

OpenMSK Terms of Use

Version 1.1 · Effective August 14, 2026

In short

- **Upload de-identified data only.**
- **Research use only.** Not a medical device; not for clinical diagnosis or patient care. Non-commercial use only.
- **Your original file isn't kept.** Your image is converted to NRRD, which strips the DICOM headers, and the file you uploaded is deleted after processing.
- **We keep the converted image and the results** to improve OpenMSK. This is a condition of using the free service. You can also install OpenMSK on your own computer and run it there — it's [available on GitHub](#).
- **What we keep may be shared or published in de-identified form** — for example in an open training dataset. Published data can't be recalled.
- **You can optionally tell us the subject's sex, age, height and weight.** Optional means optional — leave them blank and nothing about your results changes.
- **Email info@openmsk.com with your job ID** to have your data deleted, any time.

1. What this is

These terms cover your use of the OpenMSK web service at openmsk.com. By uploading data, you agree to them. OpenMSK is an independent academic project, not a university or hospital service.

OpenMSK is also free and open-source. You can download it from github.com/gattia/OpenMSK, install it on your own computer, and run the same analyses there, in which case none of this applies and no data ever leaves your machine. The repository has the code, the model weights, and install instructions. This website exists to make the pipeline easy to try without setting any of that up.

2. Research use only

OpenMSK is for non-commercial research and education. It isn't a medical device, and hasn't been reviewed or cleared by the FDA or any other regulator. **Don't use it for clinical diagnosis, treatment planning, or any decision about a patient.** Results are generated automatically, aren't reviewed by a clinician, and may be wrong.

Segmentation and shape fitting use neural networks, but they only produce measurements — nothing here makes a decision about anyone. BScore and all other outputs are research numbers, not validated clinical measures.

3. Your responsibility

When you upload data, you're confirming that:

1. It was **de-identified before you uploaded it** — to the HIPAA Safe Harbor standard or an equivalent. We strip DICOM metadata during processing (§4), but that's a safeguard, not a substitute: we can't verify that your data is de-identified, and it's your responsibility that it is.

2. You're allowed to upload it and to let us use it as described here, including any ethics approval or participant consent that applies.
3. Doing so doesn't break a law or an agreement you're bound by.
4. You won't upload identifying information, and won't try to re-identify anyone from data OpenMSK processes.

If you realise you've uploaded something you shouldn't have, email us and we'll delete it. Please also don't resell access, submit enough jobs to degrade the service for others, or poke at other people's jobs. We may turn down any submission.

4. What happens to your data

Uploads are processed on our server, hosted on commercial cloud infrastructure in the United States, so if you're outside the US your data is transferred here. Uploads and downloads use HTTPS, and the disks are encrypted at rest.

Once your image is read, it's **converted to NRRD** — a format that holds voxel data and geometry only, and can't carry DICOM metadata. Converting therefore strips the DICOM headers, and the image is renamed so your original filename isn't kept either. Where the analysis needs more than one echo (qDESS T2 mapping uses two), each echo is stored separately so the results stay reproducible.

From the headers we keep a fixed list of scan acquisition parameters, and discard everything else:

Kept: echo times, repetition time, inversion time, flip angle, echo train length, number of averages, pixel bandwidth, sequence name and variant, field strength, scanner manufacturer and model, receive coil, slice thickness, voxel spacing, image dimensions, patient position and orientation, body part, laterality, sex, age in years (90 and over recorded as 90), and height and weight where the headers carry them. Also two vendor private fields encoding gradient spoiling, (0019, 10B6) and (0019, 10B7), which are needed to compute T2 from qDESS and describe the pulse sequence, not the person.

Discarded: everything else — patient name, patient and accession numbers, all dates, institution, referring physician, device serial numbers, and all other private tags. Study and series identifiers are kept only as a one-way hash.

Subject information you enter yourself. The upload form also asks, optionally, for the subject's **sex, age, height and weight**. These are the covariates almost any musculoskeletal analysis needs, and most uploads carry none of them: a NIfTI or NRRD file has no headers at all, and research DICOMs often have these fields blanked by de-identification. Every one of them is optional. Leaving them all blank changes nothing about your results, and we don't ask twice.

What you enter is kept alongside the acquisition parameters above, on the same terms as everything else here, and may be published in de-identified form (§5). It is stored *separately* from anything read from the headers, and the two never overwrite each other — where they disagree, that is itself worth knowing. Age is recorded in whole years and capped the same way, so 90 means "90 or older". Sex, age under 90, height and weight are not among HIPAA Safe Harbor's eighteen identifiers, so recording them stays inside the de-identification standard §3 asks you to meet. Don't enter anything else about the subject, here or in a filename.

