**MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans**

Here's a little information on MRI scans and how to obtain a copy of yours on CD/DVD should you want to show it to your Osteopath, Chiropractor, Physiotherapist or massage therapist to assist with more targeted treatment or just to have a look at it for yourself.

MRI scans use strong magnetic fields and radio waves to take pictures. They are one of the most detailed ways to record images of bone, muscle and tissue and as radiation is not used, there is no risk of exposure to ionizing radiation.

The scans make for very interesting viewing and although they look a little confusing at first, once you understand that the images are "slices" of a particular area of the body usually from two different angles, sagittal (sideways) and axial (from the bottom up), then they become simpler to read. A good example to help grasp this is to imagine a whole salami on a bacon slicer which is then cut into think round slices (axial) and then another whole salami cut into lengthwise slices (sagittal). See below an example of Sagittal and axial T2-weighted images from an MRI of lumbar spine showing central posterior disc prolapses at both the L4/5 and L5/S1 levels (arrows).

  
  
If you are having an MRI on the NHS it is very unlikely that you will ever see the print out of your scan unless your consultant shows you it in your follow-up appointment. More often than not, you will be sent a copy of the written report only.  But, I believe if you have an MRI privately, you will be given the CD/DVD as a matter of course.  
  
If you want a CD/DVD from the NHS, then you MUST ask for it in advance of your scan. So inform the receptionist as you arrive for your appointment that you would like one made. Following your scan you will be given a letter by the receptionist to take to the Governance Department in the hospital where you will be asked to pay roughly £20 for the disc. It's best to have cash with you as it seems, often the system is down for card payments. Ask for a receipt and when you will be likely to receive it. Sometimes the CD will be available for collection a few hours after your scan but more often than not, you will be sent it by post at a future date (up to 21 days later) along with a password to access the disc.