adhesion
Union of two normally separate surfaces, such as the moving surfaces of joints, by fibrous tissue developing in a area of inflammation or damage. (The fibrous tissue itself is also called the adhesion.)

adhesive capsulitis
Fibrous adhesion* of the glenohumeral joint capsule* resulting in frozen shoulder.

alignment change
Arrangement of body structures such as bones that differs from the usual anatomical position. Osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis can cause bones to shift and move, causing changes in alignment.

anatomical position
A person is in the anatomical position when they are standing erect, facing forwards, arms down by their sides and palms facing forward. This position is used as the starting point to describe anatomical terms and relationships.

ankylosis
Fusion of bones across a joint space, either by bony tissue (bony ankylosis) or by shortening of fibrous tissue (fibrous ankylosis). It may occur as a complication of prolonged joint inflammation.

ankylosing spondylitis
A type of arthritis that affects the backbone. It involves inflammation of the joint capsule their attached ligaments and tendons of the intervertebral and sacroiliac joints*. It results in pain and stiffness that is treated by analgesics and regular daily exercises. It can lead to severe deformities of the spine. It is a type of spondyloarthropathy*.

anserine bursa
One of the knee bursae*; located on the medial aspect.

Abbreviations
ADL Activities of daily living
CMC Carpometacarpal joint
DIP Distal interphalangeal joint
GAUS Gait, Arms, Legs, Spine
MTP Metatarsophalangeal joints
OA Osteoarthritis
PIP Proximal interphalangeal joint
RA Rheumatoid arthritis
SLE Systemic lupus erythematosus

A
abduction
Lateral movement away from the midline of the body.
abnormality
A condition of some aspect of the body that is outside the range of values usually seen in the population.
acetabulum
A shallow, cup-shaped cavity on the lateral surface of the hip bone where the head of the femur attaches (the socket portion of the hip joint).
Achilles tendon
Tendon which connects the back of the calcaneus* to the calf of the lower leg.
acromioclavicular
The joint formed by the articulation of the acromion process* of the scapula* with the clavicle*.
acromion process
A flat, triangular plate at the end of the scapula*.
activities of daily living (ADL)
The activities usually performed in the course of a normal day in a person’s life, such as bathing, grooming, dressing, eating and toileting.
acute
Describing a disease of rapid onset, severe symptoms and brief duration. Also used to describe an intense symptom, e.g. acute pain is severe pain. Compare chronic.
adduction
Movement towards the midline of the body.

An asterisk by a word denotes that this word is also defined in the glossary.

Acute
Describing a disease of rapid onset, severe symptoms and brief duration. Also used to describe an intense symptom, e.g. acute pain is severe pain. Compare chronic.

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Anserine Bursa
One of the knee bursae*; located on the medial aspect.

Alignment
Describing or relating to the front part of the body or limbs. It can also be used to describe a relative position, so if A is anterior to B, then A is in front of B.

Anterior Cruciate Ligament
One of the ligaments* arranged in a cross formation inside the knee joint which provides stability. Cruciate ligament damage is common in sports injuries.
bony enlargement
(bony swelling of joints)
Change or enlargement at joint due to excessive bone growth.

Bouchard’s node
Boo-shards
Bony enlargement at or near the proximal interphalangeal (PIP) joint*, usually occurring in osteoarthritis*.

Boutonnière deformity
Boo-ton-ee-air
Flexion contracture* of the proximal interphalangeal (PIP)* and hyperextension* of the distal interphalangeal (DIP) joint*, usually occurring in rheumatoid arthritis*.

Bulge sign
This is a diagnostic test for the knee effusion. A small wave or bulge of fluid within the joint appears on the medial aspect of the knee subsequent to performing the test. A positive bulge sign confirms knee effusion.

bunion
The common name for hallux valgus*.

bursa (pl bursae)
The fibrous sac of protective tissue that forms a cushion between certain tendons* and the bones beneath them.

bursitis
Inflammation of a bursa* which can cause severe pain in the affected joint, particularly on movement. Arthritis is one of the causes of bursitis.

