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| **Divisions of the efferent nervous system** |
| **Characteristic** | **Autonomic** | **Somatic** |
| Effectors | Involuntary muscles/organs | Skeletal muscles (voluntary) |
| General function | Adjustment of the internal environment | Response to the external environment |
| Efferent (motor) pathway | 2 nerve fibres from the CNS to the motor neuron with a synapse in a ganglion. | One nerve fibre from the CNS to the motor neuron, no synapse and no ganglion |
| Neurotransmitter at effector | Noradrenaline = sympathetic Acetylcholine = parasympathetic  | Acetylcholine at neuromuscular junction |
| Control | Involuntary | Voluntary |
| Nerves to target | 2 sets, sympathetic and parasympathetic | One set, excitation of skeletal muscles |
| Effect target organ | Excitation or inhibition | Always excitation |