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# MRtrix Documentation

*Release 3.0*

**MRtrix contributors**

**Dec 14, 2022**



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*MRtrix* provides a large suite of tools for image processing, analysis and visualisation, with a focus on the analysis of white matter using diffusion-weighted MRI. Features include the estimation of fibre orientation distributions using constrained spherical deconvolution ([Tournier2004]; [Tournier2007]; [Jeurissen2014]), visualisation of these via directionally-encoded colour maps ([Dhollander2015a]) and panchromatic sharpening ([Dhollander2015b]), a probabilistic streamlines algorithm for fibre tractography of white matter ([Tournier2012]), voxel-based analysis of apparent fibre density and fibre cross-section ([Raffelt2012]; [Raffelt2015]; [Raffelt2017]), quantitative structural connectivity analysis ([Smith2012]; [Smith2013]; [Smith2015]; [Christiaens2015]), and non-linear spatial registration of fibre orientation distribution images ([Raffelt2011]).

These applications have been written from scratch in C++, using the functionality provided by [Eigen](#), and [Qt](#). The software is currently capable of handling DICOM, NIfTI and AnalyseAVW image formats, amongst others. The source code is distributed under the [Mozilla Public License](#).



### 1.1 Acknowledging this work

If you wish to include results generated using the *MRtrix3* package in a publication, please include a line such as the following to acknowledge the work of our developers:

- Processing was performed using the MRtrix3 package ([www.mrtrix.org](http://www.mrtrix.org)).

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**Note:** Many individual methods included in the MRtrix3 software have been published in scientific journals and should be cited as such. Please check the references listed on the specific *application's page* to ensure the appropriate reference is included, so that the scientists behind all methods receive proper acknowledgement.

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### 1.2 Warranty

The software described in this manual has no warranty, it is provided “as is”. It is your responsibility to validate the behavior of the routines and their accuracy using the source code provided, or to purchase support and warranties from commercial redistributors. Consult the [Mozilla Public License](#) for further details.

### 1.3 License

MRtrix is free software: you can redistribute it and/or modify it under the terms of the [Mozilla Public License](#) as published by the [Free Software Foundation](#), either version 2 of the License, or (at your option) any later version.

MRtrix is distributed in the hope that it will be useful, but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the [Mozilla Public License](#) for more details. You should have received a copy of [Mozilla Public License](#) along with MRtrix. If not, see <http://mozilla.org/MPL/2.0/>.



We outline the steps for installing *MRtrix3* on a Linux machine. Please consult the [MRtrix3 forum](#) if you encounter any issues with the configure, build or runtime operations of *MRtrix3*.

### 2.1 Check requirements

To install *MRtrix3*, you will need the following:

- a C++11 compliant compiler (GCC version  $\geq 4.9$ , clang)
- Python version  $\geq 2.7$
- The `zlib` compression library
- Eigen version  $\geq 3.2$
- Qt version  $\geq 4.7$  [*GUI components only*]

and optionally:

- `libTIFF` version  $\geq 4.0$  (for TIFF support)
- `FFTW` version  $\geq 3.0$  (for improved performance in certain applications, currently only `mrdegibbs`)

**Warning:** To run the GUI components of *MRtrix3* (`mrview` & `shview`), you will also need:

- an OpenGL 3.3 compliant graphics card and corresponding software driver

Note that this implies you *cannot run the GUI components over a remote X11 connection*, since it can't support OpenGL 3.3+ rendering - see [Remote display issues](#) for details.

## 2.2 Install Dependencies

The installation procedure will depend on your system. Package names may change between distributions, and between different releases of the same distribution. The commands below are suggestions based on what has been reported to work in the past, but may need to be amended. See below for hints on how to proceed in this case.

- Ubuntu Linux (and derivatives, e.g. Linux Mint):

```
sudo apt-get install git g++ python python-numpy libeigen3-dev zlib1g-dev libqt4-
↳opengl-dev libgl1-mesa-dev libfftw3-dev libtiff5-dev
```

- RPM-based distros (Fedora, CentOS):

```
sudo yum install git g++ python numpy eigen3-devel zlib-devel libqt4-devel libgl1-
↳mesa-devel fftw-devel libtiff-devel
```

on Fedora 24, this is reported to work:

```
sudo yum install git gcc-c++ python numpy eigen3-devel zlib-devel qt-devel mesa-
↳libGL-devel fftw-devel libtiff-devel
```

- Arch Linux:

```
sudo pacman -Syu git python python-numpy gcc zlib eigen qt5-svg fftw libtiff
```

### 2.2.1 If this doesn't work

You may find that your package installer is unable to find the packages listed, or that the subsequent steps fail due to missing dependencies (particularly the `./configure` command). In this case, you will need to search the package database and find the correct names for these packages:

- git
- your compiler (gcc 4.9 or above, or clang)
- Python version >2.7
- NumPy
- the zlib compression library and its corresponding development header/include files
- the Eigen template library (only consists of development header/include files);
- Qt version >4.7, its corresponding development header/include files, and the executables required to compile the code. Note this will most likely be broken up into several packages, depending on how your distribution has chosen to distribute this. You will need to get those that provide these Qt modules: Core, GUI, OpenGL, SVG, and the `qmake`, `rcc` & `moc` executables (note these will probably be included in one of the other packages).

**Warning:** The compiler included in Ubuntu 12.04 and other older distributions is no longer capable of compiling *MRtrix3*, as it now requires C++11 support. The solution is to use a newer compiler as provided by the [Ubuntu toolchain PPA](#) - follow the link for instructions on how to add the PPA. Once the PPA has been added, you'll need to issue a `sudo apt-get update`, followed by `sudo apt-get install g++-4.9`. You will probably also need to tell `./configure` to use this compiler (see `./configure -help` for further options):

```
CXX=g++-4.9 ./configure
```

## 2.2.2 If this *really* doesn't work

If for whatever reasons you need to install *MRtrix3* on a system with older dependencies, and you are unable to update the software (e.g. you want to run *MRtrix3* on a centrally-managed HPC cluster), you can as a last resort use the procedure described in *Standalone installation on Linux*.

## 2.3 Git setup

Set up your git environment as per the [Git instructions page](#)

## 2.4 Build *MRtrix3*

1. Clone the *MRtrix3* repository:

```
git clone https://github.com/MRtrix3/mrtrix3.git
```

or if you have set up your SSH keys (for collaborators):

```
git clone git@github.com:MRtrix3/mrtrix3.git
```

2. Configure the *MRtrix3* install:

```
cd mrtrix3
./configure
```

If this does not work, examine the 'configure.log' file that is generated by this step, it may give clues as to what went wrong.

3. Build the binaries:

```
./build
```

## 2.5 Set up *MRtrix3*

1. Update the shell startup file, so that the locations of *MRtrix3* commands and scripts will be added to your PATH environment variable.

If you are not familiar or comfortable with modification of shell files, *MRtrix3* now provides a convenience script that will perform this setup for you (assuming that you are using `bash` or equivalent interpreter). From the top level *MRtrix3* directory, run the following:

```
./set_path
```

2. Close the terminal and start another one to ensure the startup file is read (or just type 'bash')
3. Type `mrview` to check that everything works
4. You may also want to have a look through the [List of \*MRtrix3\* configuration file options](#) and set anything you think might be required on your system.

**Note:** The above assumes that your shell will read the `~/.bashrc` file at startup time. This is not always guaranteed, depending on how your system is configured. If you find that the above doesn't work (e.g. typing `mrview` returns a 'command not found' error), try changing step 1 to instruct the `set_path` script to update `PATH` within a different file, for example `~/.bash_profile` or `~/.profile`, e.g. as follows:

```
./set_path ~/.bash_profile
```

## 2.6 Keeping *MRtrix3* up to date

1. You can update your installation at any time by opening a terminal in the *MRtrix3* folder, and typing:

```
git pull
./build
```

2. If this doesn't work immediately, it may be that you need to re-run the configure script:

```
./configure
```

and re-run step 1 again.

## 2.7 Setting the CPU architecture for optimal performance

By default, `configure` will cause the build script to produce generic code suitable for any current CPU. If you want to ensure optimal performance on your system, you can request that `configure` produce code tailored to your specific CPU architecture, which will allow it to use all available CPU instructions and tune the code differently. This can improve performance particularly for linear algebra operations as *Eigen* will then make use of these extensions. However, note that this means the executables produced will likely *not run* on a different CPUs with different instruction sets, resulting in 'illegal instruction' runtime errors. If you intend to run *MRtrix3* on a variety of different systems with a range of CPUs, or you have no idea what the CPU is on your target system, it is safest to avoid changing the default.

Specifying a different CPU architecture is done by setting the `ARCH` environment variable prior to invoking `./configure`. The value of this variable will then be passed to the compiler via the `-march` option. To get the best performance *on the current system*, you can specify `native` as the architecture, leaving it up to the compiler to detect your particular CPU and its available instructions. For example:

```
export ARCH=native
./configure
./build
```

For more specific architectures, you can provide any value from the [list of specifiers understood by the compiler](#), for example `ARCH='sandybridge' ./configure`

## 2.8 Standalone installation on Linux

In some cases, users need to install *MRtrix3* on systems running older distributions, over which they have little or no control, for example centrally-managed HPC clusters. In such cases, there genuinely is no way to install the

dependencies required to compile and run *MRtrix3*. There are two ways to address this problem: *static executables*, and the *standalone packager*. With both approaches, you can compile *MRtrix3* on a modern distro (within a virtual machine for example), package it up, and install it on any Linux system without worrying about dependencies.

## 2.8.1 Static build

The simplest approach to this problem is to build so-called *static executables*, which have no run-time dependencies. This can be accomplished by generating a static configuration before building the software, as follows.

First, obtain the code and extract or clone it on a modern distribution (Arch, Ubuntu 16.04, Mint 18, ..., potentially with a virtual machine if required). Then, from the main *MRtrix3* folder:

```
./build clean
git pull
./configure --static [--nogui]
./build
```

Note that this requires the availability of static versions of the required libraries. This is generally not a problem, most distributions will provide those by default, with the exception of Qt. If you require a static build of MRView, you will most likely need to build a *static version of Qt* beforehand. Use the `--nogui` option to skip installation of GUI components, which rely on Qt.

You can then deploy the software onto target systems, as described in the *Deploying MRtrix3* section.

## 2.8.2 Standalone packager

In the rare cases where the *static build* procedure above doesn't work for you, *MRtrix3* now includes the `package_mrtrix` script, which is designed to package an existing and fully-functional installation from one system, so that it can be installed as a self-contained standalone package on another system. What this means is that you can now compile *MRtrix3* on a modern distro (within a virtual machine for example), package it up, and install it on any Linux system without worrying about dependencies.

**Note:** this is *not* the recommended way to install *MRtrix3*, and may not work for your system. This is provided on a best-effort basis, as a convenience for users who genuinely have no alternative.

### What it does

The `package_mrtrix` script is included in the top-level folder of the *MRtrix3* package (if you don't have it, use `git pull` to update). In essence, all it does is collate all the dynamic libraries necessary for runtime operation into a single folder, which you can then copy over and extract onto target systems. For a truly standalone installation, you need to add the `--standalone` option, which will also include any system libraries required for runtime operation from your current system, making them available on any target system.

### Limitations

- **OpenGL support:** this approach cannot magically make your system run `mrview` if it doesn't already support OpenGL 3.3 and above. This is a hardware driver issue, and can only be addressed by upgrading the drivers for your system - something that may or may not be possible.
- **GUI support:** while this approach collates all the X11 libraries that are needed to launch the program, it is likely that these will then dynamically attempt to load further libraries that reside on your system. Unfortunately, this can introduce binary compatibility issues, and cause the GUI components to abort. This might happen even if your system does have OpenGL 3.3 support. There is unfortunately no simple solution to this.

- **Installation on remote systems:** bear in mind that running the GUI components over a remote X11 connection is not possible, since the GLX protocol does not support OpenGL 3 and above (see *Remote display issues* for details). You may be able to use an OpenGL-capable VNC connection, but if that is not possible, there is little point in installing the GUI components on the remote server. The recommendation would be to configure with the `-nogui` option to skip the GUI components. You should also be able to access your data over the network (e.g. using SAMBA or SSHFS), in which case you would be able to display the images by running `mrview` locally and loading the images over the shared network drives.

### Instructions

First, obtain the code and extract or clone it on a modern distribution (Arch, Ubuntu 14.04, Mint 17, ..., potentially with a virtual machine if required). Then, from the main *MRtrix3* folder:

```
./build clean
git pull
./configure [-nogui]
./build
./package_mrtrix -standalone
```

Then copy the resulting `_package/mrtrix3` folder to the desired location on the target system (maybe your own home folder). To make the *MRtrix3* command available on the command-line, the `bin/` folder needs to be added to your `PATH` (note this assumes that you're running the BASH shell):

```
export PATH="$(pwd)/bin:$PATH"
```

Note that the above command will only add *MRtrix3* to the `PATH` for the current session. You would need to add the equivalent line to your users' startup scripts, using whichever mechanism is appropriate for your system.

We outline the steps for installing *MRtrix3* on macOS. Please consult the [MRtrix3 forum](#) if you encounter any issues with the configure, build or runtime operations of *MRtrix3*.

### 3.1 Check requirements

To install *MRtrix3*, you will need the following:

- a C++11 compliant compiler (e.g. `clang` in Xcode)
- Python version  $\geq 2.7$  (already included in macOS)
- The `zlib` compression library (already included in macOS)
- Eigen version  $\geq 3.2$
- Qt version  $\geq 5.1$  [*GUI components only*] - important: versions prior to this will *not* work

and optionally:

- `libTIFF` version  $\geq 4.0$  (for TIFF support)
- `FFTW` version  $\geq 3.0$  (for improved performance in certain applications, currently only `mrdegibbs`)

**Warning:** To run the GUI components of *MRtrix3* (`mrview` & `shview`), you will also need:

- an OpenGL 3.3 compliant graphics card and corresponding software driver - thankfully OpenGL 3.3 is supported across the entire macOS range with OS versions  $\geq 10.9$ .

---

**Note:** If you currently do not plan to contribute to the *MRtrix3* code, the most convenient way to install *MRtrix3* on macOS is to install it via homebrew.

- If you do not have homebrew installed, you can install it via:

```
/usr/bin/ruby -e "$(curl -fsSL https://raw.githubusercontent.com/Homebrew/install/  
↪master/install)"
```

- You need to add the MRtrix3 tap to homebrew: `brew tap MRtrix3/mrtrix3`
- You can now install the latest version of MRtrix3 with: `brew install mrtrix3`

This should be all you need to do. For all installation options type `brew info mrtrix3`. MRtrix3 will get upgraded when you upgrade all homebrew packages `brew update && brew upgrade`. If you want to avoid upgrading MRtrix3 the next time you upgrade homebrew you can do so with `brew pin mrtrix3`.