C

calcaneus
cal-cane-ee-us
Heel of bone of foot, one of the seven tarsal bones*.

carpal bones
kar-pal
The eight small bones of the wrist.

carpal tunnel
kar-pal
A “tunnel” or space formed by the carpal bones* in the wrist and connective tissue that overlies the flexor tendons* and the median nerve*.

carpal tunnel syndrome
kar-pal
A common painful disorder of the wrist and hand, induced by compression of the median nerve* as it passes through the carpal tunnel*.

carpometacarpal (CMC) joint
car-po-met-a-kar-pal
The joint between the carpal bones* of the wrist and the metacarpal* of the thumb.

cartilage
kar-te-lij
Connective tissue that covers the ends of bones that make contact with each other inside joints. Cartilage is firm and dense, and can withstand considerable pressure.
crepitus
\textit{krep-i-tuss}

The audible or palpable grating sensation caused by roughened surfaces within a joint rubbing against each other. Crepitus can be present in normal joints, but severe crepitus is usually indicative of chronic joint degeneration.

crepitation
\textit{krep-i-tay-shun}

Same as crepitus.

cruciate ligaments
\textit{krew-ate lig-a-ments}

Two of the ligaments of the knee that connect the femur* and the tibia* bones. The anterior cruciate (which resists hyperextension of the knee) passes in front of the posterior cruciate (which resists hyperflexion of the joint) forming a cross (cruciate) pattern within the joint.

deformity

A joint deformity refers to misalignment of two bones that move against each other in a joint. Bone deformity is the abnormal shape of a bone or bones.

deltoid muscle
\textit{del-toi-d}

The large, thick, triangular muscle that covers the shoulder joint.

de Quervain’s tenosynovitis
\textit{de Ker-va-ne-z tee-no-syn-o-vi-tus}

Tenosynovitis* of the tendon sheath* of the extensor and flexor muscles of the hand at the radial styloid. A cause of wrist pain.

dimples of Venus

The two dimples on the posterior surface of the body at the level of the sacral spine.

discs

Rounded flattened structures. The discs of the spine are the intervertebral discs.

dislocation

The complete displacement of a bone from its normal position within a joint.

distal
\textit{dis-tul}

Farthest from the centre, from the midline of the body, or from the trunk; opposite of proximal.

distal interphalangeal joint
\textit{dis-tul in-ter-fa-lan-ghee-al}

The joint located between the distal phalanx* and the middle phalanx* bones of the finger.

distribution (of a nerve)

The area served by a nerve. A motor nerve will send messages to the areas of the body in which it is distributed. A sensory nerve will receive messages from the area of the body in which it is distributed.

cartilaginous joint

Joints where the articular surfaces of the bones are attached to each other by fibrocartilaginous discs. This type of joint is only partly moveable. Examples are the joints between the vertebrae of the spine.

cauda equina
\textit{cow-da ek-uh-quin-uh}

A bundle of nerve roots containing the lumbar, sacral and coccygeal nerves that descend vertically from the spinal cord inside the vertebrae* until they reach their respective openings in the vertebral column.

cervical
\textit{ser-vik-uhl}

Relating to the neck.

cervical rotation
\textit{ser-vik-uhl}

To turn the head 60°– 80° to either side.

cervicle spine
\textit{ser-vik-uhl}

The portion of the spine in the neck.

cervicle vertebrae
\textit{ser-vik-uhl ver-tee-bray}

The vertebrae in the neck.

cervical rotation
\textit{ser-vik-uhl}

Describing a disease of long duration involving very slow changes. Such diseases often show a gradual onset. The term does not imply anything about the severity of the disease.

clavicle
\textit{klav-i-kul}

The collarbone.

coccyx
\textit{ko-sicks}

Triangular shaped bone formed from the fusion of four rudimentary vertebrae*. It articulates with the sacrum* and is the lowest point of the spine.

connective tissue
\textit{kon-ek-tiv tish-yew}

Tissue that supports or binds other body tissue and parts.

contracture
\textit{kon-trak-ture}

Fibrosis or thickening of muscle or connective tissue producing shortening and thus deformity of a joint.

coracoid process
\textit{kor-ack-oid}

Bony projection of the scapula* located on the anterior distal edge of the clavicle*.
femoral nerve

