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Body Basics – Building Confidence During Postural Assessments

Common terms with descriptions.

Bony Landmarks

- **Xiphoid Process** *The small tip at the bottom of the breastbone or sternum. Usually it is in the centre of the ribcage.*
- **Rib Cage** *The bones that protect the lungs and heart. Watch out for lumps and bumps.*
- **Vertebrae** *The bones of the spine. Changes in curve or alignment can affect comfort and breathing.*
- **Pelvis** *The bony structure located at the bottom of the spine that connects the trunk to the legs. Watch for tilts or rotation.*
- **ASIS** *The bony parts at the front of the pelvis*
- **PSIS** *The bony parts at the back of the pelvis*
- **Greater Trochanter** *The bony bump on the side of the hip. Useful for spotting hip alignment.*
- **Hip** *The joint between pelvis and the thigh. Important for both sitting and standing*
- **Scapula** *Shoulder blade. Check if one sticks out more than the other.*
- **Clavicle** *Collarbone. Helps notice shoulder position.*
- **Occiput** *Back of the head. Important for head alignment.*

Positional Terms

- **Midline**
The imaginary centre line of the body.
- **Symmetry / Asymmetry**
Symmetry = both sides look the same. Asymmetry = uneven or lopsided.
- **Windswept**
Legs fall to, drawn to or forced to one side, pelvis goes in the opposite direction
- **Internal / External Rotation**
Turning inward or outward (e.g., knees or feet pointing in or out).
- **Rotation**
Twisted, often used to describe a pattern at the chest, pelvis or legs
- **Obliquity**
Wonky, one side higher than the other
- **Tilt**
Pelvis towards the front (anterior) or the back (posterior).

- **Flexion / Extension**
Flexion = bending. Extension = straightening.
 - **Hyperextension**
Joint straightens beyond normal range.
 - **Abduction / Adduction**
*Abduction = moving away from the centre. Adduction = moving towards the centre
(**add** your legs together)*
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Lower Limb Movement

- **Plantarflexion / Dorsiflexion**
Plantarflexion = toes pointing down. Dorsiflexion = toes pointing up.
- **Inversion / Eversion**
Inversion = sole turns inward. Eversion = sole turns outward.

Postural Descriptors

- **Kyphosis**
Forward curve of the upper spine (rounded back).
 - **Lordosis**
Inward curve of the lower spine (arched back).
 - **Scoliosis**
Sideways curve of the spine.
 - **Contracture**
Permanent tightening of muscles or joints. Children lose the ability to fully extend the joint
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Tone & Movement Quality

- **Spasticity** *Stiffness or tightness in muscles.*
- **Hypertonia (High tone)** *High muscle tone (stiff)*
- **Hypotonia** *Low muscle tone (floppy).*