---

## 3.2 Install Dependencies

1. Update macOS to version 10.10 (Yosemite) or higher - OpenGL 3.3 will typically not work on older versions
2. Install XCode from the Apple Store
3. Install Eigen3 and Qt5.

There are several alternative ways to do this, depending on your current system setup. The most convenient is probably to use your favorite package manager ([Homebrew](#) or [MacPorts](#)), or install one of these if you haven't already.

If you find your first attempt doesn't work, *please* resist the temptation to try one of the other options: in our experience, this only leads to further conflicts, which won't help installing MRtrix3 *and* will make things more difficult to fix later. Once you pick one of these options, we strongly recommend you stick with it, and consult the [community forum](#) if needed for advice and troubleshooting.

- With [Homebrew](#):
  - Install Eigen3: `brew install eigen`
  - Install Qt5: `brew install qt5`
  - Install pkg-config: `brew install pkg-config`
  - Add Qt's binaries to your path: `export PATH=`brew --prefix`/opt/qt5/bin:$PATH`
- With [MacPorts](#):
  - Install Eigen3: `port install eigen3`
  - Install Qt5: `port install qt5`
  - Install pkg-config: `port install pkgconfig`
  - Add Qt's binaries to your path: `export PATH=/opt/local/libexec/qt5/bin:$PATH`
- As a last resort, you can manually install Eigen3 and Qt5: You can use this procedure if you have good reasons to avoid the other options, or if for some reason you cannot get either [Homebrew](#) or [MacPorts](#) to work.
  - Install Eigen3: download and extract the source code from [eigen.tuxfamily.org](http://eigen.tuxfamily.org)
  - **Install Qt5: download and install the latest version from [http://download.qt.io/official\\_releases/qt/](http://download.qt.io/official_releases/qt/)**  
You need to select the file labelled `qt-opensource-mac-x64-clang-5.X.X.dmg`. Note that you need to use at least Qt 5.1, since earlier versions don't support OpenGL 3.3. We advise you to use the latest version (5.7.0 as of the last update). You can choose to install it system-wide or just in your home folder, whichever suits - just remember where you installed it.

- **Make sure Qt5 tools are in your PATH** (edit as appropriate) `export PATH=/path/to/Qt5/5.X.X/clang_64/bin:$PATH`
  - **Set the CFLAG variable for eigen** (edit as appropriate) `export EIGEN_CFLAGS="-isystem /where/you/extracted/eigen"` Make sure *not* to include the final /Eigen folder in the path name - use the folder in which it resides instead!
4. Install TIFF and FFTW library.
- With **Homebrew**:
    - Install TIFF: `brew install libtiff`
    - Install FFTW: `brew install fftw`
  - With **MacPorts**:
    - Install TIFF: `port install tiff`
    - Install FFTW: `port install fftw-3`

### 3.3 Git setup

Set up your git environment as per the [Git instructions page](#)

### 3.4 Build MRtrix3

1. Clone the *MRtrix3* repository:

```
git clone https://github.com/MRtrix3/mrtrix3.git
```

or if you have set up your SSH keys (for collaborators):

```
git clone git@github.com:MRtrix3/mrtrix3.git
```

2. Configure the *MRtrix3* install:

```
cd mrtrix3
./configure
```

If this does not work, examine the 'configure.log' file that is generated by this step, it may give clues as to what went wrong.

3. Build the binaries:

```
./build
```

### 3.5 Set up MRtrix3

1. Update the shell startup file, so that the shell can locate the *MRtrix3* commands and scripts, by adding the `bin/` folder to your `PATH` environment variable.

If you are not familiar or comfortable with modification of shell files, *MRtrix3* provides a convenience script that will perform this setup for you (assuming that you are using `bash` or equivalent interpreter). From the top level *MRtrix3* directory, run the following:

```
./set_path
```

2. Close the terminal and start another one to ensure the startup file is read (or just type 'bash')
3. Type `mrview` to check that everything works
4. You may also want to have a look through the *List of MRtrix3 configuration file options* and set anything you think might be required on your system.

---

**Note:** The above assumes that your shell will read the `~/ .bash_profile` file at startup time. This is not always guaranteed, depending on how your system is configured. If you find that the above doesn't work (e.g. typing `mrview` returns a 'command not found' error), try changing step 1 to instruct the `set_path` script to update `PATH` within a different file, for example `~/ .profile` or `~/ .bashrc`, e.g. as follows:

```
./set_path ~/.profile
```

---

## 3.6 Keeping MRtrix3 up to date

1. You can update your installation at any time by opening a terminal, navigating to the *MRtrix3* folder (e.g. `cd mrtrix3`), and typing:

```
git pull
./build
```

2. If this doesn't work immediately, it may be that you need to re-run the configure script:

```
./configure
```

and re-run step 1 again.

---

## Windows installation

---

We outline the steps for installing *MRtrix3* for Windows using *MSYS2*. Please consult the [MRtrix3 forum](#) if you encounter any issues with the configure, build or runtime operations of *MRtrix3*.

**Warning:** Some of the Python scripts provided with *MRtrix3* are dependent on external software tools (for instance FSL). If these packages are not available on Windows, then the corresponding *MRtrix3* scripts also cannot be run on Windows. A virtual machine may therefore be required in order to use these particular scripts; though *MRtrix3* may still be installed natively on Windows for other tasks.

### 4.1 Check requirements

To install *MRtrix3*, you will need the following:

- a C++11 compliant compiler
- Python version  $\geq 2.7$
- The *zlib* compression library
- Eigen version  $\geq 3.2$
- Qt version  $\geq 4.7$  [*GUI components only*]

and optionally:

- *libTIFF* version  $\geq 4.0$  (for TIFF support)
- *FFTW* version  $\geq 3.0$  (for improved performance in certain applications, currently only *mrdegibbs*)

---

**Note:** All of these dependencies are installed below by the *MSYS2* package manager.

---

**Warning:** To run the GUI components of *MRtrix3* (*mrview* & *shview*), you will also need:

- an OpenGL 3.3 compliant graphics card and corresponding software driver

**Warning:** When following the instructions below, use the ‘MinGW-w64 Win64 shell’; ‘MSYS2 shell’ and ‘MinGW-w64 Win32 shell’ should be avoided.

## 4.2 Install and update MSYS2

1. Download and install the most recent 64-bit MSYS2 installer from <http://msys2.github.io/> (*msys2-x86\_64-\*.exe*), and following the installation instructions from the [MSYS2 wiki](#).
2. Run the program ‘MinGW-w64 Win64 Shell’ from the start menu.
3. Update the system packages, as per the instructions:

```
pacman -Syuu
```

Close the terminal, start a new ‘MinGW-w64 Win64 Shell’, and repeat as necessary until no further packages are updated.

**Warning:** At time of writing, this MSYS2 system update will give a number of instructions, including: terminating the terminal when the update is completed, and modifying the shortcuts for executing the shell(s). Although these instructions are not as prominent as they could be, it is *vital* that they are followed correctly!

## 4.3 Install *MRtrix3* dependencies

1. From the ‘MinGW-w64 Win64 Shell’ run:

```
pacman -S git python pkg-config mingw-w64-x86_64-gcc mingw-w64-x86_64-eigen3_
↪mingw-w64-x86_64-qt5 mingw-w64-x86_64-fftw mingw-w64-x86_64-libtiff
```

Sometimes *pacman* may fail to find a particular package from any of the available mirrors. If this occurs, you can download the relevant package from [SourceForge](#): place both the package file and corresponding *.sig* file into the `/var/cache/pacman/pkg` directory, and repeat the *pacman* call above.

Sometimes *pacman* may refuse to install a particular package, claiming e.g.:

```
error: failed to commit transaction (conflicting files)
mingw-w64-x86_64-eigen3: /mingw64 exists in filesystem
Errors occurred, no packages were upgraded.
```

Firstly, if the offending existing target is something trivial that can be deleted, this is all that should be required. Otherwise, it is possible that MSYS2 may mistake a `_file_` existing on the filesystem as a pre-existing `_directory_`; a good example is that quoted above, where *pacman* claims that directory `/mingw64` exists, but it is in fact the two files `/mingw64.exe` and `/mingw64.ini` that cause the issue. Temporarily renaming these two files, then changing their names back after *pacman* has completed the installation, should solve the problem.

## 4.4 Set up git and download *MRtrix3* sources

1. Configure global settings for Git in the ‘MinGW-w64 Win64 Shell’:

```
git config --global user.name "John Doe"
git config --global user.email johndoe@example.com
git config --global push.default upstream
```

2. Clone the *MRtrix3* repository:

```
git clone https://github.com/MRtrix3/mrtrix3.git
```

## 4.5 Build *MRtrix3*

1. Configure the *MRtrix3* install:

```
cd mrtrix3
./configure
```

If this does not work, examine the ‘configure.log’ file that is generated by this step, it may give clues as to what went wrong.

2. Build the binaries:

```
./build
```

## 4.6 Set up *MRtrix3*

1. Update the shell startup file, so that the shell can locate the *MRtrix3* commands and scripts, by adding the `bin/` folder to your `PATH` environment variable.

If you are not familiar or comfortable with modification of shell files, *MRtrix3* provides a convenience script that will perform this setup for you (assuming that you are using `bash` or equivalent interpreter). From the top level *MRtrix3* directory, run the following:

```
./set_path
```

2. Close the terminal and start another one to ensure the startup file is read (or just type ‘bash’)
3. Type `mrview` to check that everything works
4. You may also want to have a look through the *List of MRtrix3 configuration file options* and set anything you think might be required on your system.

## 4.7 Keeping *MRtrix3* up to date

1. You can update your installation at any time by typing:

```
git pull
./build
```

2. If this doesn't work immediately, it may be that you need to re-run the configure script:

```
./configure
```

and re-run step 1 again.

## 4.8 Compiling external projects with `msys2`

In `msys2`, the `ln -s` command actually creates a *copy* of the target, *not* a symbolic link. By doing so, the build script is unable to identify the location of the MRtrix libraries when trying to compile an external module.

The simplest way around this is simply to invoke the build script of the main *MRtrix3* install directly. For example, if compiling an external project called `myproject`, residing in a folder alongside the main `mrtrix3` folder, the build script can be invoked with:

```
# current working directory is 'myproject':  
../mrtrix3/build
```

If you really want a symbolic link, one solution is to use a standard Windows command prompt, with Administrator privileges: In the file explorer, go to `C:\Windows\system32`, locate the file `cmd.exe`, right-click and select 'Run as administrator'. Within this prompt, use the `mklink` command (note that the argument order passed to `mklink` is reversed with respect to `ln -s`; i.e. provide the location of the link, *then* the target). Make sure that you provide the *full path* to both link and target, e.g.:

```
mklink C:\msys64\home\username\src\my_project\build_  
↔C:\msys64\home\username\src\MRtrix3\build
```

and `msys64` should be able to interpret the softlink path correctly (confirm with `ls -la`).

I have also found recently that the build script will not correctly detect use of a softlink for compiling an external project when run under Python2, so Python3 must be used explicitly.

---

## Deploying MRtrix3

---

The installation instructions provided in the preceding pages produce a working install for the current user only. There are many advantages to this:

- no need for admin privileges, either for the initial install (beyond installation of dependencies), or any subsequent updates;
- users are in control of the precise version of MRtrix3 they are using for their specific projects - no system updates will interfere with their study.

However, system administrators and software distributors will want to install *MRtrix3* in a system-wide location to make it accessible to all users; and/or to deploy it to other systems without requiring a full rebuild. While *MRtrix3* does not provide an explicit command to do this, it is a trivial process:

- build the code
- copy the `bin/`, `lib/` and `share/` folders together to the desired target location
- set the `PATH` to point to the `bin/` folder.

This can be done any number of ways. The only requirement is that these 3 folders are co-located alongside each other, so that the executables can find the *MRtrix3* shared library, and the scripts can find the requisite python modules.

Note also that this structure is broadly compatible with the [Linux Filesystem Hierarchy Standard](#). It should be perfectly possible to merge the *MRtrix3* `bin/`, `lib/` and `share/` folders with the system's existing equivalent locations in `/usr/` or `/usr/local/` if desired, in which case there would be no need to explicitly set the `PATH` (assuming `/usr/bin` or `/usr/local/bin/` are already in the `PATH`). However, there is no *requirement* that it be installed anywhere in particular, and we expect most sysadmins will prefer to place them in a separate location to minimise any chance of conflict.

Below we provide step-by-step instructions for creating a single tar file that can then be copied to other systems and extracted in the desired folder:

1. Obtain, configure and build the desired version of *MRtrix3*:

```
$ git checkout http://github.com/MRtrix3/mrtrix3.git
$ cd mrtrix3
```

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```
$ ./configure
$ ./build
```

2. Collate the relevant folders and their contents into a single archive file:

```
$ tar cvfz mrtrix3.tgz bin/ lib/ share/
```

3. Copy the resulting `mrtrix3.tgz` file over to the target system, into a suitable location., for example (as root):

```
# mkdir /usr/local/mrtrix3
# cp mrtrix3.tgz /usr/local/mrtrix3/
```

4. Extract the archive in this location (as root):

```
# cd /usr/local/mrtrix3/
# tar xvfz mrtrix3.tgz
```

Assuming no errors were generated, you can safely remove the `mrtrix3.tgz` file at this point.

5. Add the newly-extracted `bin/` folder to the `PATH`, e.g.:

```
$ export PATH=/usr/local/mrtrix3/bin:$PATH
```

At which point `MRtrix3` command should be available to the corresponding user.

Note that the above command will only add `MRtrix3` to the `PATH` for the current shell session. You would need to add the equivalent line to your users' startup scripts, using whichever mechanism is appropriate for your system.

These instructions outline a few issues specific to high-performance computing (HPC) systems.

## 6.1 Installing *MRtrix3*

Most HPC clusters will run some flavour of GNU/Linux and hence a cluster administrator should be able to follow the steps outlined for a *Linux installation*. In particular, if your sysadmin is able to install the required dependencies (the preferred option), you should be able to subsequently *Build MRtrix3*.

However, it is not uncommon for HPC systems to run stable, and hence relatively old distributions, with outdated dependencies. This is particularly problematic since *MRtrix3* relies on recent technologies (C++11, OpenGL 3.3), which are only available on recent distributions. There is therefore a good chance these dependencies simply cannot be installed (certainly not without a huge amount of effort on the part of your sysadmin). In such cases, one can instead attempt a *Standalone installation on Linux*. Alternatively, if you (and your sysadmin) are comfortable with installation of dependencies from source within your home directory, you can try the instructions below.

## 6.2 Installation of *MRtrix3* and dependencies from source

The following instructions list the steps I used to compile *MRtrix3* natively on a local HPC cluster. Replicating these instructions line-for-line may not work on another system; I'm just providing these instructions here in case they help to point somebody in the right direction, or encourage users to try a native installation rather than resorting to transferring binaries compiled on another system.

- Installing a C++11-compliant g++ from source

Note that during this process, there will be *three* gcc directories created: one is for the source code (including that of some prerequisites), one is for compilation objects, and one is the target of the final installation (since you almost certainly won't be able to install this version of gcc over the top of whatever is provided by the HPC sysadmin).

