

# Thoracic Spine

## ■ Thoracic kyphosis

- 1 of 2 primary spinal curves (thoracic & sacral) present at birth, maintained throughout life
- Cervical & lumbar lordoses are secondary curves, more flexible, & result of development
  - Considerable variability in amount of kyphosis (20-45°)
  - Each body contributes 3.8° of kyphosis via wedge-shaped angulation
  - Apex at T7
  - Increases with age
  - M < F

## ■ Thoracic vertebrae increase in size from T1 → T12

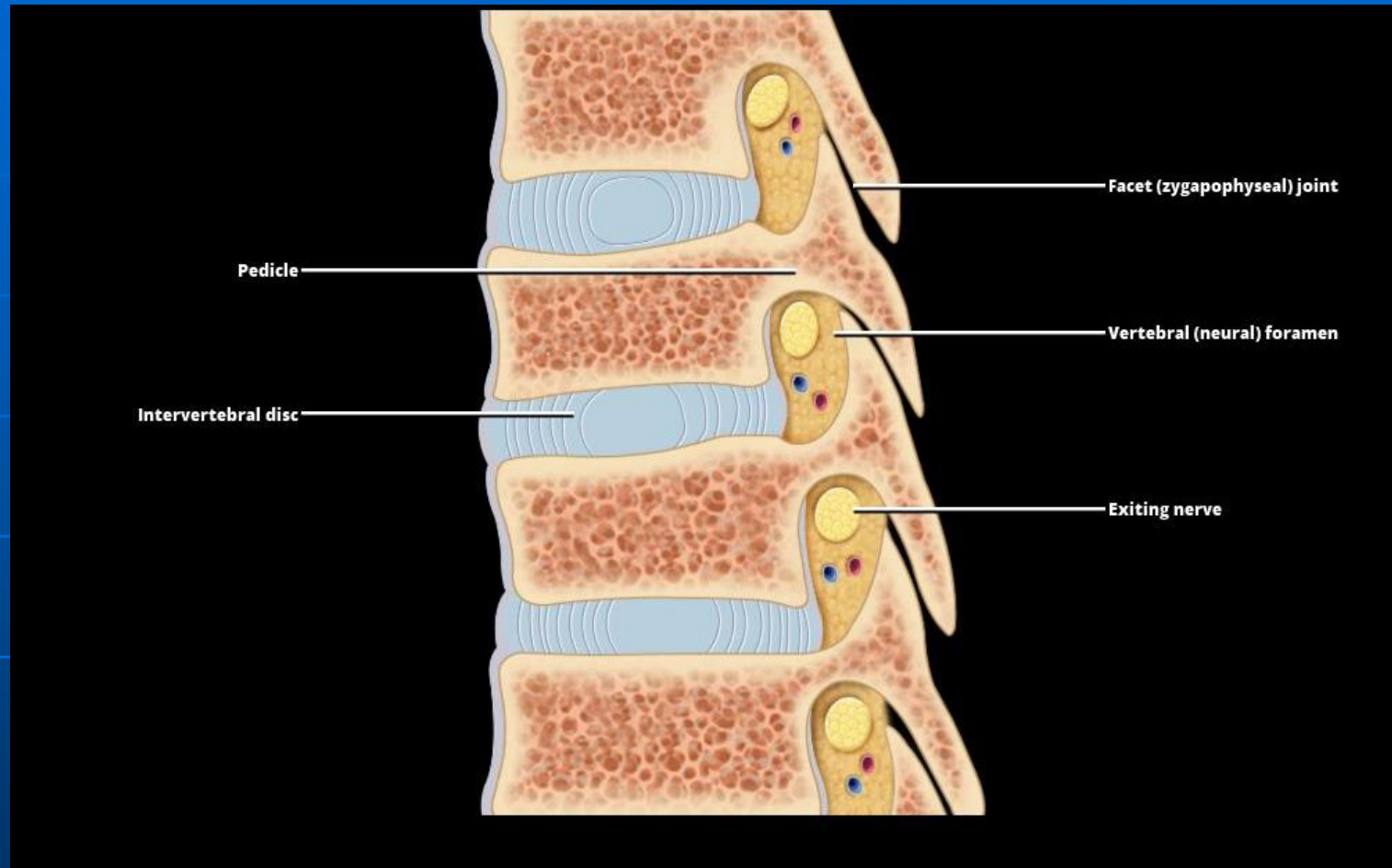
## ■ Unique features of thoracic spine

- Articulation with rib cage
- Coronal facet orientation
- Small spinal canal relative to posterior element size.

## ■ Transition from rigid thoracic spine to more mobile lumbar spine

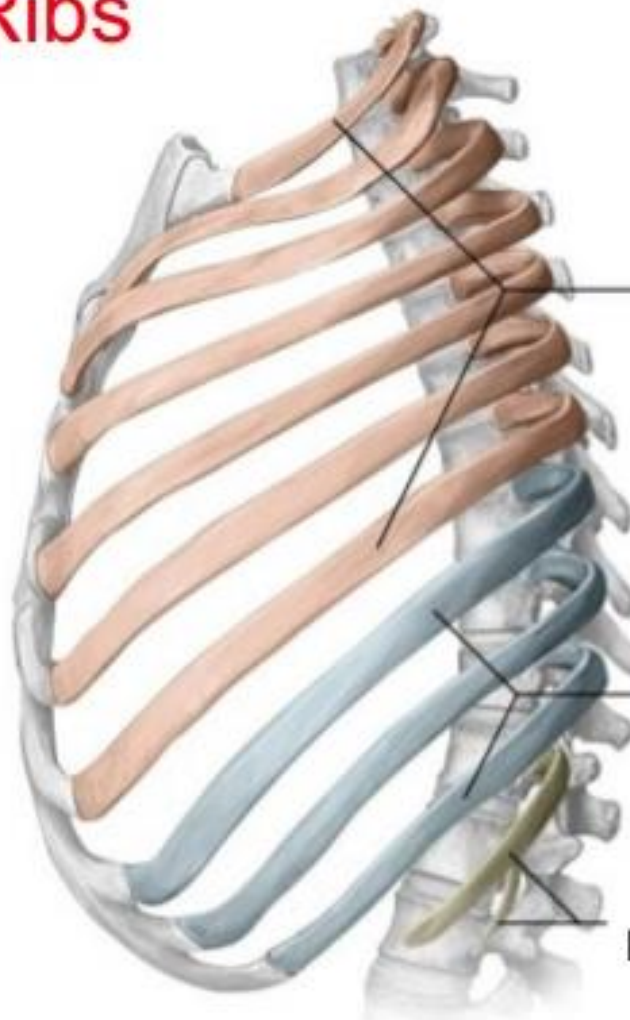
## ■ T11, T12 ribs provide less rigidity compared to rest of thoracic spine

## ■ No connection to sternum (free floating)



In this sagittal graphic through thoracic vertebral foramen, the exiting nerve is positioned superiorly bound by the vertebral body anteriorly, pedicle above, and facet joint posteriorly. Facet joints are oriented in near coronal plane in thoracic spine.

# Three Types of Ribs



True Ribs (1-7)  
Attach directly to  
the sternum

False Ribs (8-10)  
Attach to the 7<sup>th</sup>  
costal cartilage

Floating Ribs (11-12)  
No anterior  
attachment

Thieme Atlas 5.3