

The Skeleton & Bones

Your bones are part of your **skeletal system**. An adult has 206 bones. Together, they make up the **skeleton**. Your skeleton is the framework for your body. It gives you shape and protects your organs from damage. Without your bones, you would not be able to stand up!

Your bones are alive, and they grow and change. You were born with about 300 bones. Why do adults have only 206? Some bones eventually grow together, combining to make one bone. Your bones continue to grow until about the age of 25. Then they stop growing.

The point where two bones meet is called a **joint**. Some joints, like most in your skull, do not move. Other joints do move. Your elbows and knees are both joints. In your leg, the bone in your thigh (your **femur**, pronounced *fee'-mer*) meets the bones of your lower leg (your **tibia** and **fibula**). The joint where they meet is your knee. Muscles help hold the bones in place. **Ligaments** hold your bones in place, too. Ligaments are kind of like big, strong rubber bands. Your skeletal system and your muscular system really do work together!

Your bones are not hollow. They contain **bone marrow**. It is a soft and spongy tissue. It produces **red blood cells** for your blood. Those cells carry oxygen all over your body. Your skeletal system and your circulatory system are partners that work together, too!

Your **ribs** work like a cage that surrounds your heart, lungs, and liver. They protect your organs from injury. Your **spine** is also called your backbone. It is made of a stack of 26 bones called **vertebrae** (pronounced *ver'-tuh-bray*). Your vertebrae protect your **spinal cord**, a bundle of nerves that connects your brain to the rest of your body in your **nervous system**. Your skeletal system helps your nervous system, too!

Bones and our Skeletal System

Name: _____

Calcium keeps bones strong. What are some foods and sources of calcium **that you have eaten before?**

Vitamin D also helps keep bones strong. How do we get vitamin D?

Exercise is also key to keeping our bones strong. How does exercise keep our bones stronger?