```
svn co svn://gcc.gnu.org/svn/gcc/branches/gcc-5-branch gcc_src/
```

(Don't checkout the trunk gcc code; *MRtrix3* will currently not compile with it)

The following gcc dependencies will be built as part of the gcc compilation, provided that they are placed in the correct location within the gcc source directory.

```
wget https://gmplib.org/download/gmp/gmp-6.1.1.tar.bz2
tar -xf gmp-6.1.1.tar.bz2
mv gmp-6.1.1/ gcc_src/gmp/
wget ftp://ftp.gnu.org/gnu/mpc/mpc-1.0.3.tar.gz
tar -xf mpc-1.0.3.tar.gz
mv mpc-1.0.3/ gcc_src/mpc/
wget http://www.mpfr.org/mpfr-current/mpfr-3.1.4.tar.gz
tar -xf mpfr-3.1.4.tar.gz
mv mpfr-3.1.4/ gcc_src/mpfr/
```

With the following, the configure script (which resides within the gcc\_src directory in this example) must *not* be executed within that directory; rather, it must be executed from an alternative directory, which will form the target location for the compilation object files. The target installation directory (set using the --prefix option below) must be a location for which you have write access; most likely somewhere in your home directory.

```
mkdir gcc_obj; cd gcc_obj/
../gcc_src/configure --prefix=/path/to/installed/gcc --disable-multilib
make && make install
```

- Installing Python3 from source

My local HPC cluster provided Python version 2.6.6, which was not adequate to successfully run the configure and build scripts in *MRtrix3*. Therefore this necessitated a manual Python install - a newer version of Python 2 would also work, but downloading Python 3 should result in less ambiguity about which version is being run.

```
wget https://www.python.org/ftp/python/3.5.2/Python-3.5.2.tgz
tar -xf Python-3.5.2.tgz
mv Python-3.5.2/ python3/
cd python3/
./configure
./make
cd ../
```

- Installing Eigen3

```
wget http://bitbucket.org/eigen/eigen/get/3.2.8.tar.gz
tar -xf 3.2.8.tar.gz
mv eigen* eigen3/
```

- Installing *MRtrix3*

Personally I prefer to install a no-GUI version of *MRtrix3* on high-performance computing systems, and transfer files to my local system if I need to view anything; so I use the -nogui flag for the configure script.

```
git clone https://github.com/MRtrix3/mrtrix3.git
cd mrtrix3/
export CXX=/path/to/installed/gcc/bin/g++
export EIGEN_CFLAGS="-isystem /path/to/eigen3/"
```

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```
export LD_LIBRARY_PATH="/path/to/installed/gcc/lib64:$LD_LIBRARY_PATH"
../python3/python configure -nogui
../python3/python build
```

If you encounter issues when running *MRtrix3* commands that resemble the following:

```
mrconvert: /usr/lib64/libstdc++.so.6: version `GLIBCXX_3.4.9' not found
(required by mrconvert)
```

This indicates that the shared library of the compiler version installed on the cluster is being found before that of the C++11-compliant compiler installed manually. The `lib64/` directory of the manually-installed `gcc` version must appear *before* that of the version installed on the cluster in the `LD_LIBRARY_PATH` environment variable.

## 6.3 Remote display

Most people would expect to be able to run `mrview` on the server using X11 forwarding. Unfortunately, this will not work without some effort - please refer to *Remote display issues* for details.

## 6.4 Configuration

There are a number of parameters that can be set in the configuration file that are highly relevant in a HPC environment, particularly when the user's home folder is stored over a network-based filesystem (as is often the case). The *MRtrix3* configuration file is located either system-wide in `/etc/mrtrix.conf`, and/or in each user's home folder in `~/mrtrix.conf`. Entries consist of `key: value` entries, one per line, stored as ASCII text.

- **NumberOfThreads** (default: `hardware concurrency`, as reported by the system): by default, *MRtrix3* will use as many threads as the system reports being able to run concurrently. You may want to change that number to a lower value, to prevent *MRtrix3* from taking over the system entirely. This is particularly true if you anticipate many users running many *MRtrix3* commands concurrently.
- **TmpFileDir** (default: `'/tmp'`): any image data passed from one *MRtrix3* command to the next using a Unix pipeline is actually stored in a temporary file, and its filename passed to the next command. While this is fine if the filesystem holding the temporary file is locally backed and large enough, it can cause significant slowdown and bottlenecks if it resides on a networked filesystems, as the temporary file will most likely need to be transferred in its entirety over the network and back again. Also, if the filesystem is too small, *MRtrix3* commands may abort when processing large files. In general, the `/tmp` folder is likely to be the most appropriate (especially if mounted as `tmpfs`). If however it is not locally mounted, or too small, you may want to set this folder to some other more suitable location.
- **TrackWriterBufferSize** (default: `16777216`). When writing out track files, *MRtrix3* will buffer up the output and write out in chunks of 16MB, to limit the frequency of `write()` calls and the amount of IO requests. More importantly, when several instances of *MRtrix3* are generating tracks concurrently and writing to the same filesystem, frequent small writes will result in massive fragmentation of the output files. By setting a large buffer size, the chances of writes being concurrent is reduced drastically, and the output files are much less likely to be badly fragmented. Note that fragmentation can seriously affect the performance of subsequent commands that need to read affected data. Depending on the type of operations performed, it may be beneficial to use larger buffer sizes, for example 256MB. Note that larger numbers imply greater RAM usage to hold the data prior to write-out, so it is best to keep this much smaller than the total RAM capacity.



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## Key features

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While *MRtrix3* is primarily intended to be used for the analysis of diffusion MRI data, at its fundamental level it is designed as a general-purpose library for the analysis of *any* type of MRI data. As such, it provides a back-end to simplify a large number of operations, many of which will be invisible to the end-user. Specifically, *MRtrix3* features:

- a consistent *command-line interface*, with inline documentation for each command
- universal import/export capabilities when *accessing image data* across all *MRtrix3* applications.
- *Multi-file numbered image support* to load multiple images as a single multi-dimensional dataset
- efficient use of *Unix Pipelines* for complex workflows
- high performance on modern multi-core systems, with multi-threading used extensively throughout *MRtrix3*;
- available on all common modern operating systems (GNU/Linux, MacOSX, Windows);
- a consistent *Coordinate system* with most operations performed in scanner/world coordinates where possible.



---

### Commands and scripts

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The *MRtrix3* software package includes a suite of tools for image analysis and visualisation. With the exception of *mrview* and *shview*, all *MRtrix3* executables are designed to be run via a terminal using a consistent *command-line interface*. While many of the tools and features are discussed within tutorials found in this documentation, a comprehensive *List of MRtrix3 commands* and *List of MRtrix3 scripts* can be found in the reference section. These lists provide links to the help page (manual) for each executable, which can also be accessed by typing the `-help` option after the executable name on the terminal.



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## Beginner DWI tutorial

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**Warning:** This tutorial is not intended to show the optimal or even recommended way of processing. It is merely a simplified example, intended to familiarise the user with the typical command line interface of certain basic processing steps.

This tutorial will hopefully provide enough information for a novice user to get from the raw DW image data to performing some streamlines tractography. It may also be useful for experienced MRtrix users in terms of identifying some of the new command names.

For all *MRtrix3* scripts and commands, additional information on the command usage and available command-line options can be found by invoking the command with the `-help` option. Note that this tutorial includes commands and scripts for which there are relevant journal articles for citation; these are listed on the help pages also.

### 9.1 DWI geometric distortion correction

If the user has access to reversed phase-encode spin-echo image data, this can be used to correct the susceptibility-induced geometric distortions present in the diffusion images, as well as any eddy current-induced distortions and inter-volume subject motion. Procedures for this correct are not yet implemented in *MRtrix3*, though we do provide a script for interfacing with the relevant FSL tools:

```
dwipreproc <Input DWI series> <Output corrected DWI series> [options]
```

For more details, see the *dwipreproc* help file. In particular, it is necessary to manually specify what type of reversed phase-encoding acquisition has taken place (if any), and potentially provide additional relevant input images or provide details of the phase encoding scheme used in the acquisition.

### 9.2 DWI brain mask estimation

In previous versions of MRtrix, a heuristic was used to derive this mask; a dedicated command is now provided:

```
$ dwi2mask <Input DWI> <Output mask>
$ mrview <Input DWI> -roi.load <Output mask>
```

Note that if you are working with ex-vivo data, this command will likely not give the desired results. It can also give inconsistent results in cases of low SNR, strong B1 bias field, or even with good-quality images; it is recommended that the output of this command should *always* be checked (and corrected if necessary) before proceeding with further processing.

## 9.3 Response function estimation

To perform spherical deconvolution, the DWI signal emanating from a single coherently-oriented fibre bundle must be estimated. We provide a script for doing this, which has *a range of algorithms and parameters*. This example will use fairly sensible defaults:

```
$ dwi2response tournier <Input DWI> <Output response text file>
$ shview <Output response text file>
```

## 9.4 Fibre Orientation Distribution estimation

This command performs Constrained Spherical Deconvolution (CSD) based on the response function estimated previously.

```
$ dwi2fod csd <Input DWI> <Input response text file> <Output FOD image> -mask <Input_
↪DWI mask>
$ mrview <Input DWI> -odf.load_sh <Output FOD image>
```

## 9.5 Whole-brain streamlines tractography

For the sake of this tutorial, we will perform whole-brain streamlines tractography, using default reconstruction parameters.

```
$ tckgen <Input FOD image> <Output track file> -seed_image <Input DWI mask> -mask
↪<Input DWI mask> -select <Number of tracks>
$ mrview <Input DWI> -tractography.load <Output track file>
```

Note: Loading a very large number of tracks can inevitably make the `mrview` software run very slowly. When this occurs, it may be preferable to instead view only a subset of the generated tracks, e.g.:

```
$ tckedit <Track file> <Smaller track file> -number <Smaller number of tracks>
$ mrview <Input DWI> -tractography.load <Smaller track file>
```

## 9.6 Track Density Imaging (TDI)

TDI can be useful for visualising the results of tractography, particularly when a very large number of streamlines is generated.

```
$ tckmap <Input track file> <Output TDI> -vox <Voxel size in mm>
$ mrview <Output TDI>
```



## 10.1 Image format handling in *MRtrix3*

*MRtrix3* provides a flexible data input/output back-end in the shared library, which is used across all applications. This means that all applications in *MRtrix3* can read or write images in all the supported formats - there is no need to explicitly convert the data to a given format prior to processing.

However, some specialised applications may expect additional information to be present in the input image. The *MRtrix* .mif/.mih formats are both capable of storing such additional information data in their header, and will hence always be supported for such applications. Most image formats however cannot carry additional information in their header (or at least, not easily) - this is in fact one of the main motivations for the development of the *MRtrix* image formats. In such cases, it would be necessary to use *MRtrix* format images. Alternatively, it may be necessary to provide the additional information using command-line arguments (this is the case particularly for the DW gradient table, when providing DWI data in NIfTI format for instance).

Image file formats are recognised by their file extension. One exception to this is DICOM: if the filename corresponds to a folder, it is assumed to contain DICOM data, and the entire folder will be scanned recursively for DICOM images.

It is also important to note that the name given as an argument will not necessarily correspond to an actual file name on disk: in many cases, images may be split over several files. What matters is that the text string provided as the *image specifier* is sufficient to unambiguously identify the full image.

### 10.1.1 Coordinate system

All *MRtrix3* applications will consistently use the same coordinate system, which is identical to the NIfTI standard. Note that this frame of reference differs from the DICOM standard (typically the x & y axis are reversed). The convention followed by *MRtrix3* applications is as follows:

dimensional	description
0 (x)	increasing from left to right
1 (y)	increasing from posterior to anterior
2 (z)	increasing from inferior to superior

All coordinates or vector components supplied to *MRtrix3* applications should be provided with reference to this coordinate system.

### 10.1.2 Multi-file numbered image support

It is possible to access a numbered series of images as a single multi-dimensional dataset, using a syntax specific to MRtrix. For example:

```
$ mrinfo MRI-volume-[] .nii.gz
```

will collate all images that match the pattern `MRI-volume-<number>.nii.gz`, sort them in ascending numerical order, and access them as a single dataset with dimensionality one larger than that contained in the images. In other words, assuming there are `MRI-volume-0.nii.gz` to `MRI-volume-9.nii.gz`, and each volume is a 3D image, the result will be a 4D dataset with 10 volumes.

Note that this isn't limited to one level of numbering:

```
$ mrconvert data-[]-[] .nii combined.mif
```

will collate all images that match the `data-number-number.nii` pattern and generate a single dataset with dimensionality two larger than its constituents.

Finally, it is also possible to explicitly request specific numbers, using *Number sequences and floating-point lists* within the square brackets:

```
$ mrconvert data-[10:20] .nii combined.mif
```

### 10.1.3 Data types

*MRtrix3* applications can read and write data in any of the common data types. Many *MRtrix3* commands also support the `-datatype` option to specify the data type for the output image. For example:

```
$ mrconvert DICOM_images/ -datatype float32 output.nii
```

---

**Note:** Not all image formats support all possible datatypes. The MRtrix image file formats are designed to handle all of the possibilities listed below, while other image formats may only support a subset. When a data type is requested that isn't supported by the image format, a hopefully suitable alternative data type will be used instead.

---

Below is a list of the supported data types and their specifiers for use on the command-line. Note that *MRtrix* is not sensitive to the case of the specifier: `uint16le` will work just as well as `UInt16LE`.

