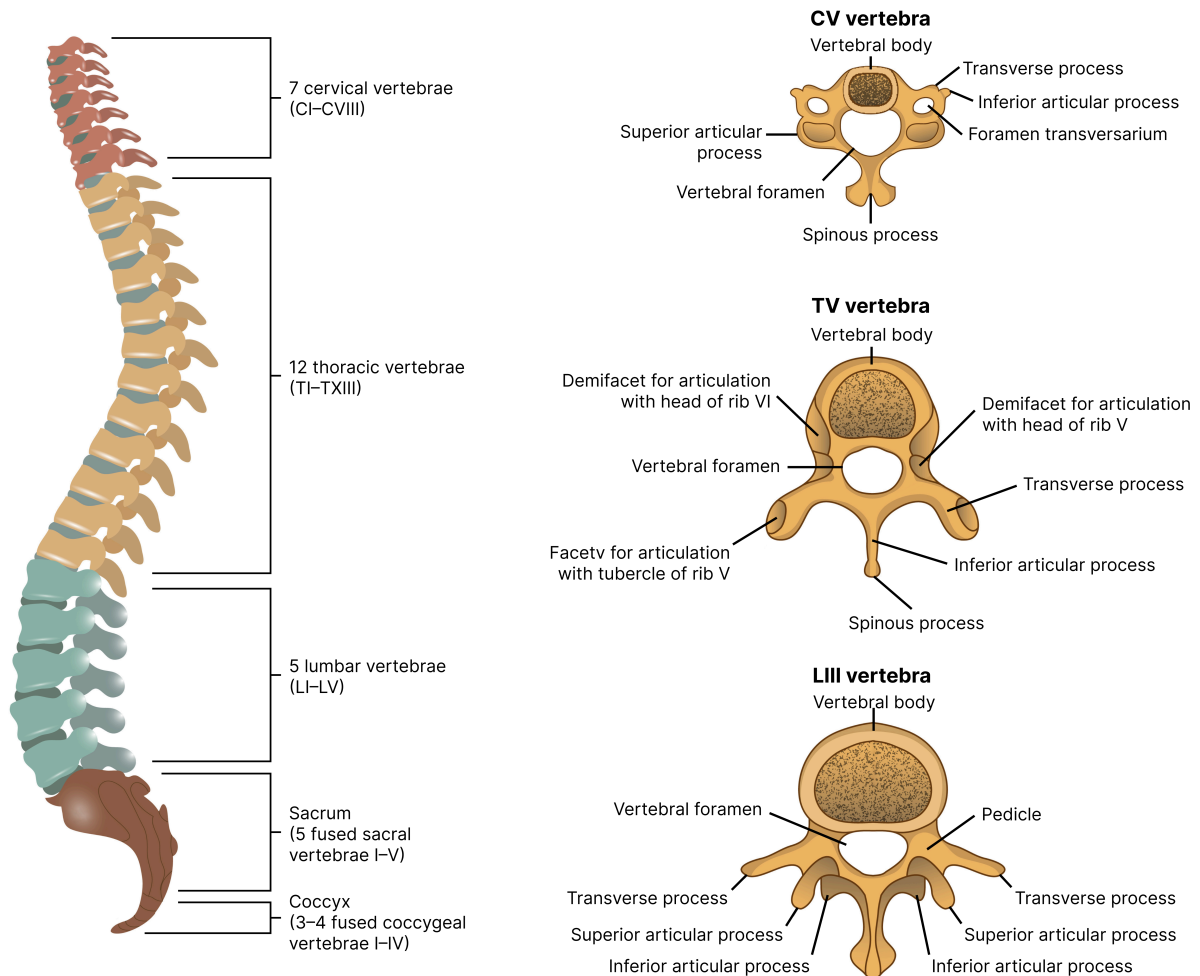


Thoracic Spine Anatomy Diagram



An integral spinal column segment, the thoracic spine, is located in the center between the cervical spine or cervical vertebrae (neck) and the lumbar spine or lumbar vertebrae (lower back). It starts from the base of the neck to the bottom of the ribs and comprises 12 vertebrae, labeled T1 through T12.

Roles of the thoracic spine

- **Protection:**
The thoracic spine safeguards the spinal cord and nerves that branch out from it. These are the main conduits for transmitting signals between the brain and other parts of the body.
- **Support:**
Each thoracic vertebra serves as an attachment point for the ribs and forms a protective cage around the chest and abdomen, consequently supporting the particular vital organs.
- **Movement:**
The discs between the vertebrae enable a degree of flexibility, allowing movements such as twisting and bending, which are essential for various daily activities.

Key anatomical features

- **Vertebral bodies:**

Vertebral bodies are the thick, cylindrical parts of each vertebra that are stacked up, separated by intervertebral discs, that bear most of the body's weight. Each vertebral body plays a crucial role, in weight-bearing, support, and other structural functions.

- **Intervertebral discs:**

Intervertebral discs, which act as cushioning pads, are located between each pair of vertebrae. Each intervertebral disc allows for flexibility and movement, absorbing shock and reducing friction between vertebrae.

- **Facet joints:**

Facet joints are cartilaginous joints that allow the sliding of vertebrae which helps with stability and flexibility.

- **Spinous processes:**

Spinal processes are bony projections that extend posteriorly from each vertebra. Not only do they serve as attachment points for muscles and ligaments for movement and spine stability, but they also offer additional protection to the spinal cord.

Notes

Reference

Crawley, A. (2021, August 25). *Thoracic spine: Unlocking the cranky upper back*. M.R.S Physiotherapy. <https://www.mrsphysiotherapy.nz/physiotips/2021/8/25/thoracic-spine-unlocking-the-cranky-upper-back>