The nerve that supplies the quadriceps muscles at the front of the thigh and receives sensation from the front and inner sides of the thigh.

femur

The thigh bone.

fibromyalgia

A form of nonarticular inflammatory disease characterized by chronic pain in muscles and soft tissue surrounding the joints, stiffness, fatigue and poor sleep. Common signs of pain or stiffness are the lower back, neck, shoulder region, arms, hands, knees, hips, thighs, legs and feet.

fibula

The smaller bone of the lower leg, fib-yew-lah lateral side.

findings

Abnormalities found on clinical examination of a patient. Common findings with arthritis are heat, redness, swelling, ligament changes, bony enlargements, tenderness, crepitation and limitation of motion.

flexion

Movement of a joint that bends it, and flex-shun decreases the angle between the bones forming the joint.

flexion contracture

A contracture occurs when there is thickening or scarring of connective tissue caused by inflammation. It results in joint deformity. A flexion contracture will hold the joint in an abnormally flexed position.

flexor tendon

Tendons that pass across the wrist and hand and attach to the fingers to flex the fingers.

foramina (singular foramen)

Opening or hole, particularly in a bone fossa.

fossa

Depression or cavity (Literally, Latin for foss-ah a ditch.)

frozen shoulder

The thorough musculoskeletal examination that is performed once a healthcare professional suspects a musculoskeletal condition*.

full examination

The thorough musculoskeletal examination that is performed once a healthcare professional suspects a musculoskeletal condition*.
glossary

**full joint examination**
The detailed examination of a joint conducted to diagnose a musculoskeletal disorder.

**fusion**
In terms of joints, fusion means that the joint is unable to move, either due to disease processes or following surgery.

**gait**
The manner and style of walking, including rhythm and speed.

**GALS**
The acronym for the screening examination: it comes from the words gait, arms, legs, spine.

**glenohumeral**
The joint between the humerus and the glenoid cavity of the shoulder.

**glenohumeral joint capsule**
The capsule surrounding the glenohumeral joint.

**glenoid cavity (or fossa)**
The socket of the scapula that receives the head of the humerus.

**greater trochanter**
A process on the lateral aspect of the upper end of the femur.

**halux valgus**
Commonly known as a bunion, this foot finding is characterised by medial displacement of the 1st metatarsal and the simultaneous deviation of the 1st phalanx of the big toe.

**Heberden’s nodes**
Bony enlargement at or near a distal interphalangeal (DIP) joint, usually occurring in osteoarthritis.

**history taking**
The conversation between a healthcare professional and the patient whereby the professional builds up a complete picture of the patient’s problems, concerns, previous disease experience and relevant family health background.

**humerus**
The bone of the upper arm which articulates with the shoulder at one end and the elbow at the other.

**hyperextension**
Extreme or abnormal extension.

**hypermobility**
Looseness of a joint that results in an ability to extend a joint beyond the normal range of motion.

**hypothenar eminence**
The bulge of muscle in the palm of the hand at the base of the little finger.

**iliac crest**
Ridge of bone that forms the upper curved portion of the hip bone.

**impingement (shoulder)**
When the arm is raised, the rotator cuff may impinge (press upon), squeeze or force up against the undersurface of the acromion process and supportive ligaments. With repeated impingement the rotator cuff can become painful, inflamed, haemorrhage or tear.

**inflammation**
The protective response of tissues of the body to irritation, infection or injury. Inflammation may be acute or chronic. It is characterized by redness, heat, swelling, pain and loss of function.

**infrapatellar bursa**
Bursa located below the patella (knee cap).

**infraspinatus**
Posterior shoulder muscle.

**internal rotation**
The turning of a limb inwardly or towards the midline of the body, e.g. a leg is inwardly rotated when the foot and toes are turned in towards the midline.

**intervertebral discs**
The discs between the vertebrae of the spine. They consist of a tough fibrous membrane enclosing a jelly-like substance. They cushion the movement of the spinal column and protect the brain and spinal cord from impact such as produced by running.

**intrinsic muscles**
Muscles that are contained entirely within an organ. For example the intrinsic muscles of the hand located between the metacarpals.