Specifier	Description
Bit	bitwise data
Int8	signed 8-bit (char) integer
UInt8	unsigned 8-bit (char) integer
Int16	signed 16-bit (short) integer (native endian-ness)
UInt16	unsigned 16-bit (short) integer (native endian-ness)
Int16LE	signed 16-bit (short) integer (little-endian)
UInt16LE	unsigned 16-bit (short) integer (little-endian)
Int16BE	signed 16-bit (short) integer (big-endian)
UInt16BE	unsigned 16-bit (short) integer (big-endian)
Int32	signed 32-bit int (native endian-ness)
UInt32	unsigned 32-bit int (native endian-ness)
Int32LE	signed 32-bit int (little-endian)
UInt32LE	unsigned 32-bit int (little-endian)
Int32BE	signed 32-bit int (big-endian)
UInt32BE	unsigned 32-bit int (big-endian)
Float32	32-bit floating-point (native endian-ness)
Float32LE	32-bit floating-point (little-endian)
Float32BE	32-bit floating-point (big-endian)
Float64	64-bit (double) floating-point (native endian-ness)
Float64LE	64-bit (double) floating-point (little-endian)
Float64BE	64-bit (double) floating-point (big-endian)
CFloat32	complex 32-bit floating-point (native endian-ness)
CFloat32LE	complex 32-bit floating-point (little-endian)
CFloat32BE	complex 32-bit floating-point (big-endian)
CFloat64	complex 64-bit (double) floating-point (native endian-ness)
CFloat64LE	complex 64-bit (double) floating-point (little-endian)
CFloat64BE	complex 64-bit (double) floating-point (big-endian)

### 10.1.4 The image transform

The orientation of the image with respect to the scanner axes is determined by the combination of the *image axes* and the *location of the corner voxel*. This information is encapsulated in the *transformation matrix*, commonly referred to simply as the *transform*. You can view the transform for any image using *mrinfo*, for example:

```
$ mrinfo dwi.mif
*****
Image:                "dwi.mif"
*****
Dimensions:          104 x 104 x 54 x 167
Voxel size:           2.30769 x 2.30769 x 2.3 x ?
Data strides:         [ -1 -2 3 4 ]
Format:               MRtrix
Data type:            unsigned 16 bit integer (little endian)
Intensity scaling:    offset = 0, multiplier = 1
Transform:
                    0.9999   6.887e-09   -0.01564   -116.1
                    -0.001242   0.9968   -0.07943   -89.44
                    0.01559   0.07944   0.9967   -64.27
Comments:             TOURNIER DONALD (BRI) [MR] diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC
                    study: BRI_Temp_backup Donald
                    DOB: 09/03/1977
                    DOS: 03/10/2007 15:58:40
```

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dw_scheme:	[ 167 entries ]
------------	-----------------

The ‘Transform’ field above shows the first 3 rows of the transformation matrix (technically, this is a 4×4 matrix, but the last row is always set to [ 0 0 0 1 ]). The first 3 columns correspond to the  $x$ ,  $y$  &  $z$  image axes respectively, while the last column corresponds to the location *in real (scanner/world) space* of the corner voxel (i.e. the voxel at index [ 0 0 0 ]).

In *MRtrix3*, the transform shown always corresponds to the transformation from image coordinates *in millimeters* to scanner coordinates *in millimeters* - the voxel size is not taken into account, and the image axes are always normalised to unit amplitude. This may differ from other packages.

Furthermore, *MRtrix3* will always present the transform that best matches the real space. If the transform of the image on file represents a large rotation, such that for example the first image axis is closer to the scanner’s  $z$  axis, this transform will be modified by permutation or inversion of the axes to bring it in alignment with the expected coordinate system, so that the first axis genuinely can be interpreted as approximately left-right, etc. To achieve this, *MRtrix3* will also modify the image *Strides* to match.

### 10.1.5 Strides

A file is simply a linear array of values. Image data on the other hand are multidimensional arrays. The image values can therefore be ordered on file in many different ways. For example, we could start from the voxel at the left posterior inferior corner of the image, and store intensity values in order of traversal towards the *right*. Once the other end of the image is reached, we repeat the process for the row of values *anterior* to the last one, and repeat until the end of the slice. At this point, we store the slice *superior* to the last one, until the whole image has been stored. This ordering scheme is what is typically used in the NIfTI standard, and is commonly referred to as RAS (right anterior posterior), referring to the direction of traversal of each axis in turn. This scheme is also often referred to as *neurological*, although this term is in general much more ambiguous.

However, this is only a convention, and many other combinations are possible. For instance, it is possible to start from the *right* posterior inferior corner, and raster through along the *left* direction, then store the next row along the anterior direction, and finally the next slice in the superior direction. This scheme is what is normally used in the now deprecated Analyse format, and is commonly referred to as LAS or *radiological*.

Of course, there are many more possibilities. For instance, sagittal DICOM images will typically be stored using a PIR (posterior inferior right) order, since each sagittal slice is stored in order, etc. *MRtrix3* applications are agnostic to the order of storage, and can handle any such images provided the format is clear about what the order is.

In *MRtrix3*, the order of storage is defined by their *strides*. These refer to the number of voxels between a given voxel and the next voxel along a given dimension. For instance, in a 128×128×128 image stored using RAS ordering, the strides would be 1, 128, 16384: the next voxel along the  $x$  axis is just one voxel away, while the next voxel along the  $y$  axis is 128 values away (i.e. a whole row of  $x$  values), and so on. In contrast, if stored in LAS order, the strides would be -1, 128, 16384, indicating that the next voxel along the  $x$  axis would actually be stored one value *before* the current one.

To simplify the specification of these strides, *MRtrix3* typically expects and provides *symbolic* strides. For example, the RAS strides above would be expressed as 1, 2, 3, since this is sufficient to deduce the actual strides once the image dimensions are known. Likewise, LAS would correspond to strides of -1, 2, 3, PIR to 3, -1, -2, etc. This has the advantage that the specification of the strides is then independent of the image dimensions.

Using strides to specify ordering also allows the specification to generalise to arbitrary dimensions. For example, it is fairly common for *MRtrix3* applications to request their output for 4D images to be written with strides 2, 3, 4, 1 (if the image format supports it): this corresponds to a volume-contiguous order, whereby the values for all volumes of a given voxel are written next to each other on file; this often has performance advantages for applications that need to process all values for a given voxel concurrently (as is often the case in diffusion MRI), by allowing the hardware to make better use of resources (tractography is one such example).

Many *MRtrix3* commands accept the `-strides` option, which is used to specify the strides for the output image. For example, to generate a LAS (radiological) NIfTI image for use with FSL (along with the corresponding `bvecs/bvals`), you can use *mrconvert* along with the `-strides -1,2,3,4` option:

```
$ mrconvert dwi.mif -strides -1,2,3,4 -export_grad_fsl bvecs bvals dwi.nii
```

Likewise, if you need to ensure the orientation is neurological (RAS), you can specify strides `1,2,3,4` (or use the `1:4` shorthand). You can also specify other combinations if required: for example `-strides -2,-1,3,4` would correspond to a PLS coordinate system, `-strides 2,3,4,1` would correspond to volume-contiguous storage (with RAS for the spatial axes), etc.

The different formats supported by *MRtrix3* differ in the range of strides that they support. The *MRtrix image formats* (*.mih* / *.mif*) are the only formats to support arbitrary combinations.

---

**Note:** Not all image formats support all possible datatypes. The *MRtrix image formats* (*.mih* / *.mif*) are designed to handle arbitrary strides, while other image formats may only support a limited subset. When strides are requested that are not supported by the image format, a hopefully suitable alternative will be used instead.

---

### Interaction between strides and transform

There is an interaction between the strides and the image transform: if the transform matrix corresponds to a 90° rotation, this can be viewed as changing the *strides* without affecting the transform. Such a large rotation has changed the order of storage relative to the anatomical labels typically used to refer to the ordering (e.g. RAS, LAS, etc). For example, if a RAS image is modified such that its transform rotates the image axes by 90° around the y axis, this in effect implies that voxels are now ordered IAR (i.e. *right* becomes *inferior*, *anterior* remains as-is, and *superior* becomes *right*).

The *MRtrix3* back-end will indeed interpret such large rotations as affecting the strides, so that if the strides are stated as `1,2,3`, the order of storage will always be left->right, posterior->anterior, inferior->superior *relative to the scanner axes*. Note that this also implies that the transform matrix will always be modified as necessary to bring it close to the standard coordinate system, so that the first image axis is close to the x axis, etc. This allows *MRtrix3* applications to operate on images in the knowledge that these axes are always anatomically as expected, without worrying about the details of *how* this information was actually stored on file.

It is important to bear this in mind when interpreting for output of *mrinfo* for example, since this produces the strides and transform *as interpreted by MRtrix3*, rather than those actually stored on file - although the two representations should be strictly equivalent. If you need to inspect the information as stored on file, use *mrinfo*'s `-norealign` option.

## 10.2 Supported image formats

This lists the various image formats currently supported by *MRtrix3*.

### 10.2.1 MRtrix image formats (*.mih* / *.mif*)

These MRtrix-specific image formats are closely related. They consist of a text header, with data stored in binary format, either within the same file (*.mif*) or as one or more separate files (*.mih*). In both cases, the header structure is the same, as detailed below. These file formats were devised to address a number of limitations inherent in currently available formats. In particular:

- simplicity: as detailed below, the header format is deliberately kept very simple and human-readable, making it easy to debug and edit manually if needed.

- extendability: any information can be stored in the header, and will simply be ignored by the application if not recognised.
- arbitrary data organisation: voxel values can be stored in any order, making it simple to ensure for example that all FOD coefficients for a given voxel are stored contiguously on file.

Note that *MRtrix3* now includes *MatLab* functions to read and write MRtrix image files, and to load MRtrix tracks files. These are located in the `matlab` subfolder.

### Compressed MRtrix image format (`.mif.gz`)

*MRtrix3* also supports the compressed version of the single-file `.mif` format, both for reading and writing.

---

**Note:** While this can reduce file sizes, it does incur a runtime cost when reading or writing the image (a process that can often take longer than the operation to be performed), and will require the entire image to be loaded uncompressed into RAM (*MRtrix3* can otherwise make use of [memory-mapping](#) to keep RAM requirements to a minimum). For large files, these costs can become considerable; you may find that *MRtrix3* can process a large uncompressed image, yet run out of RAM when presented with the equivalent compressed version (in such cases, you can try using `gunzip` to uncompress the file manually before invoking the relevant *MRtrix3* command).

---

### Header structure

The header is the first (and possibly only) data stored in the file, as ASCII-encoded text (although other encodings such as UTF8 may work equally well). Lines should be separated by Unix-style newlines (line-feed, ‘`\n`’, ASCII 0x0A), although MRtrix will also accept DOS-type newlines.

The first line should read only `mrtrix image` to indicate that this is an image in MRtrix format. The last line of the header should read only `END` to signal the end of the header, after which all data will be considered as binary.

All lines *between* these two entries must be represented as key-value pairs, as described below.

### Header key-value pairs

All following lines are in the format `key: value`, with the value entry extending up to the end of the line. All whitespace characters before and after the value entry are ignored. Some keys are required to read the images, others are optional (sensible defaults will be substituted if they are absent). Recognised keys are provided in the list below, along with the expected format of the corresponding values.

- **dim** [required]

the image dimensions, supplied as a comma-separated list of integers. The number of entries specifies the dimensionality of the image. For example: `dim: 192,256,256` specifies a 192×256×256 image.

- **vox** [required]

the voxel size along each dimension, as a comma-separated list of floating-point values. The number of entries should match that given in the `dim` entry. For example: `vox: 0.9,0.898438,0.898438`.

- **layout** [required]

specifies the organisation of the data on file. In simplest terms, it provides a way of specifying the strides required to navigate the data file, in combination with the `dim` entry. It is given as a comma-separated list of signed integers, with the sign providing the direction of data traversal with respect to voxel coordinates, and the value providing a way of specifying the order of increasing stride.

For example, assuming an image with `dim: 192,256,256`, the entry `layout: +2,-0,-1` is interpreted as: the shortest stride is along the y-axis (second entry), then the z-axis (third entry), and then along the x-axis. Voxels are stored in the order left to right (positive stride) along the x-axis; anterior to posterior along the y-axis (negative stride); and superior to inferior (negative stride) along the z-axis. Given the image dimensions, the final strides are therefore  $256 \times 256 = 65536$  for adjacent voxels along the x-axis, -1 for the y-axis, and -256 for the z-axis. This also implies that the voxel at coordinate [ 0 0 0 ] is located 65536 voxel values into the data portion of the file.

- **datatype** [required]

the datatype used to store individual voxel values. See the listing of valid *Data types*. For example: `datatype: UInt16LE`

- **file** [required]

specifies where the binary image data are stored, in the format `file: filename offset`, with the offset provided in bytes from the beginning of the file. For example: `file: image.dat 0`.

For the single-file format (.mif), the filename should consist of a single full-stop (‘.’) to indicate the current file, and the offset should correspond to a point in the file after the END statement of the header.

For the separate header/data format (.mih), the filename should refer to an existing file in the same folder as the header (.mih) file. Multiple such entries can be supplied if the data are stored across several files.

- **transform** [optional]

used to supply the 4x4 transformation matrix specifying the orientation of the axes with respect to real space. This is supplied as a comma-separated list of floating-point values, and only the first 12 such values will be used to fill the first 3 rows of the transform matrix. Multiple such entries can be provided to fill the matrix; for example, *MRtrix3* will normally produce 3 lines for the transform, with one row of 4 values per entry:

```
transform: 0.997986,-0.0541156,-0.033109,-74.0329
transform: 0.0540858,0.998535,-0.00179436,-100.645
transform: 0.0331575,2.34007e-08,0.99945,-125.84
```

- **scaling** [optional]

used to specify how intensity values should be scaled, provided as an offset and scale. Voxel values will be read as `value_returned = offset + scale * value_read`. For example: `scaling: -1,2`. Default is 0,1 (no modification).

In addition to these keys, it is also possible to store additional key-value pairs within the header of these image files. If a particular key is not recognised by *MRtrix3*, it is simply ignored (but may be carried over to any outputs resulting from the command, depending on the particular command).

There are some keys that are utilized by particular *MRtrix3* commands in order to preserve important information as image data are passed between commands. A prominent example is `dw_scheme`, which is used to embed the diffusion gradient table within the *Image header*.

## 10.2.2 DICOM (folder or .dcm)

DICOM format is only supported for reading. *MRtrix3* applications will assume an image is in DICOM format if the image specifier provided corresponds to a folder or ends with the `.dcm` extension. For a folder, the application will scan the entire folder and its subfolders for DICOM files and generate a list of DICOM patients, studies and series. If a single series is found within the folder, this data set will be accessed with no further interaction required. Otherwise, the user will be prompted to select the series of interest. *MRtrix3* supports data from all major manufacturers, including Siemens mosaics and the newer single-file multi-frame format.

