Joints

Joints in the body (wrist, shoulder, thigh) can be compared with structures used in machines and simple devices (hinge, ball-and-socket, and sliding joints).

Your skull has some fixed joints called sutures.

- Sutures close up the bones of the skull.

Moving joints are the ones that let you twist, bend, and move different parts of your body.

One type of moving joint is called a hinge joint.

- Your elbows and knees each have hinge joints.

They allow you to bend and then straighten your arms and legs.
You also have many smaller hinge joints in your fingers and toes.

These joints are like the hinges on a door.

• Just as most doors can only open one way, you can only bend your arms and legs in one direction.

Another important type of moving joint is the ball and socket joint, which allow movement in every direction.

• You can find these joints at your shoulders and hips.

They are made up of the round end of one bone fitting into a small cup-like area of another bone.

Sliding joints allow bones in your hand to glide over one another.

Sliding joints also provide flexibility.
When bones move, there is friction.

- Cartilage helps cushion the areas where bones meet.

Your joints have their own lubricating fluid called synovial fluid.

- This fluid helps them move freely.

Bones are held together at the joints by ligaments.

- Ligaments are strong elastic bands of connective tissue.
- The word, ligament, comes from Latin, *ligare*, meaning “to bind”