**inversion (foot)**
Turning the foot inward towards the midline; opposite of eversion.

**interphalangeal joints**
The joints between the bones of the fingers or toes.

**intra-articular**
Within a joint.
lumbar vertebrae: The vertebrae in the lumbar region of the spine.

luxation: Dislocation.

malleolus (pl. malleoli): Rounded protuberances on the end of the tibia and fibula that form the ankle joint.

malaise: A general feeling of being unwell that may be accompanied by physical discomfort and is often a sign of disease.

management plan: The plan of treatment (medication, physiotherapy etc) and tests devised for an individual patient to try to ameliorate their condition or cure it where possible.

medial: Towards the midline of the body.

medial collateral ligament: The collateral ligaments are at the side of the knee joint. The lateral ligament is on the lateral aspect of the knee or the “outside”. The medial collateral ligament is on the “inside” of the knee.

medial displacement: Displacement of a bone or joint towards the midline of the body.

medial malleoli: The malleoli are the widest projections (singular malleolus) of the bone at either side of the ankle. The lateral malleolus is at the lower end of the fibula; the medial malleolus at the lower end of the tibia.

lesser trochanter: A small conical process on the posterior aspect of the femur.

ligament: A band or sheet of fibrous tissue that attaches to and binds the ends of bones together to form and support joints. The ligaments facilitate or limit motion of the bones that have been bound together.

lordosis: Forward curvature of the lumbar spine.

lumbar: The part of spine in the lower back between the chest and pelvis.

-eye-tis: Greek suffix meaning inflammation.

joint space: The synovial fluid-filled area between and around the heads of articulating bones of a joint, enclosed by a synovial membrane.

joint examination: The inspection of the appearance and functioning of the joints.

knee cap: Common name for the patella.

kyphosis: Abnormally increased convexity of the thoracic spine as viewed from the side (“hunch back”).

K
lateral: Away from the midline of the body.

lateral collateral ligament: The collateral ligaments are at the side of the knee joint. The lateral ligament is on the lateral aspect of the knee or the “outside”. The medial collateral ligament is on the “inside” of the knee.

lateral deviation: A deformity that causes a bone to be positioned or bent further away from the midline than normal.

lesser trochanter: A small conical process on the posterior aspect of the femur.

ligament: A band or sheet of fibrous tissue that attaches to and binds the ends of bones together to form and support joints. The ligaments facilitate or limit motion of the bones that have been bound together.

lordosis: Forward curvature of the lumbar spine.

lumbar: The part of spine in the lower back between the chest and pelvis.
Glossary

midline An imaginary line that divides the body into left and right.
muscle The tissue of the body that produces movement. Muscle is composed of microscopic fibres that are able to contract, which causes and allows the movements of parts of the body. One type of muscle, skeletal muscle, is attached to bones, via tendons, and produces movement of the bones.
muscle wasting Deterioration of the muscle tissue resulting in loss of strength, size and/or function.

medical joint examination The examination of the joints of the body.
musculoskeletal conditions (or problems) Conditions affecting the musculoskeletal system.
musculoskeletal system All the bones of the body that comprise the skeleton, including the joints, and the muscles attached to these bones that cause movement.

N

nodule A small rounded knotty lump, which may be, but is not necessarily, associated with rheumatoid arthritis.
non-articular Not relating to a joint or movement of a joint.

O

olecranon bursa The bursa overlying the olecranon process.
olecranon process The large process of the ulna that projects behind the elbow joint.
osteoarthritis (OA) A type of arthritis in which there is localised progressive cartilage deterioration in synovial joints or vertebrae.

P

palmar fascia Sheath of fibrous tissue covering palm of hand and overlying metacarpal bones.
palpation Technique used in physical examination where the hand and/or fingers are used to feel the texture, size, consistency and location of the body part being examined.

parasthesiae Tingling or “pins and needles”.
patella The kneecap.

periarticular Around the joint.
phalanges The small bones that comprise the fingers and toes. Plural of phalanx.
phalanx A bone of the finger or toe.

piano key sign Upon palpation, the ulnar styloid depresses ventrally, then bounces back when released. Reflects instability of the wrist.

plantar fasciitis Inflammation of the fascia in the sole of the foot at the point where it joins the calcaneus causing pain and localised tenderness of the heel.