A separate application, *dcm\_info*, is provided to view all DICOM header elements within a particular DICOM file, including Siemens’ custom shadow attributes (CSA).

Note that no support is provided for reading the DICOMDIR entry due to case-sensitivity issues. DICOM data are typically stored on CD or DVD on a case-insensitive filesystem. However, Unix systems will typically not access these filesystems in a case-insensitive manner, and will fail to find the appropriate files if the case of filenames supplied in the DICOMDIR file does not match the case of the files found on the CD or DVD.

### 10.2.3 NifTI & NifTI-2 (.nii)

These file formats are supported both for reading and writing, and allows interoperation with other packages such as SPM or FSL. The `mrinfo` command can be used to determine whether a particular image is in NifTI-1 or NifTI-2 format.

---

**Note:** Use of the NifTI format can introduce ambiguity into the transformation information used to orient and localise the image data with respect to physical space, particularly when combined with the use of multiple software packages. More information is provided in the “:ref:nifti\_qform\_sform” section.

---

### Compressed NifTI (.nii.gz)

*MRtrix3* also supports compressed NifTI images (both versions 1 & 2), for both reading and writing.

---

**Note:** While this can reduce file sizes, it does incur a runtime cost when reading or writing the image (a process that can often take longer than the operation to be performed), and will require the entire image to be loaded uncompressed into RAM (*MRtrix3* can otherwise make use of [memory-mapping](#) to keep RAM requirements to a minimum). For large files, these costs can become considerable; you may find that *MRtrix3* can process a large uncompressed image, yet run out of RAM when presented with the equivalent compressed version (in such cases, you can try using `gunzip` to uncompress the file manually before invoking the relevant *MRtrix3* command).

---

### 10.2.4 FreeSurfer formats (.mgh / .mgz)

*MRtrix3* supports both of these formats for reading and writing.

Images stored in these formats may include [additional data structures](#) that follow the image data. These data structures provide a similar functionality to the [Header key-value pairs](#) used in the *MRtrix image formats (.mih / .mif)*.

When present in an input file, `_MRtrix3_` will import these data into [Header key-value pairs](#), with keys named “MGH\_\*” (each element present in the input file is named and stored individually), and the values for these data structures will be written in legible format (e.g. matrix data are stored as delimited text). The data will therefore be encapsulated within the image header and preserved (as long as formats capable of retaining this information are used subsequently). For instance:

```
$ mrinfo image.mgz
*****
Image:                "image.mgz"
*****
Dimensions:          256 x 256 x 256
Voxel size:          1 x 1 x 1
Data strides:        [ -1 3 -2 ]
Format:              MGZ (compressed MGH)
Data type:           unsigned 8 bit integer
Intensity scaling:   offset = 0, multiplier = 1
Transform:           1 -4.098e-08 6.147e-08 -129.3
```

(continues on next page)

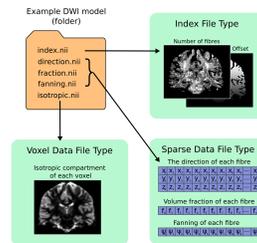


- **Easily read and written** by other software packages to enable inter-operability of fixel-based DWI models.
- **Flexible** enough to allow for both fixel-specific model parameters (e.g. volume fractions, fanning), and voxel-specific parameters (e.g. hindered isotropic compartment). The format should also support any number of model parameters.
- **Self-documenting.** Users should be able to easily infer what kind of data is included in the model. Developers should also easily understand the data layout, without having to read in special fields in the image header.
- **Minimise the need for supporting commands.** We wanted to avoid the need to have dedicated commands for performing basic operations on the data (e.g. math/calculator operations, thresholding, histogram generation etc).
- **Extendability.** Users should be able to add components to an existing sparse image. E.g. a mask to label fixels of interest, or additional test-statistic output from a group analysis.

### 10.3.2 Specifications

In the fixel format we have opted to leverage the file system by storing data belonging to a single sparse DWI model inside a single *directory/folder* (in contrast to the old *Legacy MRtrix Sparse Format (.msh / .msf)* where all data is stored inside a single *file*). Effectively the directory becomes the ‘dataset’. While this implies that all data files must be kept together inside the directory, and can be tampered with (or accidentally deleted) by users, we believe the transparency and accessibility of the data is beneficial and enables all of the above requirements to be met.

All files types saved inside the format are in either **NIFTI-2 format** (for maximum compatibility with other packages) or **MRtrix image formats (.mih / .mif)**. To help describe the format and the layout of the files within the directory, we have used an example of how a ball and racket-like model may be stored:



### 10.3.3 Fixel format file types

#### Index File

- 4D image ( $i \times j \times k \times 2$ ).
- The index file is required, with fixed naming (`index.nii` or `index.mif`).
- The first 3D volume in the 4th dimension stores the *number of elements (fixels)* per voxel.
- The second volume in the 4th dimension stores the *index of the first element (fixel)* in that voxel; indices for the subsequent elements in each voxel are inferred to be sequential.

#### Fixel Data File

- 3D image ( $n \times p \times 1$ ) where  $n$  is the total number of elements in the image, and  $p$  is the number of parameters per element (e.g. 3 for `direction.nii`, 1 for `volume.nii`, or 6 for a multi-tensor model).
- For each voxel, data for the elements within that voxel must be stored within sequential indices in the first dimension.

- Easily identified as a data file type because the size of the image is 1 in the 3rd dimension
- Any number of Fixel Data File types may be present in the directory. In the example image above, the volume fraction and fanning angle parameters have been saved as separate files; however the format is flexible and allows for multiple parameters, p, per element.
- Any naming convention can be used for Fixel Data Files, with the exception of:
  - The directions file (see below).
  - If a particular set of commands expect to write and subsequently read one or more data files with a fixed name, then manually renaming such files may prevent the operation of that set of commands.

---

**Note:** The number of fixels in a whole-brain image can be very large (> 100,000). The NIfTI-1 format therefore cannot be used in this context, as it restricts the total number of voxels along any dimension of the image to 65,535. This is why either NIfTI-2 or *MRtrix image formats (.mih / .mif)* must be used.

---

### Fixel Direction File

- **All fixel-based DWI models must specify the direction of each fixel.**
- Directions for each fixel must be saved within a single file named either `directions.nii` or `directions.mif`.
- This can be considered as a special type of fixel data file, with dimensions (n x 3 x 1).
- Directions must be specified with respect to the *scanner coordinate frame*, in *cartesian coordinates*.

### Voxel Data File

- 3D or 4D image
- Any number of Voxel Data Files may be stored in the directory
- Must have the same resolution and header transform as the index image
- Naming of files is flexible
- The 4th dimension is optional, but allows for multiple parameters per voxel to be stored (e.g. 6 tensor coefficients of the ‘hindered’ compartment in CHARMED)

## 10.3.4 Usage

Because the fixel format leverages the file system to store all fixel data within a single directory, interacting with fixel data in *MRtrix3* may require user input and output arguments to be either: 1) the path to the fixel format directory; or 2) specific fixel data files within the directory. For example, `fod2fixel` requires the name of the containing directory *and* the names of the output fixel data files to be stored inside the directory:

```
fod2fixel patient01/fod.mif patient01/fixel_directory -afd afd.mif -disp dispersion.
↪mif
```

In this example, a new fixel format directory is created, with the name `patient01_fixel_directory`; this includes creation of the requisite index and directions files. Fixel Data Files for two fixel-specific measures (AFD and dispersion) are then additionally saved inside this directory.

Other commands, such as `fixel2voxel`, may only require the fixel data file:

```
fixel2voxel patient01/fixel_directory/afd.mif sum patient01/total_afd.mif
```

A major benefit of the directory-based format is that existing commands for operating on traditional images can be used to manipulate fixel data. For example, to threshold fixels based on their AFD value:

```
mrthreshold patient01/fixel_directory/afd.mif -abs 0.1 patient01/fixel_directory/afd_
↳mask.mif
```

Other commands like `mrhistogram`, `mrcalc` and `mrstats` can also be used on Fixel Data Files. For example, to compute the mean dispersion over all fixels in a mask:

```
mrstats -output mean -mask patient01/fixel_directory/afd_mask.mif patient01/fixel_
↳directory/dispersion.mif
```

### 10.3.5 Viewing fixel data in `mrview`

Fixel data can be visualised using the “Fixel Plot” tool in `mrview`. Any image within the fixel directory can be opened by the file chooser. By default the fixels will be coloured based on the file selected when loaded (e.g. if you select the fixel directions file, fixels will be colour-coded by direction; if `afd.mif` is selected they will be coloured by AFD value). Irrespective of the file selected to view the fixel file, all other fixel file types in the fixel directory will be detected and available for use in colour-coding and thresholding fixels via a combo box in the Fixel Plot tool. This enables advanced visualisations such as thresholding fixels by p-value while colour-coding by effect size.

## 10.4 Legacy MRtrix Sparse Format (`.msh` / `.msf`)

This is an old legacy format previously used for applications where the number of discrete elements within a voxel may vary between voxels (typically used to store fixels). This format has been superseded by the new directory-based *Fixel image (directory) format*. While all fixel-related commands now only use the new format, files stored in the legacy format can still be viewed in `mrview`.

Much like the standard *MRtrix image formats* (`.mih` / `.mif`), there are two different image file extensions available. One (`.msh`) separates the image header information and raw data into separate files, while the other (`.msf`) encodes all information relevant to the image into a single file.

However unlike these established formats, sparse images contain *two* separate raw data fields. The first of these behaves identically to standard images: a single intensity value for every image element. The second stores sparse image data. For any particular image element, the intensity value within the standard image field defines a *pointer* to a location within the sparse image field, where the sparse data relevant for that image element can be found.

### 10.4.1 Additional image header features

These image formats have some features within the image header that differ from the standard MRtrix image formats:

- The ‘magic number’ that appears at the start of the file must read ‘mrtrix sparse image’.
- Key:value pair ‘sparse\_data\_name’ defines the *name* of the class used in the sparse data field. This class name is typically not reader-friendly; the value that appears is that provided by the C++ call `typeid(XYZ).name()` for a class called XYZ. This is necessary to ensure that the data stored in the sparse field can be interpreted correctly.
- Key:value pair ‘sparse\_data\_size’ defines the size (in bytes) of the class used to store the sparse data.
- The ‘datatype’ field MUST be a 64-bit integer, with the same endianness as the system. A 64-bit integer type is required because the standard image data provides pointers to the sparse data in memory, while the endianness is tested to ensure that the sparse data can be interpreted correctly. Note that sparse images cannot be transferred and used between systems with different endianness.

- In addition to the ‘file’ key, a second key ‘sparse\_file’ is also required, which provides the path to the beginning of the sparse image data. In the .msf format, this provides an offset from the start of the file to the start of the sparse data field; in the .msh format, a second associated data file with the extension .sdaf is generated on image creation, and the path to this file is defined in the header.

## 10.4.2 Sparse data storage

Within the sparse data field, there is no delimiting information or identifying features; the image format relies on the integers stored in the standard image field to provide offset pointers to appropriate locations within the sparse field.

From the data position defined by such an offset, the first 4 bytes provide a 32-bit integer (with native endianness), which specifies the number of discrete elements stored. This is followed by data to fill precisely that number of instances of the sparse data class. Note that no endianness conversion can be performed on this data; data is read and written using a straight memory copy.

## 10.5 Tracks file format (.tck)

The format for track files is similar to that for *MRtrix image formats (.mih / .mif)*. It consists of a text header in the same key: value format, ending with a single ‘END’ statement, and followed by binary data.

The first line of the header should read `mrtrix tracks` to indicate that the file contains tracks in MRtrix format. Further key: value pairs typically provide information about the parameters used to produce the tracks, and for the most part are not required to read the data. The only required keys are the following:

- **file**

a `file: . offset` entry is required to specify the byte offset from the beginning of the file to the start of the binary track data. At this stage, only the single-file format is supported - in other words the filename part must be specified as ‘.’ (see above for details).

- **datatype**

specifies the datatype (and byte order). At this point only the Float32 data type is supported, either as little-endian (LE) or big-endian (BE).

The binary track data themselves are stored as triplets of floating-point values (at this stage in 32 bit floating-point format), one per vertex along the track. Tracks are separated using a triplet of NaN values. Finally, a triplet of Inf values is used to indicate the end of the file.



---

## Command-line usage

---

*MRtrix3* generally follows a relatively standard Unix syntax, namely:

```
$ command [options] argument1 argument2 ...
```

If you need to become familiar with using the command-line, there are plenty of tutorials online to get you started. There are however a few notable features specific to *MRtrix3*, which are outlined below.

### 11.1 Ordering of options on the command-line

Options can typically occur anywhere on the command-line, in any order - they do not usually need to precede the arguments.

For instance, all three of the lines below will have the same result:

```
$ command -option1 -option2 argument1 argument2
$ command argument1 argument2 -option1 -option2
$ command -option2 argument1 argument2 -option1
```

Care must however be taken in cases where a command-line option *itself has an associated compulsory argument*. For instance, consider a command-line option `-number`, which allows the user to manually provide a numerical value in order to control some behaviour. The user's desired value *must* be provided *immediately after* `-number` appears on the command-line in order to be correctly associated with that particular option.

For instance, the following would be interpreted correctly:

```
$ command -number 10 argument1 argument2
```

But the following would *not*:

```
$ command -number argument1 10 argument2
```

The following cases would also *not* be interpreted correctly by *MRtrix3*, even though some other softwares may interpret their command-line options in such ways:

```
$ command -number10 argument1 argument2
$ command --number=10 argument1 argument2
```

There are a few cases in *MRtrix3* where the order of options on the command-line *does* matter, and hence the above demonstration does not apply:

- *mrcalc*: `mrcalc` is a stack-based calculator, and as such, the order of inputs and operations on the command-line determine how the mathematical expression is formed.
- *mrview*: `mrview` includes a number of command-line options for automatically configuring the viewing window, and importing data into its various tools. Here the order of such options does matter: the command line contents are read from left to right, and any command-line options that alter the display of a particular image or data open within a tool is applied to the *most recent* data (image or otherwise) opened by the tool associated with that option.
- *Scripts*: A subset of the Python scripts provided with *MRtrix3* (currently *5ttgen* and *dwi2response*) require the selection of an *algorithm*, which defines the approach that the script will use to arrive at its end result based on the data provided. The name of this algorithm *must* be the *first* argument on the command-line; any command-line options provided *prior* to this algorithm name will be **silently ignored**.

