

The General Principles of Physical Examination

Irena Zakarija-Grković,

MD, FRACGP, IBCLC, PhD

University of Split School of Medicine

Department of Clinical Skills

Modern Approach to Diagnosis

- History taking
- Examining the patient
 - looking (inspecting)
 - feeling (palpating)
 - tapping (percussing)
 - listening (auscultating)



Medicine is learned by the bedside and not in the classroom.

Sir William Osler (1849 – 1919)



Sir Luke Fields: The Doctor. Tate Gallery, London

The General Principles of Physical Examination

- Formal approach important
- Ensures thoroughness and that important signs are not overlooked
- Systematic approach
- Observant like a detective



The Physical Examination

More mistakes are made from want of a proper examination than for any other reason.

Russell John Howard (1875 – 1942)

Preparing the Patient for Examination

- Introduce yourself
- Confirm the patient's name and DoB
- Ask how the patient wants to be addressed
- Explain the purpose of the examination and what the examination will involve
- Obtain the patient's consent
- Offer a chaperone

Preparing the Patient for Examination

- Well lit, quiet room
- Undressed (respect privacy)
- Position patient at 45°
- Patients are always examined from the right side of the bed



First Impressions

- How sick is the patient?
- Assess the patient's colour
- Level of comfort?
- Body habitus?
- Signs of illness?



The Physical Examination

- Hands
 - Nails (nicotine staining, pitting, haemorrhages...)
 - Clubbing
 - Hands: capillary return, colour, warmth, turgor
 - Atrophy
 - Contractures
 - Tremor



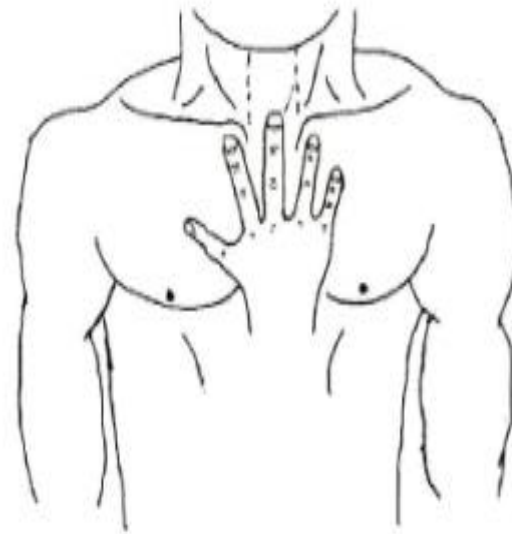
The Physical Examination

- Pulse, BP, RR
- Facies
 - Colour
 - Eyes
 - Mouth
 - ?diagnostic
- Hair



The Physical Examination

- Neck
 - Lymph nodes
 - JVP
 - Thyroid
 - Trachea
 - Carotid pulse

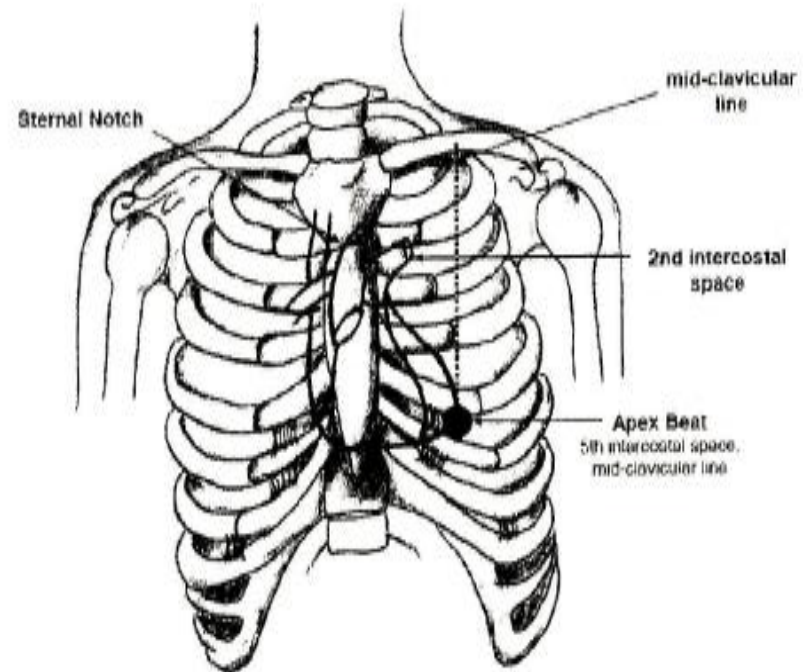


Locating the trachea (Sam Hey, Medical Student)