plantar flexion Moving the top of the foot away from the shin, commonly called pointing your toes. Opposite of dorsiflexion.

polymyalgia rheumatica A rheumatic disease causing aching and progressive stiffness of the muscles of the shoulders and hips.

polymyositis A generalised disease of muscles that may be acute or chronic. It particularly affects the muscles of the shoulder and hip girdles which become weak and tender to the touch.

pope
di
tel
cyst

popliteal fossa The hollow space at the back of the knee.
posterior

Situated at or near the back of the body. If region A is posterior to region B, it is behind region B.

devoted cruciate ligament

One of the ligaments arranged in a cross formation inside the knee joint which provides stability. Cruciate ligament damage is common in sports injuries.

posterior longitudinal ligament

A broad strong ligament running down the posterior surface of the spine. It provides stability to the spinal column.

predisposing risk factors

Aspects of an individual that make them more likely to suffer a particular condition. These include genetic factors, environmental exposures and previous illness.

prepatellar bursa

A bursa located above the patella or kneecap.

process

A protrusion of bone.

prolapsed intervertebral disc

An intervertebral disc that has developed a weakness in the outer fibrous envelope such that the gelatinous centre is squeezed out to form a protrusion which may press on a nerve.

pronation

The act of turning the hand so that the palm faces downwards. In this position the bones of the forearm are crossed.

prone

A person lying down on his face is in the prone position with the palms of the hands facing down and thumbs out.

proximal

Situated close to the origin or point of attachment or close to the median line of the body. Opposite of distal.

proximal interphalangeal joint (PIP)

The joint between the phalanges (bones of the fingers or toes) nearest to the hand or foot.

psoriatic arthritis

Arthritis associated with psoriasis, a chronic skin condition. It often affects small joints such as the terminal joints of the fingers or toes or the spine and sacroiliac joints.

Q

quadriiceps

Large muscle located superior to the knee on the lateral aspect of the femur. The primary extensor of the knee joint.

R

radial styloid

Protrusion on the radius at the wrist end of the bone.

radius

The outer (thumb side) bone of the forearm.

referred pain

Pain that is felt in one part of the body although the origin of the pain is actually in a different area.

remission

A period during the natural course of a disease when the condition is not active and symptoms decrease or disappear.

rheumatic conditions

Conditions affecting joints and surrounding tissues.

rheumatoid arthritis

The second most common type of arthritis. Typically involving the joints of the fingers, wrist, feet and ankles with later involvement of hips, knees, shoulders and neck. An autoinflammatory condition it is usually bilateral.

rheumatoid nodules

A swelling on a tendon associated with rheumatoid arthritis. Often seen on the back of the hand or elbow.

rotation

Turning.

rotator cuff

A musculo-tendon structure that encircles and gives strength and support to the shoulder joint. It is formed by the tendons of the supraspinatus, infraspinatus and teres minor and subscapularis muscles.

S

sacral vertebrae

The five vertebrae that form the sacrum.

sacroiliac joint

The articular joint between the sacrum and the ilium, a bone of the hip.

sacroilitis

Inflammation of the sacroiliac joints that can result in fusion of the joints.
spinous process  A part of the vertebra the projects posteriorly; it is an attachment point for muscles.

spondyloarthropathy  The spondyloarthropathies are a family of related disorders that includes ankylosing spondylitis*, Reiter syndrome, reactive arthritis, psoriatic arthritis*, spondyloarthropathy associated with inflammatory bowel disease (or enteropathic arthritis*), and undifferentiated spondyloarthropathy*. The spondyloarthropathies are chronic inflammatory diseases involving the sacroiliac joints, axial skeleton, and, to a lesser degree, peripheral joints and certain extra articular* organs, including the eyes, skin, and cardiovascular system. The cause is unknown but involves the interaction of genetic and environmental factors.

squaring of the hands  A change in the palms of the hands associated with osteoarthritis* of the thumb base enlarging the carpometacarpal* joint that produces a square appearance.

styloid  Projections of the bone at the lower end of the radius* and ulna*.

sub-  Prefix meaning below, under or beneath.

subdeltoid bursa  A bursa* located beneath the deltoid sub-del-toid muscle on the lateral portion of the shoulder.