## 11.2 Number sequences and floating-point lists

Some options expect arguments in the form of *number sequences* or *floating-point lists of numbers*. The former consists of a series of integers separated by commas or colons (no spaces), with colons indicating a range, optionally with an increment (if different from 1). For example:

- `1,4,8` becomes `[ 1 4 8 ]`
- `3,6:12,2` becomes `[ 3 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 2 ]`
- `1:3:10,8:2:0` becomes `[ 1 4 7 10 8 6 4 2 0 ]`

Note that the sign of the increment does not matter, it will always run in the direction required.

Likewise, floating-point lists consist of a comma-separated list of numbers, for example:

- `2.47,-8.2223,1.45e-3`

## 11.3 Using shortened option names

Options do not need to be provided in full, as long as the initial part of the option provided is sufficient to unambiguously identify it.

For example:

```
$ mrconvert -debug in.mif out.nii.gz
```

is the same as:

```
$ mrconvert -de in.mif out.nii.gz
```

but will conflict with the `-datatype` option if shortened any further:

```
$ mrconvert -d in.mif out.nii.gz
mrconvert: [ERROR] several matches possible for option "-d": "-datatype", "-debug"
```

## 11.4 Unix Pipelines

The output of one program can be fed straight through to the input of another program via [Unix pipes](#) in a single command. The appropriate syntax is illustrated in this example:

```
$ dwi2tensor /data/DICOM_folder/ - | tensor2metric - -vector ev.mif
dwi2tensor: [done] scanning DICOM folder "/data/DICOM_folder/"
dwi2tensor: [100%] reading DICOM series "ep2d_diff"...
dwi2tensor: [100%] reformatting DICOM mosaic images...
dwi2tensor: [100%] loading data for image "ACME (hm) [MR] ep2d_diff"...
dwi2tensor: [100%] estimating tensor components...
tensor2metric: [100%] computing tensor metrics...
```

This command will execute the following actions:

1. `dwi2tensor` will load the input diffusion-weighted data in DICOM format from the folder `/data/DICOM_folder/` and compute the corresponding tensor components. The resulting data set is then fed into the pipe.
2. `tensor2metric` will access the data set from the pipe, generate an eigenvector map and store the resulting data set as `ev.mif`.

The two stages of the pipeline are separated by the `|` symbol, which indicates to the system that the output of the first command is to be used as input for the next command. The image that is to be fed to or from the pipeline is specified for each program using a single dash `-` where the image would normally be specified as an argument.

For this to work properly, it is important to know which arguments each program will interpret as input images, and which as output images. For example, this command will fail:

```
dwi2tensor - /data/DICOM_folder/ | tensor2metric - ev.mif
```

In this example, `dwi2tensor` will hang waiting for input data (its first argument should be the input DWI data set). This will also cause `tensor2metric` to hang while it waits for `dwi2tensor` to provide some input.

### 11.4.1 Advanced pipeline usage

Such pipelines are not limited to two programs. Complex operations can be performed in one line using this technique. Here is a longer example:

```
$ dwi2tensor /data/DICOM_folder/ - | tensor2metric - -vector - | mrcalc -
mask.nii -mult - | mrview -
dwi2tensor: [done] scanning DICOM folder "/data/DICOM_folder/"
dwi2tensor: [100%] reading DICOM series "ep2d_diff"...
dwi2tensor: [100%] reformatting DICOM mosaic images...
dwi2tensor: [100%] loading data for image "ACME (hm) [MR] ep2d_diff"...
dwi2tensor: [100%] estimating tensor components...
tensor2metric: [100%] computing tensor metrics...
mrcalc: [100%] computing: (/tmp/mrtrix-tmp-VihKrg.mif * mask.nii) ...
```

This command will execute the following actions:

1. `dwi2tensor` will load the input diffusion-weighted data in DICOM format from the folder `/data/DICOM_folder/` and compute the corresponding tensor components. The resulting data set is then fed into the pipe.
2. `tensor2metric` will access the tensor data set from the pipe, generate an eigenvector map and feed the resulting data into the next stage of the pipeline.

3. `mrcalc` will access the eigenvector data set from the pipe, multiply it by the image mask.nii, and feed the resulting data into the next stage of the pipeline.
4. `mrview` will access the masked eigenvector data set from the pipe and display the resulting image.

### 11.4.2 How is it implemented?

The procedure used in *MRtrix3* to feed data sets down a pipeline is somewhat different from the more traditional use of pipes. Given the large amounts of data typically contained in a data set, the ‘standard’ practice of feeding the entire data set through the pipe would be prohibitively inefficient. *MRtrix3* applications access the data via memory-mapping (when this is possible), and do not need to explicitly copy the data into their own memory space. When using pipes, *MRtrix3* applications will simply generate a temporary file and feed its filename through to the next stage once their processing is done. The next program in the pipeline will then simply read this filename and access the corresponding file. The latter program is then responsible for deleting the temporary file once its processing is done.

This implies that any errors during processing may result in undeleted temporary files. By default, these will be created within the `/tmp` folder (on Unix, or the current folder on Windows) with a filename of the form `mrtrix-tmp-XXXXXX.xyz` (note this can be changed by specifying a custom `TmpFileDir` and `TmpFilePrefix` in the *Configuration file*). If a piped command has failed, and no other *MRtrix* programs are currently running, these can be safely deleted.

### 11.4.3 Really advanced pipeline usage

As implemented, *MRtrix3* commands treat image file names that start with the `TmpFilePrefix` (default is `mrtrix-tmp-`) as temporary. When reading the image name from the previous stage in the pipeline, the image file name will trivially match this. But this also means that it is possible to provide such a file as a normal *argument*, and it will be treated as a temporary *piped* image. For example:

```
$ mrconvert /data/DICOM/ -datatype float32 -
mrconvert: [done] scanning DICOM folder "/data/DICOM/"
mrconvert: [100%] reading DICOM series "ep2d_diff"...
mrconvert: [100%] reformatting DICOM mosaic images...
mrconvert: [100%] copying from "ACME (hm) [MR] ep2d_diff" to "/tmp/mrtrix-tmp-zcDlnr.
↪mif"...
/tmp/mrtrix-tmp-zcDlnr.mif
```

Notice that the name of the temporary file is now printed on the terminal, since the command’s stdout has not be piped into another command, and we specified `-` as the second argument. You’ll also see this file is now present in the `/tmp` folder. You can use this file by copy/pasting it as an *argument* to another *MRtrix* command (be careful though, it will be deleted once this command exits):

```
$ mrstats /tmp/mrtrix-tmp-zcDlnr.mif
channel          mean          median      std. dev.         min          max
↪ count
↪ 506880 [ 0 ]          1053.47          96          1324.71          0          3827
↪ 506880 [ 1 ]          173.526          84          140.645          0          549
...
```

This allows for a non-linear arrangement of pipelines, whereby multiple pipelines can feed into a single command. This is achieved by using the shell’s output capture feature to insert the temporary file name of one pipeline as an argument into a second pipeline. In BASH, output capture is achieved using the `$(commands)` syntax, or equivalently using backticks: ``commands``. For example:

```

$ dwi2tensor /data/DICOM/ - | tensor2metric - -mask $(dwi2mask /data/DICOM/ - |
↳maskfilter - erode -npass 3 - ) -vec ev.mif -fa - | mrthreshold - -top 300 highFA.
↳mif
dwi2mask: [done] scanning DICOM folder "/data/DICOM/"
dwi2tensor: [done] scanning DICOM folder "/data/DICOM/"
dwi2mask: [100%] reading DICOM series "ep2d_diff"...
dwi2tensor: [100%] reading DICOM series "ep2d_diff"...
dwi2mask: [100%] reformatting DICOM mosaic images...
dwi2tensor: [100%] reformatting DICOM mosaic images...
dwi2mask: [100%] loading data for image "ACME (hm) [MR] ep2d_diff"...
dwi2tensor: [100%] loading data for image "ACME (hm) [MR] ep2d_diff"...
dwi2mask: [100%] finding min/max of "mean b=0 image"...
dwi2mask: [done] optimising threshold...
dwi2mask: [100%] thresholding...
dwi2tensor: [100%] estimating tensor components...
dwi2mask: [100%] finding min/max of "mean b=1000 image"...
dwi2mask: [done] optimising threshold...
dwi2mask: [100%] thresholding...
dwi2mask: [done] computing dwi brain mask...
maskfilter: [100%] applying erode filter to image -...
tensor2metric: [100%] computing tensor metrics...
mrthreshold: [100%] thresholding "/tmp/mrtrix-tmp-UHvhc2.mif" at 300th top voxel...

```

In this one command, we asked the system to perform this non-linear pipeline:

```

          dwi2tensor \
                    |--> tensor2metric  ---> mrthreshold
dwi2mask ---> maskfilter /

```

More specifically:

1. `dwi2tensor` will load the input diffusion-weighted data in DICOM format from the folder `/data/DICOM/` and compute the corresponding tensor components. The resulting data set is then fed into the pipe.
  1. meanwhile, `dwi2mask` will generate a brain mask from the DWI data, and feed the result into a second pipeline.
  2. `maskfilter` will access the mask from this second pipeline, erode the mask by 3 voxels, and output the name of the temporary file for use as an *argument* by the next stage.
2. `tensor2metric` will access the tensor data set from the first pipe, generate eigenvector and FA maps within the mask provided as an *argument* by the second pipeline, store the eigenvector map in `ev.mif` and feed the FA map into the next stage of the pipeline.
3. `mrthreshold` will access the FA image from the pipe, identify the 300 highest-valued voxels, and produce a mask of these voxels, stored in `highFA.mif`.



---

## Configuration file

---

The behaviour of a number of aspects of *MRtrix3* can be controlled by the user via the *MRtrix3 configuration file*. Note, that this file is distinct from the build configuration file that is generated as part of the *MRtrix3* installation, but rather is used to specify default settings for a number of parameters, many of which relate to data visualisation when using *mrview*.

For all available configurable options, please refer to the [configuration file options](#) page.

### 12.1 Location

*MRtrix3* applications will attempt to read configuration information from a two locations. The system-wide configuration file `/etc/mrtrix.conf` is read first if present, followed by the user-specific configuration `~/.mrtrix.conf`. If both system and user-specific configuration files exist, the parameters specified in the two configuration files will be aggregated, with user-specified configuration options taking precedence in the case of a conflict. In the case that a particular configuration parameter is not defined, *MRtrix3* will resort to hard-coded defaults.

### 12.2 Format

The configuration files are text files, with each line containing a key: value pair. For example

```
Analyse.LeftToRight: false
NumberOfThreads: 2
```

---

**Note:** Key names are case-sensitive.

---

The value entry may be interpreted by *MRtrix3* applications as either:

- **Boolean:** allowed values here are true or false
- **Integer:** any integer value

- Floating-point: any floating-point value
- Text: any text string, without any further interpretation

The list of all configuration file options can be found [here](#).

MRtrix includes a command `dwidenoise`, which implements DWI data denoising and noise map estimation by exploiting data redundancy in the PCA domain ([Veraart2016a] and [Veraart2016b]). The method uses the prior knowledge that the eigenspectrum of random covariance matrices is described by the universal Marchenko Pastur distribution.

### 13.1 Recommended use

Image denoising must be performed as the first step of the image-processing pipeline. Interpolation or smoothing in other processing steps, such as motion and distortion correction, may alter the noise characteristics and thus violate the assumptions upon which MP-PCA is based.

Typical use will be:

```
dwidenoise dwi.mif out.mif -noise noise.mif
```

where `dwi.mif` contains the raw input DWI image, `out.mif` is the denoised DWI output, and `noise.mif` is the estimated spatially-varying noise level.

We always recommend eyeballing the residuals, i.e. `out - in`, as part of the quality control. The lack of anatomy in the residual maps is a marker of accuracy and signal-preservation during denoising. The residuals can be easily obtained with

```
mrcalc dwi.mif out.mif -subtract res.mif
mrview res.mif
```

The kernel size, default `5x5x5`, can be chosen by the user (option: `-extent`). For maximal SNR gain we suggest to choose  $N > M$  for which  $M$  is typically the number of DW images in the data (single or multi-shell), where  $N$  is the number of kernel elements. However, in case of spatially varying noise, it might be beneficial to select smaller sliding kernels, e.g.  $N \sim M$ , to balance between precision, accuracy, and resolution of the noise map.

Note that this function does not correct for non-Gaussian noise biases yet.



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## DWI distortion correction using dwipreproc

---

The `dwipreproc` script, responsible for performing general pre-processing of DWI series, has been completely re-designed as part of the *MRtrix3* 3.0\_RC1 update. Although the ‘guts’ of the script are completely new, the fundamental operation - eddy current-induced distortion correction, motion correction, and (optionally) susceptibility-induced distortion correction, using FSL’s `eddy / topup / applytopup` tools, remains the same. While the user interface remains reasonably similar to that provided previously (examples to come), they are slightly different.

The major benefit of the new design is that *MRtrix3* is now capable of not only *capturing the relevant phase encoding information* from DICOM headers, but also *using that information* within `dwipreproc` to internally generate the necessary phase encoding table files in order to run these FSL tools. This comes with a number of benefits:

- It makes it possible to acquire and process a wider range of DWI acquisition designs, without requiring that the user laboriously manually construct the phase encoding tables that these FSL tools require.
- It means that automated pre-processing pipelines (e.g. these two [works-in-progress](#)) can be applied to provided data without requiring manual intervention to specify this information.
- Over time, as *MRtrix* 0.3.16 code is used to import DICOMs (and hence capture the phase encoding information) and the relevant code is thoroughly tested, there will be less onus on users to track and specify the type of phase encoding acquisition performed.

---

**Note:** Although the `dwipreproc` script is provided as part of *MRtrix3* in the hope that users will find it useful, the major image processing steps undertaken by this script are still performed using tools developed at FMRIB and provided as part of FSL. It is therefore *essential* that the appropriate references be cited whenever this script is used!

---

The `dwipreproc` script now has four major ‘modes’ of operation, that can be selected at the command-line using the `-rpe_*` options. Note that exactly *one* of these options **\*must\*** be provided. The following are example use cases; specific parameters, file names etc. may need to be altered to reflect your particular data.

### 1. No variation in phase encoding

All DWI volumes are acquired with precisely the same phase encoding direction and EPI readout time, and no additional spin-echo  $b=0$  images are acquired over and above those interleaved within the DWI acquisition. It is therefore impossible to estimate the inhomogeneity field using `topup`, and `eddy` will perform motion and eddy current correction only.

