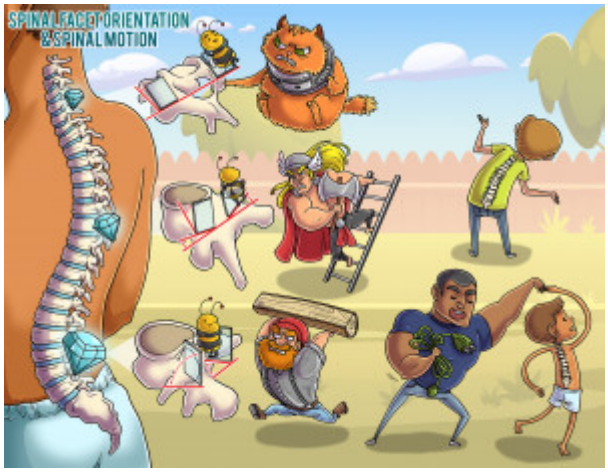
Spinal Facet Orientation and Spinal Motion

The superior spinal facets are located at the top of the vertebrae, or superiorly. These facets allow communication between the vertebrae above, and assist in coordination of movement in the spine. The superior facets are organized in a way that assists with congruent motion and fluidity.



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BUMBULBUM Mnemonic
BUMBULBUM-bees
Recall the surface of the superior facet with the mnemonic “BUMBULBUM”.
“BUM” represents cervical because the superior facet surface faces Back, Up and Medial.
“BUL” because the superior facet surface faces Back, Up and Lateral.
Lastly, “BUM” represents Lumbar because the superior facet surface faces Back, Up and Medial.

Spine Facets

Cervical: Backward, Upright and Medial
Cervical-cat Back, Upward and wearing Metal
The surface of the superior facets of the cervical spinal faces back, up and towards midline.

Thoracic: Backward, Upward and Lateral
Thor-axe Back, Upward and on a Ladder
The superior facets of the thorax are oriented backwards, upwards and lateral.

Lumbar: Backward, Upward and Medial
Lumberjack Back, Upward and wearing Metal
Facets in the lumbar spine face back, up and medial.

Spinal Motion

Flexion and Extension
Flexing and Extension-cord
The cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine can be moved in flexion and extension. The most noticeable areas of flexion and extension are the cervical and lumbar spine, where the superior facets are oriented backward and medially. Flexion and extension occur along the transverse axis in the sagittal plane.

Rotation
Rotation
Rotation is seen throughout the spine, and is most noted in the cervical and thoracic regions. Rotation is around the vertical axis, in the transverse plane.

Sidebending
Sidebending
Sidebending (Lateral Flexion) occurs throughout the vertebral column, and is most noticeable in the cervical and thoracic vertebrae. Sidebending occurs around the anterior-posterior axis, in the coronal plane.

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