subluxation  A partial or incomplete dislocation of bones within a joint.

subscapularis muscle  A muscle located beneath or on the sub-scap-you-lar is anterior portion of the scapula and aiding in arm movement.

subtalar joint  The joint between the talus* and the calcaneus* bones.

supination  The act of turning the hand so that the palms are uppermost.
supine (soo-pine) | Somebody lying on his back with the palms of their hands facing up and thumbs out is in the supine position.

supra- | A prefix meaning over, above, on top of.

supraspinatus muscle (soup-ra-spine-at-us) | A muscle that originates above the spinal ridge of the scapula and which inserts at the greater tuberosity of the humerus. It abducts the arm.

swan neck deformity | Deformity of the hand causing flexion at the DIP joint and hyperextension of the PIP joint.

syndesmophytes (syn-des-mo-phytes) | Bony outgrowths that result in ankylosis of the spine in ankylosing spondylitis

synovial fluid (sy-no-vee-al) | A lubricant fluid secreted by synovial joints.

synovial joint (sy-no-vee-al) | A freely moveable joint. The ends of the adjoining bones are covered with a cartilaginous sheath and the bones are linked by a capsule lined by a synovial membrane.

synovial membrane (sy-no-vee-al) | Membrane lining a synovial joint that secretes synovial fluid.

tendonitis (ten-din-eye-tis) | Inflammation of a tendon.

tendinosis (ten-din-oh-sis) | Degenerative conditions of tendons. Most commonly occurs in the patellar tendon.

tendon sheath | A tough whitish cord that attaches a muscle to a bone.

tenosynovitis (tee-no-sy-no-vi-tus) | Inflammation of tendon sheath. Usually producing pain, swelling and an audible creaking on movement.

teres minor (teh-rez) | Muscle located on the inferior, posterior portion of the scapula which aids in arm movement.

thenar eminence (thee-nar) | The fleshy part of the palm of the hand at the base of the thumb.

thoracic vertebrae | The vertebrae in the thoracic region of the spinal column.

tibial (tih-bi-ah) | Larger bone of the lower leg (shin bone).

tibialis anterior (tih-bi-ay-ler-an-ter) | Muscle located on the posterior aspects of the upper arm.

trochanter | Greater trochanter – broad flat process on the upper lateral aspect of the femur; Lesser trochanter – smaller conical process on posterior aspect of the femur.
trochanteric bursa

tuberosity
tuck sign

tro-can-tair-ick

tew-ber-ru-si-tee
tuck sign

A bursa* located on the lateral aspect of the thigh over the greater trochanter*.

A raised rounded bony process.

Movement of a swollen extensor tendon when the fingers are actively extended.

valgus deviation of the extremity below a joint away from the midline. Most commonly used to describe knock knees or clubfoot.

varus deviation of an extremity below a joint towards the midline. Most commonly used to describe bow legs or clubfoot.

ventral relating to the front of the body or the ventral front of an organ. Opposite of dorsal.

vertebra (pl vertebrae) the 33 bones of the vertebral column.

volar relating to the palm of the hand or sole of the foot.

volar subluxation displacement of a joint towards the palm of the hand or sole of the foot.

ulna medial bone of the forearm (on the little finger side).

ulnar deviation displacement of the fingers towards the ulnar side of the arm, caused by swelling in the MCPs which causes displacement of the extensor tendons*.

ulnar nerve one of the major nerves of the arm. It originates in the neck and runs down the inner side of the upper arm and behind the elbow. Trauma to the nerve at the elbow causes intense pain in the fingers.

ulnar styloid the enlarged distal end of the ulna.

undifferentiated spondylarthropathy one of the spondyloarthropathies*. Undifferentiated means that the disease cannot be placed in a definite category as to the type of spondylarthropathy.

valgus deviation of the extremity below a joint away from the midline. Most commonly used to describe knock knees or clubfoot.

valgus angulation knock knees.

varus deviation of an extremity below a joint towards the midline. Most commonly used to describe bow legs or clubfoot.

varus angulation bow legs

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vertebra (pl vertebrae) the 33 bones of the vertebral column.

volar relating to the palm of the hand or sole of the foot.

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References


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