*Example DICOM image data:*

```
002_-_DWI_phaseAP/
```

*Old usage* (i.e. prior to MRtrix 0.3.16):

```
$ dwipreproc AP 002_-_DWI_phaseAP/ dwi_preprocessed.mif -rpe_none
```

*New usage:*

```
$ dwipreproc 002_-_DWI_phaseAP/ dwi_preprocessed.mif -rpe_none -pe_dir AP [ -
↳readout_time 0.1 ]
```

Note that here (and in subsequent examples), providing the EPI readout time manually is optional (if omitted, the ‘sane’ default of 0.1s will be assumed). The precise scaling of this parameter is not expected to influence results provided that the readout time is equivalent for all  $b=0$  / DWI volumes.

## 2. Reversed phase encode $b=0$ pair(s)

All DWI volumes are acquired with precisely the same phase encoding direction and EPI readout time. In addition, one or more pairs of spin-echo  $b=0$  EPI volumes are provided, where half of these volumes have the same phase encoding direction and readout time as the DWIs, and the other half have precisely the *opposite* phase encoding direction (but the same readout time). These additional images are therefore used to estimate the inhomogeneity field, but do not form part of the output DWI series.

*Example DICOM image data:*

```
002_-_ep2dse_phaseAP/
003_-_ep2dse_phasePA/
004_-_DWI_phaseAP/
```

*Old usage* (i.e. prior to MRtrix 0.3.16):

```
$ dwipreproc AP 004_-_DWI_phaseAP/ dwi_preprocessed.mif -rpe_pair 002_-_
↳ep2dse_phaseAP/ 003_-_ep2dse_phasePA/
```

*New usage:*

```
$ mrcat 002_-_ep2dse_phaseAP/ 003_-_ep2dse_phasePA/ b0s.mif -axis 3
$ dwipreproc 004_-_DWI_phaseAP/ dwi_preprocessed.mif -pe_dir AP -rpe_pair -
↳se_epi b0s.mif [ -readout_time 0.1 ]
```

## 3. Reversed phase encoding for all DWIs

For all diffusion gradient directions &  $b$ -values, two image volumes are obtained, with the opposite phase encoding direction with respect to one another. This allows for the combination of the two volumes corresponding to each unique diffusion gradient direction & strength into a single volume, where the relative compression / expansion of signal between the two volumes is exploited.

*Example DICOM image data:*

```
002_-_DWI_64dir_phaseLR/
003_-_DWI_64dir_phaseRL/
```

*Old usage* (i.e. prior to MRtrix 0.3.16):

```
$ dwipreproc LR 002_-_DWI_64dir_phaseLR/ dwi_preprocessed.mif -rpe_all 003_-_
↳DWI_64dir_phaseRL/
```

*New usage:*

```
$ mrcat 002_-_DWI_64dir_phaseLR/ 003_-_DWI_64dir_phaseRL/ all_DWIs.mif -axis_
↪3
$ dwipreproc all_DWIs.mif dwi_preprocessed.mif -pe_dir LR -rpe_all [ -
↪readout_time 0.1 ]
```

Note that in this particular example, the `dwipreproc` script will in fact extract the  $b=0$  volumes from the input DWIs and use those to estimate the inhomogeneity field with `topup`. If additional  $b=0$  images are also acquired, and it is desired to instead use those images to estimate the inhomogeneity field only, the `-se_epi` option can be used.

#### 4. Arbitrary phase encoding acquisition

In cases where either:

- An up-to-date version of *MRtrix3* has been used to convert from DICOM, such that phase encoding information is embedded in the image header; or
- Image data of unknown origin are to be processed by an automated pipeline without user intervention, and therefore phase encoding information must be provided using data files associated with the input images (such as JSON files in the BIDS standard),

it is possible for the `dwipreproc` script to automatically determine the appropriate steps to perform based on the phase encoding configuration of the image data presented to it.

*Usage:*

```
$ mrcat <all_input_DWIs> all_dwis.mif -axis 3
$ mrcat <all_extra_b=0_volumes> all_b0s.mif -axis 3 (optional)
$ dwipreproc all_dwis.mif dwi_preprocessed.mif -rpe_header [ -se_epi all_b0s.
↪mif ]
```

**Warning:** With regards to Option 4 (using phase encoding information as it is stored in the header), note that this functionality is preliminary and should not be trusted blindly. It is impossible for us to check and test all possible usage scenarios. Furthermore, if this information is imported or exported to/from the image header, this requires reorientation due to the way in which *MRtrix3* handles image orientations internally, which introduces additional mechanisms by which the tracking of phase encoding orientations may go awry. Results should therefore be checked manually if using / testing this mechanism.

When one of the options 1-3 are used, internally the `dwipreproc` script *generates the effective phase encoding table* given the user's images and command-line input; this is what is passed to `topup` / `applytopup` / `eddy`. If one of these options is used, but there is actually phase encoding information found within the image header(s), the script will *compare* the user's phase encoding specification against the header contents, and produce a warning if it detects a mismatch (since either the phase encoding design is not what you think it is, or the import of phase encoding information from DICOM is awry; either warrants further investigation).

## 14.1 Using eddy's slice-to-volume correction capability

As of September 2017, FSL's `eddy` tool has the capability of not only estimating and correcting motion *between* DWI volumes, but also motion *within* volumes. Details of this method can be found within the relevant [publication](#). *MRtrix3* is capable of supporting this underlying `eddy` functionality within the wrapping `dwipreproc` script. Below are a few relevant details to assist users in getting this working:

- At time of writing, only the CUDA version of the `eddy` executable provides the slice-to-volume correction capability. Therefore, this version must be installed on your system, and CUDA itself must be appropriately set up. Note that with *MRtrix3* version 3.0\_RC3, presence of the CUDA version of `eddy` will be automatically detected within your `PATH` by `dwipreproc`, and this version will be executed in preference to the OpenMP version.
- `eddy`'s slice-to-volume correction is triggered by the presence of the `--mporder=#` command-line option. Therefore, to activate this behaviour, the contents of the `-eddy_options` command-line option passed to `dwipreproc` must contain this entry.
- The timing of acquisition of each slice must be known in order to perform slice-to-volume correction. This is provided to `eddy` via the command-line option `--slspec=`, where a text file is provided that defines the order in which the slices are acquired within each volume. In `dwipreproc`, there are two ways in which this information can be provided:
  - If you include the string `--slspec=path/to/file.txt` within the contents of the `-eddy_options` command-line option, then `dwipreproc` will copy the file to which you have provided the path into the temporary directory created by the script, such that `eddy` appropriately locates that file.
  - If DICOM conversion & all subsequent processing is performed solely using *MRtrix3* commands, and *Header key-value pairs* are preserved, then where possible, *MRtrix3* will store fields “SliceEncodingDirection” and “SliceTiming” based on DICOM information (note that the naming of these fields is consistent with the [BIDS specification](#)). `dwipreproc` will then use these fields to *internally* generate the “slspec” file required by `eddy` without user intervention; as long as the user does *not* provide the `--slspec=` option within `-eddy_options`.

---

## Response function estimation

---

A prerequisite for spherical deconvolution is obtaining the response function(s), which is/are used as the kernel(s) by the deconvolution algorithm. For the white matter, the response function models the signal expected for a voxel containing a single, coherently oriented bundle of axons [Tournier2004] [Tournier2007]. In case of multi-tissue variants of spherical deconvolution, response functions for other tissue types are introduced as well; typically to represent grey matter(-like) and/or CSF(-like) signals [Jeurissen2014] [Dhollander2016a].

In MRtrix3, the *dwi2response* script offers a range of algorithms to estimate these response function(s) directly from your dataset itself. This process of estimating response function(s) from the data is non-trivial. No single algorithm works for *any* possible scenario, although some have proven to be more widely applicable than others.

### 15.1 General recommendations

#### 15.1.1 Choice of algorithm

While many algorithms exist, the following appear to perform well in a wide range of scenarios, based on experience and testing from both developers and the MRtrix3 community:

**Single-tissue CSD:** If you intend to perform (single-tissue) *Constrained spherical deconvolution* (e.g. via `dwi2fod csd`), the *tournier* algorithm is a convenient and reliable way to estimate the single-fibre white matter response function:

```
dwi2response tournier dwi.mif wm_response.txt
```

Other options include the *fa* or *tax* algorithms.

**Multi-tissue CSD or global tractography:** If you intend to perform a *multi-tissue* analysis, such as *Multi-shell multi-tissue constrained spherical deconvolution* (e.g. via `dwi2fod msmt_csd`) or *Global tractography* (e.g. via `tckglobal`), the *dhollander* algorithm is a convenient and reliable way to estimate the single-fibre white matter response function as well as the grey matter and CSF response functions:

```
dwi2response dhollander dwi.mif wm_response.txt gm_response.txt csf_response.txt
```

Other options include the *msmt\_5tt* algorithm.

## 15.1.2 Checking the results

In general, it's always worthwhile checking your response function(s):

```
shview wm_response.txt
```

Use the left and right arrow (keyboard) keys in this viewer to switch between the different b-values ('shells') of the response function, if it has more than one b-value (this would for example be the case for the outputs of the *dhollander* algorithm).

It may also be helpful to check which voxels were selected by the algorithm to estimate the response function(s) from. For any *dwi2response* algorithm, this can be done by adding the `-voxels` option, which outputs an image of these voxels. For example, for the *tournier* algorithm:

```
dwi2response tournier dwi.mif wm_response.txt -voxels voxels.mif
```

The resulting `voxels.mif` image can be overlaid on the `dwi.mif` dataset using the *mrview* image viewer for further inspection.

## 15.2 Available algorithms

The available algorithms differ in a few general properties, related to what they deliver (as output) and require (as input), notably

- **single- versus multi-tissue:** whether they only estimate a single-fibre white matter response function (*tournier*, *tax* and *fa*) or also additional response functions for other tissue types (*dhollander* and *msmt\_5tt* both output a single-fibre white matter response function as well as grey matter and CSF response functions)
- **single versus multiple b-values:** whether they only output response function(s) for a single b-value (*tournier*, *tax* and *fa*) or for all—or a selection of— b-values (*dhollander* and *msmt\_5tt*)
- **input requirements:** whether they only require the DWI dataset as input (*tournier*, *dhollander*, *tax* and *fa*) or also additional input(s) (*msmt\_5tt* requires a 5TT segmentation from a spatially aligned anatomical image)

Beyond these general categories, the algorithms differ mostly in the actual strategy used to determine the voxels that will be used to estimate the response function(s) from.

The *manual* choice is an exception to most of the above, in that it allows/*requires* you to provide the voxels yourself, and even allows you to provide single-fibre orientations manually as well. It should only be considered in case of exceptional kinds of data, or otherwise exceptional requirements. Caution is advised with respect to *interpretation* of spherical deconvolution results using manually defined response function(s).

The following sections provide more details on each algorithm specifically.

### 15.2.1 dhollander

This algorithm currently is the original implementation of the strategy proposed in [Dhollander2016b] to estimate multi b-value (single-shell + b=0, or multi-shell) response functions for single-fibre white matter (*anisotropic*), grey matter and CSF (both *isotropic*), which can subsequently be used for multi-tissue (constrained) spherical deconvolution algorithms. It has the distinct advantage of requiring *only* the DWI data as input, in contrast to other multi-tissue response function estimations methods, making it the simplest and most accessible method, and a sensible default for applications that require multi-shell responses.

This is a fully automated unsupervised algorithm that leverages the relative diffusion properties of the 3 tissue response functions with respect to each other, to select the most appropriate voxels from which to estimate the response functions. It has been used successfully in a wide range of conditions (overall data quality, pathology, developmental state of the subjects, animal data and ex-vivo data). Additional insights into its performance are presented in [Dhollander2018a]. Due to its ability to deal with the presence of extensive white matter (hyperintense) lesions, it was for example also successfully used in [Mito2018a]. Finally, the response functions as obtained in this particular way also form the basis of the 3-tissue framework to study the microstructure of lesions and other pathology [Dhollander2017] [Mito2018b].

In almost all cases, it runs and performs well out of the box. In exceptional cases where the anisotropy in the data is particularly *low* (very early development, ex-vivo data with low b-value, ...), it may be advisable to set the `-fa` parameter *lower* than its default value of 0.2. See [Dhollander2018b] for an example of a dataset where changing this parameter was required to obtain good results.

As always, check the `-voxels` option output in unusually (challenging) cases.

For more information, refer to the [dhollander algorithm documentation](#).

### 15.2.2 fa

This algorithm is an implementation of the strategy proposed in [Tournier2013] to estimate a single b-value (single-shell) response function of single-fibre white matter, which can subsequently be used for single-tissue (constrained) spherical deconvolution. The algorithm estimates this response function from the 300 voxels with the highest FA value in an eroded brain mask. There are also options to change this number or provide an absolute FA threshold.

Due to relying *only* on FA values, this strategy is relatively limited in its abilities to select the best voxels. In white matter close to CSF, for example, Gibbs ringing can affect FA values. More advanced iterative strategies, such as the *tournier* and *tax* algorithms have been proposed more recently.

For more information, refer to the [fa algorithm documentation](#).

### 15.2.3 manual

This algorithm is provided for cases where none of the available algorithms give adequate results, for deriving multi-shell multi-tissue response functions in cases where the voxel mask for each tissue must be defined manually, or for anyone who may find it useful if trying to devise their own mechanism for response function estimation. It requires manual definition of both the single-fibre voxel mask (or just a voxel mask for isotropic tissues); the fibre directions can also be provided manually if necessary (otherwise a tensor fit will be used).

For more information, refer to the [manual algorithm documentation](#).

### 15.2.4 msmt\_5tt

This algorithm is a reimplement of the strategy proposed in [Jeurissen2014] to estimate multi b-value response functions of single-fibre white matter (*anisotropic*), grey matter and CSF (both *isotropic*), which can subsequently be used for multi-tissue (constrained) spherical deconvolution. The algorithm is primarily driven by a prior (*The 5TT format*) tissue segmentation, typically obtained from a spatially aligned anatomical image. This also requires prior correction for susceptibility-induced (EPI) distortions of the DWI dataset. The algorithm selects voxels with a segmentation partial volume of at least 0.95 for each tissue type. Grey matter and CSF are further constrained by an (upper) 0.2 FA threshold. Single-fibre voxels within the WM segment are then extracted using the *tournier* algorithm (in contrast to original publication, see [Replicating original publications](#) below).

The input tissue segmentation can be estimated using the same *pre-processing pipeline* as required for *Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT)*, namely: correction for motion and (EPI and other) distortions present in the diffusion MR data, registration of the structural to (corrected) EPI data, and spatial segmentation of the anatomical image.

