

The Morphology of Neanderthal Man

Because of the richness of the Neanderthal fossil record, we do have a general idea of what they looked like. There is a distinct Neanderthal morphology: (1) large cranial capacity the average being larger than the average for modern humans, (2) skull shape low, broad, and elongated, (3) rear of the skull rather pointed, with a bun, (4) large, heavy browridges, (5) low forehead, (6) large, long faces with the center of the face jutting forward, (7) weak, rounded chin, and (8) postcranial skeleton rugged with bones very thick.

Bones of Contention p.61

One of the most characteristic features of the Neanderthals is the exaggerated massiveness of their trunk and limb bones. All of the preserved bones suggest a strength seldom attained by modern humans. Furthermore, not only is their robustness present among the adult males, as one might expect, but it is also evident in the adult females, adolescents, and even children.

Trinkaus 1978

Body mass then seems to have increased through time, with late archaic *Homo sapiens*—dating from just 75,000-36,000 yr BP and often collectively called 'Neanderthals'—being about 30% larger than the living worldwide human average (or about 24% larger than living high-latitude humans). But modern humans (dating in this study from 90,000 yr to the present, and overlapping in time with archaic *Homo sapiens*) show a decrease in body mass. Other data show that archaic *Homo* (Neanderthal) had a more strongly constructed skeleton than all but the very earliest modern humans, and the pronounced muscle markings on the bones are believed to indicate great strength.

Kappelman, John, "They Might be Giants," *Nature*, vol. 387 (May 8, 1997), pp. 126-127.

Neanderthal was far more powerful than modern humans. Whereas archeologist can experimentally duplicate the wear pattern on tools such as were used by people from the Upper Paleolithic (the people that followed Neanderthal...), the wear patterns on Neanderthal's tools cannot be duplicated. We do not have the strength to do it Neanderthal skeleton reflects a supremely powerful musculature.

Geist, 1981

The evidence indicates that Neanderthals were people of incredible power and strength far superior to all but the most avid bodybuilders of today.

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The vertebral columns of the Shanidar Neanderthals are similar to those of modern man but with a marked tendency to robustness. The ribs are thick. The upper limb bones disclose a pattern of morphology close to that of other Neanderthals of the Near East and of Europe. This pattern includes powerful shoulders, arms and hands built for grasping, pulling and lifting. The lower limb remains conforms to the pattern of Neanderthal man in that they are robust, powerfully muscled and in keeping with upright posture and bipedal gait. In addition it seems that the distribution of muscularity is such that powerful acceleration would have been possible in running, jumping or climbing.

Day, M. H. 1993. *Guide to Fossil Man*. Univ. Chicago Press. p.137

The limb bones are of rugged construction, having stout tuberosities and impressive muscular markings. The humeri are straight and cylindrical, but the radius is curved with an internal concavity. The radial tuberosity is very large, adumbrating a powerful biceps muscle.

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