

**TIP #1 – Most anatomy and physiology terms contain two or more parts.**

To understand an anatomy & physiology term, break it down into its component parts: root(s), prefix, suffix, and combining vowels.

**Root(s)** - the word's essential meaning; a word may have two roots

**Prefix** - added to the beginning of a root word to make it more specific

**Suffix** - added to the end of the root word to make it more specific

**Linking or combining vowels (a,e,i,o,u)** - placed in between word parts to help with pronunciation

**Examples:**

**Myocardium (myo/cardi/um)** means heart muscle.

**myo-** (root) = muscle, **cardi** (root) = heart, and **-um** (suffix) helps form the noun

**Subcutaneous (sub/cutan/eous)** means below the skin.

**sub-** (prefix) = below, **cutan** (root) = skin, and **-eous** (suffix) = pertaining to, relating to

**Suprascapular (supra/scapula/r)** means relative to the area above the shoulder blade.

**supra-** (prefix) = above, **scapula** (root) = shoulder blade, and **-r** (suffix) = relative to

**TIP #2 – The definitions of root words, prefixes, and suffixes remain the same when combined to produce different terms.**

Remember that the basic definition of a word part remains the same when combined with various components.

**Examples:**

The prefix **hypo-** means below.

**Hypodermis** - a layer of connective tissue below the skin

**hypo-** (prefix) = below, **derm** (root) = skin, and **-is** (suffix) = related to

**Hypothermia** - below normal temperature

**hypo-** (prefix) = below, **therm** (root) = temperature, and **-ia** (suffix) = abnormal state

The root word for heart is **cardio**.

**Cardiovascular** - pertaining to the heart and vessels

**cardio** (root) = heart, **vascul** (root) = vessels, and **-ar** (suffix) = pertaining to

**Pericardium** - surrounding the heart

**peri-** (prefix) = around, **cardi** (root) = heart, and **-um** (suffix) helps form the noun

The suffix for cell is **-cyte**.

**Osteocyte** - bone cell

**osteo** (root) = bone and **-cyte** (suffix) = cell

**Erythrocyte** - red blood cell

**erythro** (root) = red and **-cyte** (suffix) = cell

**TIP #3 – Prefixes and suffixes are never used alone.**

Root words might be used as words all by themselves. Prefixes and suffixes will *never* be used alone, but always in combination with a root word.

**TIP #4 – Use terms to make connections between seemingly different content.**

Anatomy and physiology are sometimes thought of as 'purely memorization'. One strategy for reducing the amount of memorization and promoting a better understanding is to make connections between topics using terminology.

**Example:** Each of the following terms might be taught in different units of a course; however, they are almost identical concepts.

**Perimysium** - Fibrous membrane surrounding a muscle fascicle

**peri-** (prefix) = around, **mysi** (root) = muscle, and **-um** (suffix) helps form the noun

**Pericardium** - Fibrous membrane surrounding the heart

**peri-** (prefix) = around, **cardi** (root) = heart, and **-um** (suffix) helps form the noun

**Perineurium** - Fibrous membrane surrounding a nerve fascicle

**peri-** (prefix) = around, **neuri** (root) = nerve, and **-um** (suffix) helps form the noun