

THE HUMAN SKELETON

From your head to your toes, your skeleton acts like a framework inside your body. It is made of both bone and cartilage, and it has three main functions:

Support
keeps the body upright

Protection
protects the internal organs

Movement
allows movement of the body

Our bones meet at joints which bend in different ways to allow us to move. Read on to learn more, and perhaps you'll discover something that might surprise you about your own body!

Because of the shoulder joint, it is possible for the arm to move in a complete circle.

A baby is born with between 270-300 bones, yet this shrinks to 206 in adulthood.



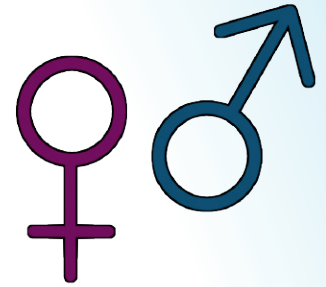
270-300 bones

206 bones

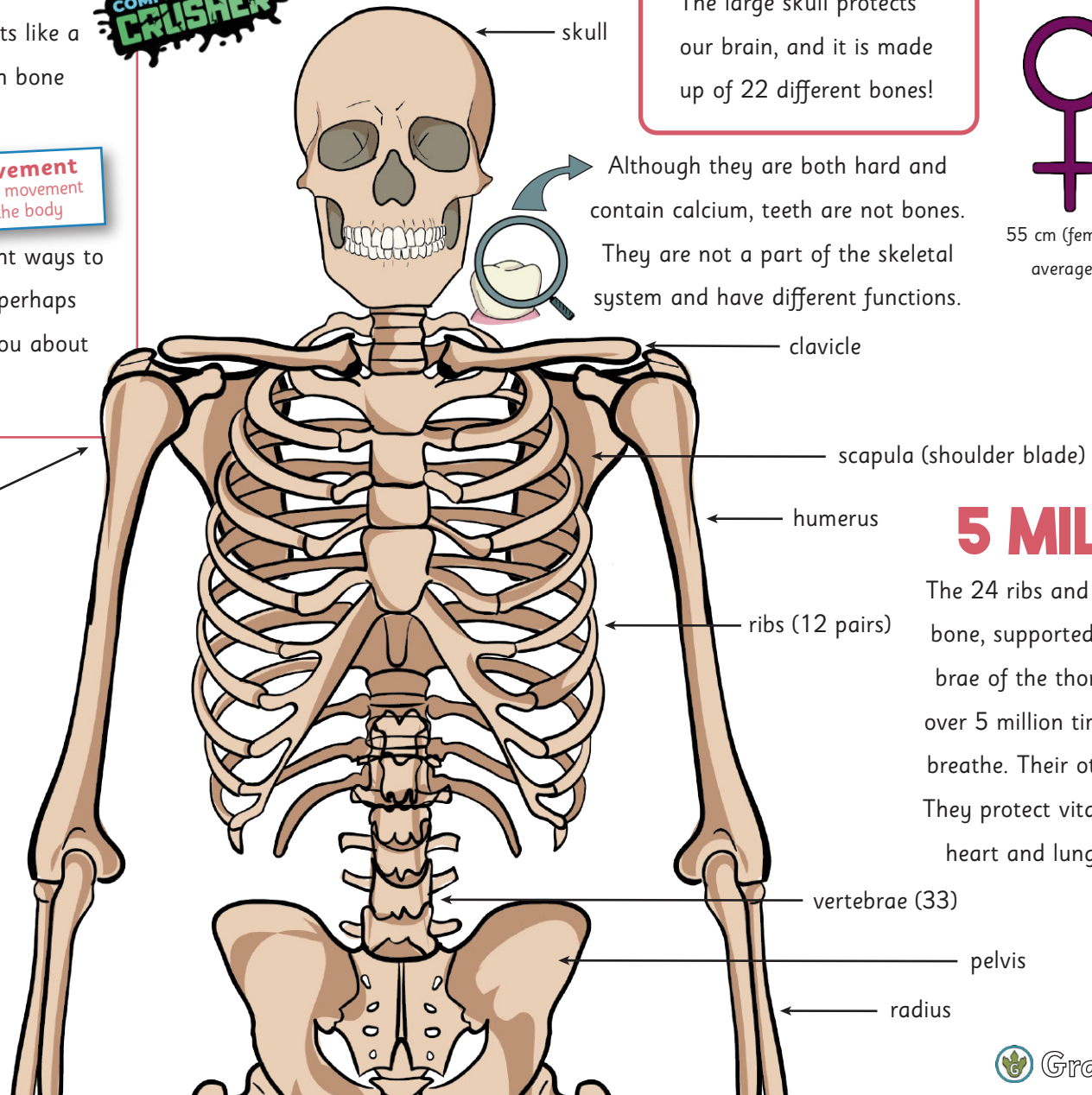


The large skull protects our brain, and it is made up of 22 different bones!

Although they are both hard and contain calcium, teeth are not bones. They are not a part of the skeletal system and have different functions.



55 cm (female) 57 cm (male)
average skull circumference



5 MILLION

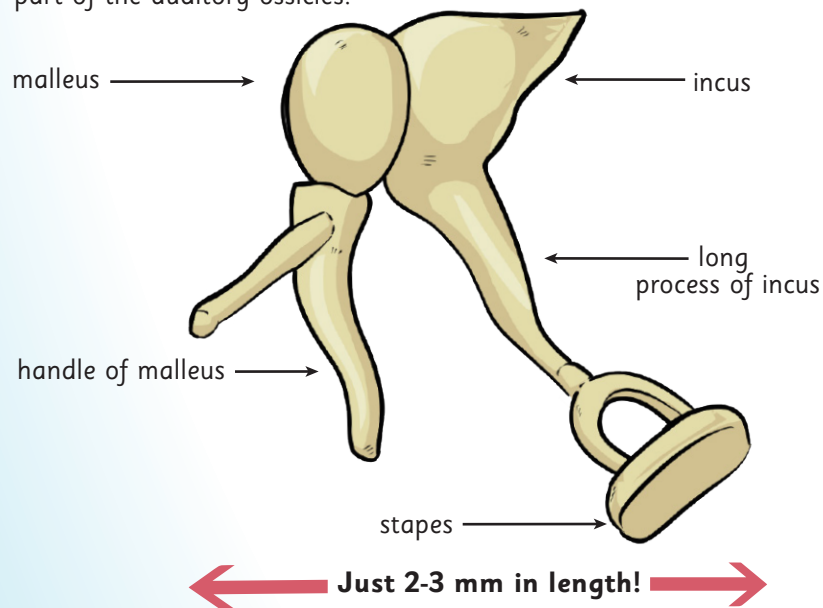
The 24 ribs and three-part breast-bone, supported by the 12 vertebrae of the thoracic spine, move over 5 million times a year as you breathe. Their other job is crucial. They protect vital organs like your heart and lungs in your chest.

Did you know? Babies are born with soft kneecaps made of bendy cartilage. As they grow, these kneecaps slowly turn into hard bone.

