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MT COOK - NEW ZEALAND

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Common Myths Around MRI and Back Pain

If you've been unlucky enough to suffer from chronic or ongoing back pain, chances are that at some stage, you've had other investigations to capture what is happening inside your spine. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is an incredible technology that can provide essential insights into tissues that otherwise can't be seen.

Unfortunately, there are some common misconceptions around what that information means, which can sometimes be unhelpful and even harmful to recovery. Here are a few things you might not realise that can help you understand your MRI:

Not all tissues show up on every scan.

Muscle, fascia, or other irritable tissues may not show up on your scan, meaning you may experience a lot of pain but have a completely normal scan. Not all parts of your anatomy will show up from every scan's perspective and some tissue changes might only be evident in certain postures.

Age-related changes are normal and may not be related to your pain.

Results such as arthritis, disc bulges, and small tears can be concerning However, it's helpful to note that people who have no painful symptoms can have similar, if not more, age-related changes, and these signs may not be related to your pain at all.

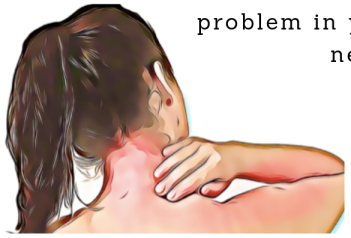
Severe pain may not be related to severe changes on MRI.

Pain is a complex experience, influenced by multiple factors including the sensitivity of the tissues involved, what the brain believes about the pain and what it means, and how long it has been present. MRI is helpful for ruling out severe pathology such as infection, fracture, or malignancy; however, it is not always an accurate guide to the source of symptoms. The results of an MRI should always be taken into account as a small part of a bigger clinical picture when guiding treatment.

Talk to your physiotherapist for advice on any imaging results you have and what they might mean for your treatment and prognosis.

Did You Know?

Pins and needles or numbness felt in your hands can actually be caused by a problem in your neck?



Brain Teaser

How can you throw a ball as hard as you can and have it come back to you, even if it doesn't bounce off anything? There is nothing attached to it, and no one else catches or throws it back to you.

Fibula Fractures

What are they?

The lower part of the leg, from the knee down to the ankle, consists of two long bones that sit side by side: the thicker Tibia and the thinner Fibula. The bones are joined together by thick fibrous connective tissue called a "syndesmosis" and are firmly adhered to each other with just a small amount of movement between them, allowing for a small amount of rotation of the ankle.

A fracture of the fibula occurs when the bony tissue is disrupted or broken. It is a common injury and can occur at any part of the bone, depending on the mechanism of injury or the state of the bone.

How does it happen?

A fracture of any bone can occur when the force applied to any point exceeds the strength of the tissue at that point. However, as with all fractures, there are common patterns that are seen based on structural points of weakness in the bone and common patterns of movement. A few common ways that the fibula is broken are;

Blunt force: If something hits the bone hard enough, it will break on impact. This could include being hit by a ball hard enough or being hit by a car, as this is the site where a car's bumper would reach. Impacts like this that have enough force will often break both the Tibia and the Fibula at the same time. Skiing accidents where skis hit something suddenly or get stuck can also cause the bones to break at the level of the ski boots.

Ankle Sprain: When it comes to the fibula, the most common reason for the bone to be broken is during a severe ankle sprain. The ligaments that attach the outside of the foot to the fibula are so strong that when you twist your ankle badly enough, sometimes it is the bone that breaks. This is one of the most commonly missed injuries, partly because the fibula is not a weight-bearing bone. This means that after the initial pain and swelling have subsided, you can still walk on your foot without pain stopping you. It is important to have any severe ankle sprains imaged by X-ray to rule out any fibula fractures.

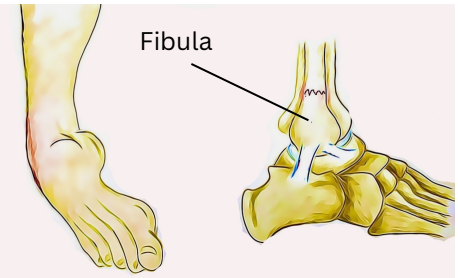
What are the symptoms?

In some cases, the symptoms of a fibula fracture will be unmistakable, with severe pain. Sometimes the skin will be broken and there will be bleeding. If the bone has been moved from its usual position, there will be a deformity under the skin. For smaller, displaced fractures, there will be pain over the bony aspects and a constant, deep pain that is worse when weight-bearing.

What is the treatment?

Physiotherapists are often the first to notice fractures caused by ankle sprains. Once a fracture has been confirmed, your medical team will decide on the best course of action to allow the bones to heal. This might include surgery to pin the bones together, casting or the use of a moon boot. Following a period of immobilisation, your physiotherapist can help you rehabilitate the surrounding tissues. This will include muscle strengthening, joint mobilisation, balance and control retraining, and a stretching program.

None of the information in this article is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always seek medical professional advice for your condition.



Answers: By throwing it up into the air

Roasted Almonds with Dates and Rosemary

Ingredients

200g Whole Almonds
2 Sprigs Fresh Rosemary
100g Medjool Dates
100g Goats or Feta Cheese
1 Clove of Garlic
2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
1 Tbsp. Fresh Lemon Juice
Salt and Pepper

1.Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius and line a baking tray with baking paper. Spread dates over baking tray and drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Cook for 10 minutes.
2.Add almonds to the baking tray; add a crushed clove of garlic and a sprig of rosemary. Continue baking for a further 10 minutes until almonds are toasted but not burnt.
3.Remove from oven and set aside to cool. Add goat's cheese and drizzle with lemon juice before serving.

Garnish with rosemary and serve as a delicious starter or snack.

Miami PHYSIOTHERAPY

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