The file you uploaded, and anything extracted from it, is deleted when your job finishes, or within 24 hours, whichever comes first.

Your results come as a zip at a download link, which we also email you. That link isn't password-protected, so anyone who has it can download your results — don't forward it. The zip is deleted 24 hours after your job finishes.

5. What we keep, and why

We keep the converted image, the derived results, the acquisition parameters above, and any subject information you chose to enter, and use them to improve OpenMSK and for musculoskeletal imaging research. Keeping them is a condition of using the free hosted service. If you'd prefer to keep your data entirely in-house, you can install OpenMSK from [GitHub](#) and run the same pipeline on your own computer instead (\$1).

You agree that what we keep may go into our training and evaluation data, be shared with other researchers, and be **published in de-identified form** — we periodically release OpenMSK training and benchmark data so results can be reproduced. Anything published contains only converted images, derived results, acquisition parameters, and subject information you entered; never original files, filenames, or email addresses. Published data can't be recalled. We don't sell any of it.

We also store a SHA-256 checksum of the image data, so we can spot the same scan being uploaded twice and avoid double-counting it. A checksum is one-way — it can't reproduce or reveal the image.

6. Your email address, and deleting your data

We use your email to send you your results, and occasionally to contact you about OpenMSK — major changes, related papers, or collaboration. We keep it indefinitely, don't sell it, and will stop emailing you or delete it if you ask.

To have your data deleted, email info@openmsk.com with your job ID (it's on the results page and in your notification email) or the email address you used. That includes the derived results. One person handles these, so allow up to 90 days. We may keep the duplicate-detection checksum, which identifies no one, and we can't pull back anything already published.

7. Licensing and intellectual property

OpenMSK builds on components licensed for non-commercial academic use, and the neural shape modelling method it uses is the subject of a pending patent application filed by Stanford University. Nothing in these terms grants you any licence — patent, copyright, or otherwise — beyond using this service for non-commercial research. If you want to use OpenMSK or its methods commercially, get in touch first.

The example scan and results we publish on the home page are a maintainer's own knee, shared deliberately. You're welcome to use them for research and teaching, including in publications, provided you cite the paper below. They are not for clinical use, and the same "research use only" terms in §2 apply to them.

Results we produce for you are yours to use in your research and to publish. If OpenMSK contributes to your work, please cite it:

Goyal A, Belibi F, Sahani V, Pedersen R, Vainberg Y, Williams A, Chu C, Haddock B, Gold G, Chaudhari A, Kogan F, Gatti A. *Automating Imaging Biomarker Analysis for Knee Osteoarthritis Using an Open-Source MRI-Based Deep Learning Pipeline*. medRxiv 2025. doi:10.1101/2025.02.21.25322094

8. Using OpenMSK in a research study

Guidance for investigators, not legal advice.

- **Only send de-identified data** — HIPAA Safe Harbor or equivalent. If your protocol requires data to stay on infrastructure your institution has reviewed, install OpenMSK from [GitHub](#) onto your own machine and run it

there instead.

- **Disclose retention and publication** in your protocol and consent form. Suggested wording: *"De-identified image and analysis data will be processed using OpenMSK, a non-commercial academic research tool. De-identified images and derived measurements will be retained by the OpenMSK team indefinitely, may be used to improve their analysis methods, and may be included in publicly released de-identified research datasets. They will not be linked to any identifying information."*
- **Note in your risk section** that data included in a public de-identified release can't later be withdrawn (§5).
- **Describe it accurately:** *"Analysis is performed by OpenMSK, an independent academic tool hosted on commercial cloud infrastructure in the United States; only de-identified data are submitted."*

If your board needs something this doesn't cover, get in touch.

9. No warranty, and no liability

OpenMSK runs on one server, maintained as best we can. It may be slow or unavailable without warning, jobs may be lost, and we may change or shut it down at any time. Don't treat it as the only copy of anything, and download your results before they expire.

THE SERVICE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, ACCURACY, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW, WE ARE NOT LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGES OR LOSSES ARISING FROM YOUR USE OF THE SERVICE, INCLUDING LOST DATA OR LOST RESEARCH TIME.

If data you upload in breach of §3 causes a claim against us, you agree to cover it.

10. Changes, law, contact

We may update these terms; the version and date above will change, and whichever version is current governs uploads made while it's in effect. A copy of the version that applied to your job is included in your results zip, so you always keep the terms you actually agreed to. We won't retroactively change how we use data already uploaded under an earlier version. If you need a superseded version, ask us.

California law governs these terms, and any dispute goes to the courts of California. Questions: info@openmsk.com.