

## **Skeletal Alignment**

### **The Alignment Story**

The alignment is a uniquely personal story of coping with the environment by contending with gravity while inhabiting space. Each individual story includes our personal use of our human structure which is reflective of what is happening at all our koshic layers. “Our story”, karmas past, present and possibly even future, are reflected in the use of our bodies. With this sensitivity to the bigger picture in mind, we’ll focus on skeletal alignment.

### **Mechanical Balance**

In any structure, mechanical balance occurs when the forces acting on the structure are in balance. This produces a state of **equilibrium**. A pyramid is a very stable mechanically balanced structure. And it exemplifies the features that make for stability, such as:

- (a) A broad ***base of support***
- (b) A ***central axis of gravity***
- (c) The center of weight close to its base
- (d) An even ***distribution of weight around the axis***.

### **A View of the Body’s Weight Bearing Structure**

The body’s structure employs both compressional stress (a squeezing pressure) and tensile stress (a pulling pressure) to bear weight. There are three *main* designs in the human skeletal system in which weight

- (a) Sits, (compressional)
- (b) is Braced (compressional), or
- (c) Hangs (tensile).

### **The Serpentine Spine**

The structure of our spine and human form is not built solely for stability. Alignment is not something that jumps out at you when you see a spine. You don’t say, “What a stable structure!” And there’s the problem. The spine is a very mobile structure that carries a lot of weight that we ask, at times, to act in a stable manner. In yoga practice, we move and position the spine in stability in a wide variety of planes and positions.

### **Aligning the Spine with Awareness and Imagery (Anatomically-based Ideokinesis)**

#### **Three Body Weights**

#### **Five Spinal Curves**

#### **Vertical Central Axis or “Plumb Line”**

Tapping yourself on top of the head stimulates awareness of the plumb line.

#### ***Boney Landmarks in Standing Alignment:***

- \* the side of the ankle (greater malleolus)
- \* the side of the crease of the knee
- \* greater trochanter at hip
- \* the side of the rib cage
- \* the shoulder socket
- \* the center of the ear

### ***Anatomically-based imagery facilitates alignment, ease of movement and greater efficiency!***

Imagery has been scientifically proven to organize the muscular system toward very efficient action.