

# Vocabulary



**cartilage** a flexible tissue that cushions bones at joints

Pads of cartilage in joints keep the bones from rubbing against each other. You also have cartilage in your nose and ears.

**involuntary muscle** muscle that contracts on its own without your thinking about it

Your heart is made of involuntary muscle. Your heart keeps beating even if you are sound asleep. Involuntary muscle also lines your stomach and intestines.

**joint** a place where two or more bones meet

Your body has more than 230 joints. Examples of joints are the ball-and-socket joint in your hip, the hinge joint in your knee, and pivot joints in your neck.

**skeletal muscle** muscle that is attached to bones and moves them

The biceps and triceps in your upper arm are skeletal muscles. When your biceps contracts, your arm bends at the elbow. When your biceps relaxes and your triceps contracts, your arm straightens.

**vertebra** one of the bones that form an animal's backbone

Your backbone is made of many separate bones. The backbone is also called the spinal column.

**voluntary muscle** muscle that contracts when you tell it to

Skeletal muscles in your arm are voluntary muscle. You decide when to contract your biceps and triceps to bend and straighten your arm.