LITTLE AND LARGE

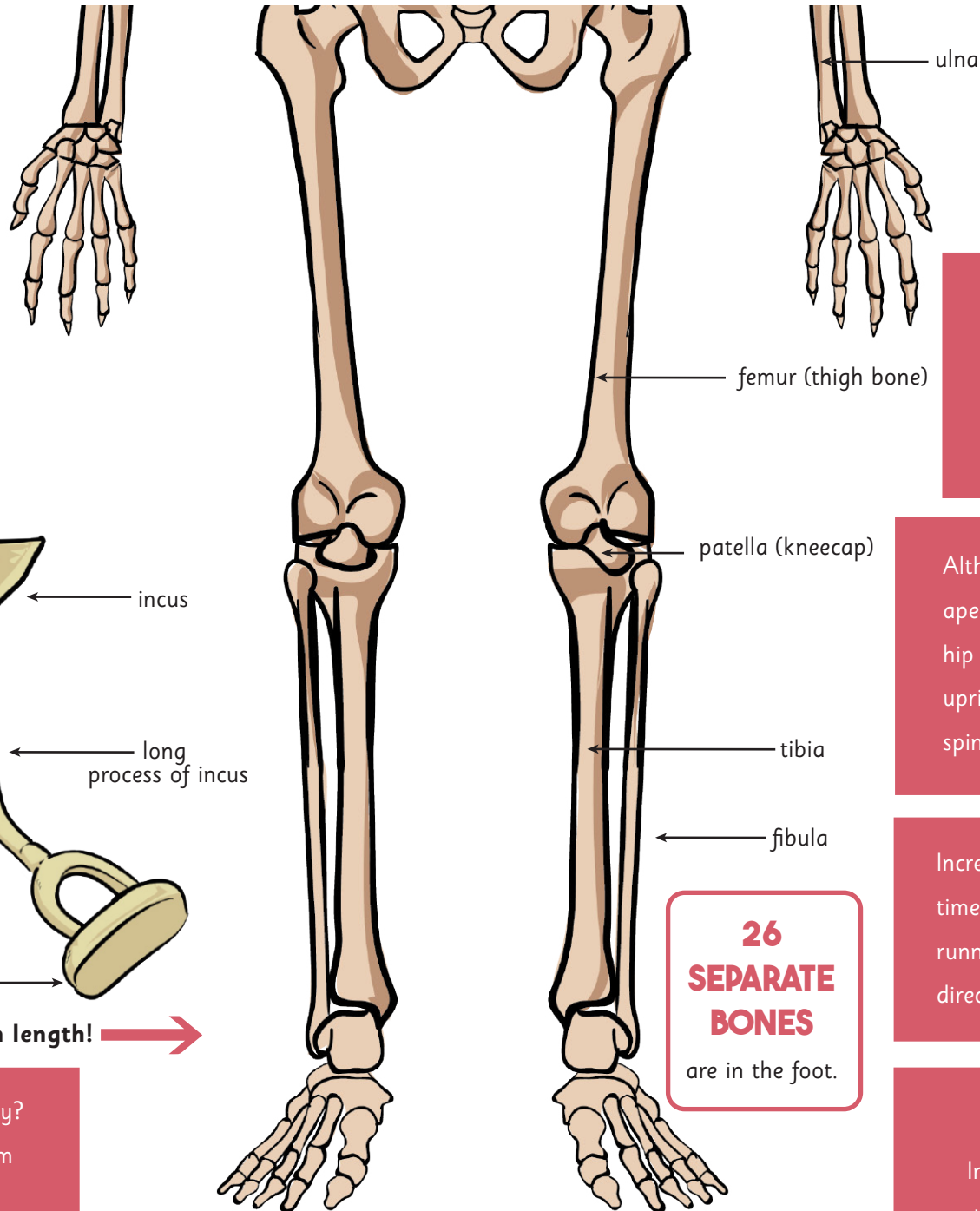
The femur, or thigh bone, is the longest bone in your body. It makes up about a quarter of your height. A 6 ft man could have a 50 cm thigh bone!

The smallest bone in the human body is in the inner ear, called the stapes, and it's part of the auditory ossicles.



How can you keep your skeleton healthy?

- a healthy diet with plenty of calcium
- vitamin D from the sun
- regular exercise
- keep to a healthy weight



27 BONES

are in an adult hand (including the wrist).

Because the shoulder, wrist and forearm can move and twist, the hand can move to almost any position around your body!

Although monkeys and some other apes can walk on two legs, humans' hip bones have adapted to walk upright all the time with both the spine and legs straight!

Incredibly, the knee can support five times the human body's weight when running. It can bend in only one direction.

26 SEPARATE BONES

are in the foot.

DID YOU KNOW?

Inside our bones is a soft, spongy tissue called bone marrow. Bone marrow produces the cells that become our blood cells.