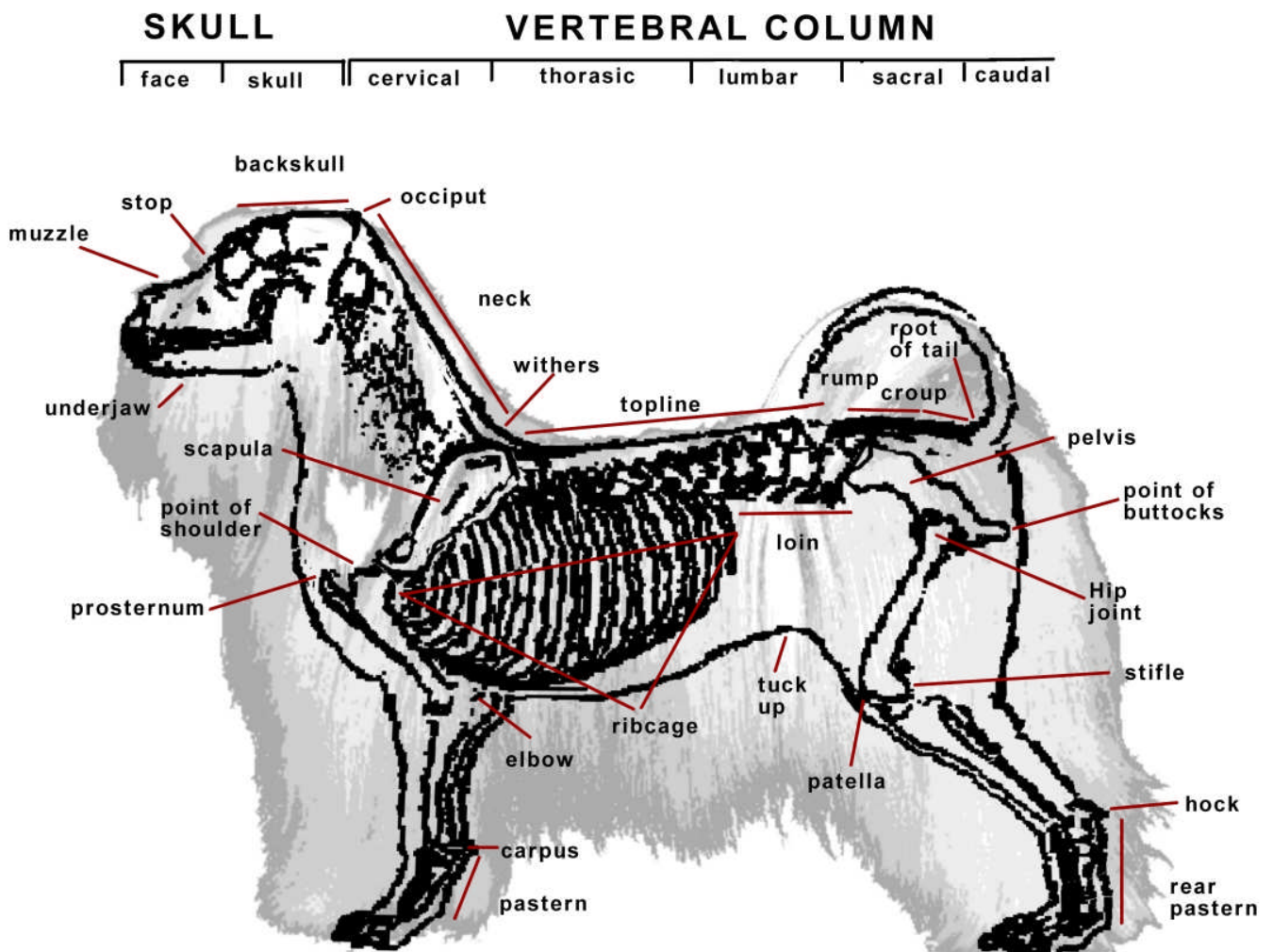


The same terms as those developed by old time livestock breeders (particularly of horses) carry over to the description of canine anatomy with only minor changes. Certain terms were developed to have special meanings.



Nb. For illustration only – diagram not complete and not perfectly to scale. The shadowed coated outline is of an average Havanese in size and proportion.

The Skull or head is comprised of two parts

- 1) the face which includes from the tip of the nose to the stop
- 2) the backskull which is from the stop to the occiput

The canine spinal anatomy is very similar to ours, with the exception of 1 additional thoracic vertebra and 2 additional lumbar vertebra and a variable number of coccygeal(caudal) vertebrae. The spinal column is made up of five major vertebral regions: cervical (neck), thoracic (upper/mid back), lumbar (lower back), sacral (pelvic) and coccygeal(tail).

