VNTR

The full genetic profiles of any two individuals (other than identical twins) reveal many differences. But since most human genes are the same from person to person, DNA typing relies on the stretches of DNA that tend to differ among different people. While the repeated sequences themselves are usually the same from person to person, the number of times they are repeated tends to vary.

These stretches of repeats, known as Variable Number of Tandem Repeats or VNTRs, can be isolated from an individual's DNA.

The number of repeats can be gauged by dividing the entire molecular weight of a given VNTR by the molecular weight of the repeated sequence. VNTRs are similar to Short Tandem Repeats (For more on STRs, see page 3), the difference being that in a VNTR, the repeated sequence is longer—about 10-100 base pairs long.