YouTube: [Geekymedics.com:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziaYBkgEZNU)
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The Physical Examination

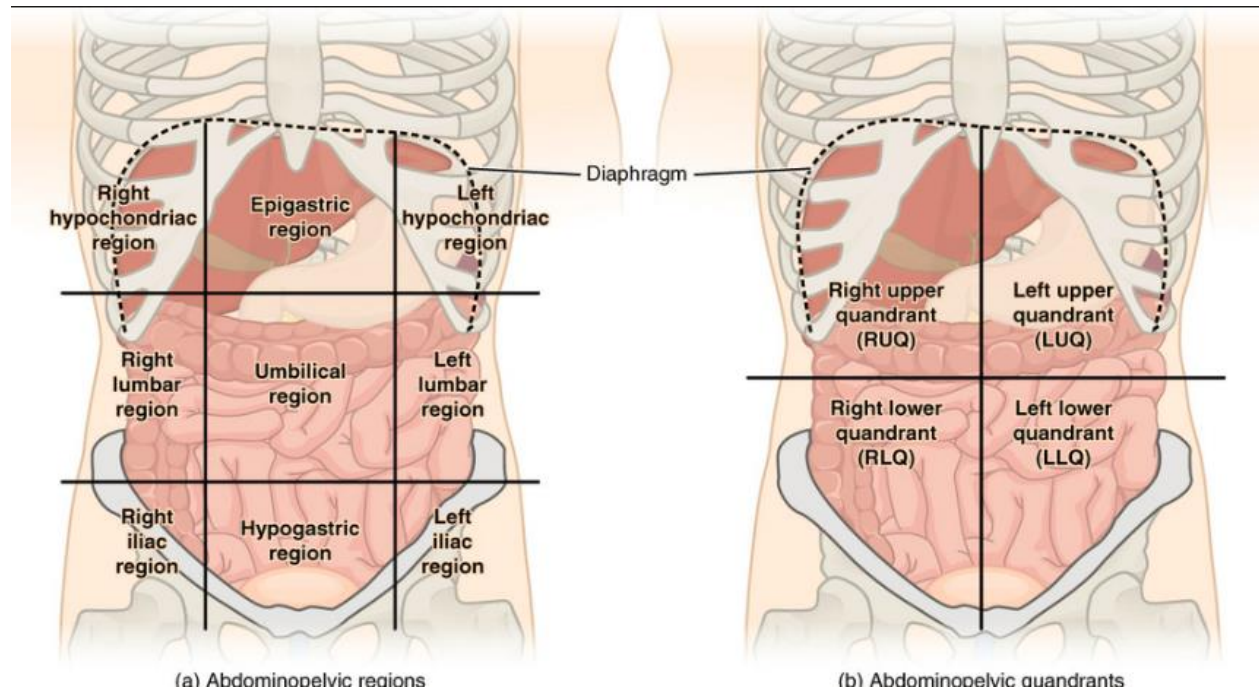
- Chest
 - Inspect wall
 - Feel expansion
 - Palpate apex
 - Percuss lungs
 - Auscultate lungs
 - Auscultate heart sounds



Location of apex beat (Areej Paracha, Medical Student)

The Physical Examination

- Abdomen
 - Inspect
 - Palpate
 - Percuss
 - Auscultate
- Groins
- Legs
- Neurological examination



Patient-Centred Approach to Physical Examination

- Explain to the patient what you plan to do
- Obtain their consent
- Check that the patient is comfortable
- Thank them for their consent and participation

Finally, a few quotes

- *To study the phenomena of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea, while to study books without patients is not to go to sea at all.*

Sir William Osler (1849-1919)

- *A physician is obliged to consider more than a diseased organ, more even than the whole man – he must view the man in his world.*

Harvey Cushing (1869-1939)