- 1) 7 cervical vertebra form the neck – from the occiput to the withers . The last of the cervical vertebrae and the first of the thoracic vertebrae are down between the shoulder blades. The withers is a transition stage between the neck's relatively upright carriage and the more horizontal back area.
- 2) 13 thoracic vertebra form the main part of the torso support and are attached to the rib cage
- 3) 7 lumbar vertebrae form the lower back area - These vertebrae are very sturdy in construction, as they support more weight and movement than other vertebrae. They allow for supple flexion and extension, lateral flexion (sidebending), and also some rotation.
- 4) The 3 sacral vertebrae form the rump/croup of the dog from the front of the pelvis to the tail set
- 5) The coccygeal vertebrae are the bones forming the tailbone and tail. Many animals, including dogs have a greater number of "tail vertebrae" than humans and they are more commonly known as caudal vertebrae. The canine tail consists of 6 to 23 highly mobile vertebrae.

Some common anatomy terms

- Abdomen** – Body Cavity between the chest and pelvis
- Angulation** – the angle which is formed by the meeting of bones at a joint
- Back** – Region between the withers and root of tail
- Belly** – under part of abdomen
- Bite** – the relative position of the upper and lower teeth when the mouth is closed
- Buttocks** – rear of the upper thigh
- Carpals** – Bones of the wrist
- Chest** – the forepart of the body/ trunk that is enclosed by the ribs
- Croup** - The rear part of the rump extending to the root of the tail. The croup consists of the fused sacral vertebrae, that form the roof of the pelvis, and the first few caudal vertebrae of the tail. Some use the terms rump and croup interchangeably.
- Dentition** – the number and arrangement of the teeth
- Elbow** – the joint between the upper arm and forearm
- Flank** – The side of the body between the last rib and the hip
- Floating Rib** – the last (13th) rib which is unattached to other ribs
- Forearm** – the bones of the forelegs between the elbow and the carpus (wrist)
- Forechest** – the front part of the chest
- Foreleg** – the front leg from elbow to foot
- Forequarters** – the front of the dog, excluding the head and the neck
- Hind Leg** – Rear leg from the pelvis to the foot
- Hindquarters** – rear part of dog from the loin
- Keel** – Breast bone – sternum
- LayBack** – the angle of the shoulder blade when viewed from the side
- Loin** – the region of the body either side of the vertebral column, unsupported by ribs, between the last rib and the hindquarters – anterior thigh muscles
- Mandible** – the lower jawbone
- Metatarsals** – bones between hock joint and the foot
- Muzzle** – the foreface - head in front of the eyes, which includes the nasal bone, nostrils & jaws
- Neck** – the part between the skull and the withers
- Occiput** – the upper, back point of the skull
- Pastern** – the region of the foreleg between the carpus(wrist) and the toes
- Patella** – Kneecap – in front of the stifle joint
- Pelvis** – a framework of bones formed by the pelvic arch
- Pin Bone** – the upper bony protuberance of the pelvis
- Point of Buttock** – rear most point of the buttocks – anatomically called the Ischium
- Point of Hip** – Front most point of the Hip and Pelvis
- Point of Shoulder** – Joint where the upper arm meets the scapula
- Prosternum** – front most upper point of the sternum – anatomically called the Manubrium
- Rear pastern** - the region of the rear leg between the hock and toes
- Roach back** – a convex curvature of the back towards the loin
- Rump** – The rear part of the back from the front of the pelvis to the root of the tail (includes the croup) – some references consider the rump to be the entire fleshy area surrounding the pelvic girdle extending from the front most point of the hip to the rearmost point of the buttocks.
- Scapula** – Shoulder blade
- Shoulder height** – the height of a dog's body as measured vertically from the withers to the ground
- Skull** – bony regions of the head – Cranium - section of head from stop to occiput
- Spring of ribs** – degree of curvature of the ribs.
- Sternum** –central chest bone - breastbone – keel
- Stop** – the depression in front of the eyes between the skull and the muzzle
- Stifle** – joint of the hind leg - the dog's knee
- Tail Set** – the position of the tail on the Croup
- Thigh** – the hind quarters from hip to stifle
- Throat** – front part of the neck beneath the lower jaw
- Topline** – the outline of the back from just behind the withers to the rump
- Tuck Up** – the concave underline of the body curving up from the end of the ribs to the waist
- Upper Arm** – the humerus - bone of the foreleg between the shoulder blade and the elbow
- Withers** – the point where the shoulders and neck meet and the point at which height is measured
- Zygomatic arch** – arch of bone forming the lower border of the eye socket extending to the base of the ear