This process is therefore also dependent on the accuracy of each of these steps, so that the T1 image can be reliably used to select pure-tissue voxels in the DWI volumes. Failure to achieve high accuracy for each of these individual steps may result in inappropriate voxels being used for response function estimation, with concomitant errors in tissue estimates.

The *dhollander* algorithm does not rely on a number of these steps. A comparison is presented in [Dhollander2018a].

For further information, refer to the *msmt\_5tt algorithm documentation*.

## 15.2.5 tax

This algorithm is a reimplementation of the iterative approach proposed in [Tax2014] to estimate a single b-value (single-shell) response function of single-fibre white matter, which can subsequently be used for single-tissue (constrained) spherical deconvolution. The algorithm iterates between performing CSD and estimating a response function from all voxels detected as being ‘single-fibre’ from the CSD result itself. The criterion for a voxel to be ‘single-fibre’ is based on the ratio of the amplitude of second tallest to the tallest peak. The method is initialised with a ‘fat’ response function; i.e., a response function that is safely deemed to be much less ‘sharp’ than the true response function.

This algorithm has occasionally been found to be unstable and converge towards suboptimal solutions. The *tournier* algorithm has been engineered with the intention to overcome some of the issues believed to be the cause of these instabilities (see some discussion on this topic [here](#) and [here](#)).

For more information, refer to the *tax algorithm documentation*.

## 15.2.6 tournier

This algorithm is a reimplementation of the iterative approach proposed in [Tournier2013] to estimate a single b-value (single-shell) response function of single-fibre white matter, which can subsequently be used for single-tissue (constrained) spherical deconvolution. The algorithm iterates between performing CSD and estimating a response function from a set of the best ‘single-fibre’ voxels, as detected from the CSD result itself. Notable differences between this implementation and the algorithm described in [Tournier2013] include:

- This implementation is initialised by a sharp  $l_{\max}=4$  response function as opposed to one estimated from the 300 brain voxels with the highest FA.
- This implementation uses a more complex metric to measure how ‘single-fibre’ FODs are:  $l_{\text{peak1}} \times (1 - l_{\text{peak2}} / l_{\text{peak1}})^2$ , as opposed to a simple ratio of the two tallest peaks. This new metric has a bias towards FODs with a larger tallest peak, to avoid favouring small, yet low SNR, FODs.
- This implementation only performs CSD on the 3000 best ‘single-fibre’ voxels (of the previous iteration) at each iteration.

While the *tournier* algorithm has a similar iterative structure as the *tax* algorithm, it was adjusted with the intention to overcome some occasional instabilities and suboptimal solutions resulting from the latter. Notable differences between the *tournier* and *tax* algorithms include:

- The *tournier* algorithm is initialised by a *sharp* ( $l_{\max}=4$ ) response function, while the *tax* algorithm is initialised by a *fat* response function.
- This implementation of the *tournier* algorithm uses a more complex metric to measure how ‘single-fibre’ FODs are (see above), while the *tax* algorithm uses a simple ratio of the two tallest peaks.
- The *tournier* algorithm estimates the response function at each iteration only from the 300 *best* ‘single-fibre’ voxels, while the *tax* algorithm uses *all* ‘single-fibre’ voxels.

Due to these differences, the *tournier* algorithm is currently believed to be more robust in a wider range of scenarios (for further information on this topic, refer to some of the discussions [here](#) and [here](#)).

For more information, refer to the *tournier algorithm documentation*.

## 15.3 Replicating original publications

For completeness, we provide below instructions for replicating the approaches used in previous relevant publications. Note that the implementations provided below are not necessarily *exactly* as published, but aim to be close approximations nonetheless.

### 15.3.1 Spherical deconvolution and Constrained spherical deconvolution

In the original spherical deconvolution [Tournier2004] and constrained spherical deconvolution [Tournier2007] papers, the response function was estimated by extracting the 300 voxels with the highest FA values within a brain mask, eroded to avoid noisy voxels near the edge of the brain. This can be performed using the *fa* method directly:

```
dwi2response fa dwi.mif response.txt
```

where:

- `dwi.mif` is the input DWI data set,
- `response.txt` is the estimated response function, produced as output

### 15.3.2 MSMT-CSD and Global tractography

In the original multi-shell multi-tissue CSD [Jeurissen2014] and global tractography [Christiaens2015] papers, response functions were estimated using a prior tissue segmentation obtained from a coregistered structural T1 scan. For the WM response, a further hard FA threshold was used: respectively 0.7 in the MSMT-CSD paper and 0.75 in the global tractography paper. This pipeline can be replicated using the *5ttgen* command and *msmt\_5tt* algorithm with the `-sfwm_fa_threshold` option in this fashion:

```
5ttgen fsl T1.mif 5tt.mif
dwi2response msmt_5tt dwi.mif 5tt.mif wm_response.txt gm_response.txt csf_response.
↳txt -sfwm_fa_threshold 0.7
```

where:

- `T1.mif` is a coregistered T1 data set from the same subject (input)
- `5tt.mif` is the resulting tissue type segmentation, used subsequently used in the response function estimation (output/input)
- `dwi.mif` is the same dwi data set as used above (input)
- `<tissue>_response.txt` is the tissue-specific response function as used above (output)

To replicate the global tractography paper, specify a value of 0.75 instead of 0.7 as shown in the command line above.



---

## Constrained spherical deconvolution

---

### 16.1 Introduction

Constrained Spherical Deconvolution (CSD) [Tournier2007] estimates a white matter fibre Orientation Distribution Function (fODF) based on an estimate of the signal expected for a single-fibre white matter population (the so-called *response function*). This is used as the kernel in a deconvolution operation to extract a white matter fODF from dMRI signal measured within each voxel.

### 16.2 User guide

#### 16.2.1 Prerequisites

Constrained Spherical Deconvolution as defined in [Tournier2007] relies on *single-shell* high angular resolution diffusion imaging (HARDI) data, containing at least one non-zero  $b$ -value. Ideally, the  $b$ -value used should be in the region of 2,500 – 3,000 s/mm<sup>2</sup> (at least for *in vivo* human brains), although good results have sometimes been obtained using  $b = 1000$  s/mm<sup>2</sup> data.

In addition, this command expects that a suitable *single-shell single-tissue response function* has already been computed. Please refer to the [Response function estimation](#) page for details.

#### 16.2.2 Invocation

Constrained Spherical Deconvolution can be performed as:

```
dwi2fod csd dwi.mif response.txt fod.mif
```

where:

- `dwi.mif` is the dwi data set (input)
- `response.txt` is the response function (input)

- `fod.mif` is the resulting fODF (output)

Typically, you will also want to use the `-mask` option to avoid unnecessary computations in non-brain voxels:

```
dwi2fod csd -mask mask.mif dwi.mif response.txt fod.mif
```

The resulting WM fODFs can be displayed together with the mean fODF amplitude map using:

```
mrview fod.mif -odf.load_sh fod.mif
```

---

## Multi-shell multi-tissue constrained spherical deconvolution

---

### 17.1 Introduction

Multi-Shell Multi-Tissue Constrained Spherical Deconvolution (MSMT-CSD) exploits the unique  $b$ -value dependencies of the different macroscopic tissue types (WM/GM/CSF) to estimate a multi-tissue orientation distribution function (ODF) as explained in [Jeurissen2014]. As it includes separate compartments for each tissue type, it can produce a map of the WM/GM/CSF signal contributions directly from the DW data. In addition, the more complete modelling of the DW signal results in more accurate apparent fiber density (AFD) measures and more precise fibre orientation estimates at the tissue interfaces.

### 17.2 User guide

#### 17.2.1 Prerequisites

MSMT-CSD relies on *multi-shell* high angular resolution diffusion imaging (HARDI) data, containing multiple  $b$ -values. The number of tissue types that can be resolved is limited by the number of  $b$ -values in the data (including  $b=0$ ). To resolve the three primary tissue types in the brain (WM, GM & CSF), the acquisition should contain at least 2 shells along with the  $b=0$  volumes (i.e. 3 unique  $b$ -values).

In addition, this command expects that suitable *multi-shell multi-tissue response functions* have already been computed. A number of approaches are available for this, please refer to the [Response function estimation](#) page for details.

#### 17.2.2 Invocation

Multi-shell multi-tissue CSD can be performed as:

```
dwi2fod msmt_csd dwi.mif wm_response.txt wmfod.mif gm_response.txt gm.mif csf_  
↳response.txt csf.mif
```

where:

- `dwi.mif` is the dwi data set (input)
- `<tissue>_response.txt` is the tissue-specific response function (input)
- `<tissue>.mif` is the tissue-specific ODF (output), typically full FODs for WM and a single scalars for GM and CSF

Note that input response functions and their corresponding output ODFs need to be specified in pairs.

Typically, you will also want to use the `-mask` option to avoid unnecessary computations in non-brain voxels:

```
dwi2fod msmt_csd -mask mask.mif dwi.mif wm_response.txt wmfod.mif gm_response.txt gm.  
↪mif csf_response.txt csf.mif
```

RGB tissue signal contribution maps can be obtained as follows:

```
mrconvert -coord 3 0 wm.mif - | mrcat csf.mif gm.mif - vf.mif
```

The resulting WM FODs can be displayed together with the tissue signal contribution map as:

```
mrview vf.mif -odf.load_sh wm.mif
```

---

## Fibre density and cross-section - Single-tissue CSD

---

### 18.1 Introduction

This tutorial explains how to perform fixel-based analysis of fibre density and cross-section [Raffelt2017] using *single-tissue* spherical deconvolution. We note that high b-value (>2000s/mm<sup>2</sup>) data is recommended to aid the interpretation of apparent fibre density (AFD) being related to the intra-axonal space. See [Raffelt2012] for more details about *single-tissue* AFD.

All steps in this tutorial are written as if the commands are being **run on a cohort of images**, and make extensive use of the *foreach script to simplify batch processing*. This tutorial also assumes that the imaging dataset is organised with one directory identifying each subject, and all files within identifying the image type (i.e. processing step outcome). For example:

```
study/subjects/001_patient/dwi.mif
study/subjects/001_patient/wmfod.mif
study/subjects/002_control/dwi.mif
study/subjects/002_control/wmfod.mif
```

---

**Note:** All commands at the start of this tutorial are run **from the subjects path**. From the step where tractography is performed on the template onwards, we change directory **to the template path**.

---

For all MRtrix scripts and commands, additional information on the command usage and available command-line options can be found by invoking the command with the `-help` option.

### 18.2 Pre-processing steps

#### 18.2.1 1. Denoising and unringing

If denoising and/or Gibbs ringing removal are performed as part of the preprocessing, they *must* be performed *prior* to any other processing steps: most other processing steps, in particular those that involve interpolation of the data, will

invalidate the original properties of the image data that are exploited by *dwidenoise* and *mrdegibbs* at this stage, and would render the result prone to errors.

If denoising is included, it's performed as the first step:

```
foreach * : dwidenoise IN/dwi.mif IN/dwi_denoised.mif
```

If Gibbs ringing removal is included, it follows immediately after:

```
foreach * : mrdegibbs IN/dwi_denoised.mif IN/dwi_denoised_unringed.mif -axes 0,1
```

**Warning:** The `-axes` option to *mrdegibbs* is used to specify in which plane the slices were acquired. The `-axes 0,1` in the example above refers to the x-y plane, which is appropriate for data consisting of a stack of *axial* slices (assuming a typical human scanner and subject). For typical human data, change this to `-axes 0,2` for *coronal* slices or `-axes 1,2` for *sagittal* slices.

### 18.2.2 2. Motion and distortion correction

The *dwipreproc* command handles motion and distortion correction for DWI data (including eddy current distortions and optionally susceptibility-induced EPI distortions). Even though the command works seamlessly like any other MRtrix3 command, it is in fact a script that interfaces with the *FSL* package to perform most of its core functionality and algorithms. For this command to work, *FSL* (including *eddy*) needs to be installed. Also remember to cite the relevant articles with respect to the specific algorithms (see the *dwipreproc* help page).

The simplest scenario is to (only) correct for motion and eddy current-induced distortions:

```
foreach * : dwipreproc IN/dwi_denoised_unringed.mif IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc.  
↪mif -rpe_none -pe_dir AP
```

**Warning:** The `-pe_dir` option to *dwipreproc* is used to specify the phase encoding direction of the acquisition. The `-pe_dir AP` in the example above refers to an *anterior-posterior* phase encoding direction, which is relatively commonly used for acquiring human data. For typical human data, change this to `-pe_dir LR` for a *left-right* phase encoding direction or `-pe_dir SI` for a *superior-inferior* phase encoding direction.

For different, more advanced, scenarios and acquisitions (e.g. the common case of correcting for susceptibility-induced EPI distortions using a pair of reverse phase-encoded b=0 images), refer to the *DWI distortion correction using dwipreproc* section and the *dwipreproc* documentation.

### 18.2.3 3. Estimate a temporary brain mask

Compute a brain mask:

```
foreach * : dwi2mask IN/dwi_denoised_preproc.mif IN/dwi_temp_mask.mif
```

## 18.3 AFD-specific pre-processing steps

To enable robust quantitative comparisons of AFD across subjects three additional steps are required. Note these can potentially be skipped if analysing *certain* other DWI fixel-based measures related to fibre density (for example CHARMED).

### 18.3.1 4. Bias field correction

Because we recommend a *global intensity normalisation*, bias field correction is required as a pre-processing step to eliminate low frequency intensity inhomogeneities across the image. DWI bias field correction is performed by first estimating the bias field from the DWI b=0 data, then applying the field to correct all DW volumes. This can be done in a single step using the *dwibiascorrect* script with the `-ants` option in MRtrix. The script uses a bias field correction algorithm available in ANTS (the N4 algorithm). *Don't* use the `-fsl` option with this script in this fixel-based analysis pipeline. To perform bias field correction on DW images, run:

```
foreach * : dwibiascorrect -ants IN/IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc.mif IN/IN/dwi_
↳denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased.mif
```

### 18.3.2 5. Global intensity normalisation across subjects

As outlined [here](#), a global intensity normalisation is required for AFD analysis. For a single-tissue pipeline, a possible approach is to use the *dwiintensitynorm* script. The script performs normalisation on all subjects within a study (using a group-wise registration), and therefore the input and output arguments are directories containing all study images. First create directories to store all the input and output images. From the subjects directory:

```
mkdir -p ../dwiintensitynorm/dwi_input
mkdir ../dwiintensitynorm/mask_input
```

You could copy all files into this directory, however symbolic linking them will save space:

```
foreach * : ln -sr IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased.mif ../dwiintensitynorm/
↳dwi_input/IN.mif
foreach * : ln -sr IN/dwi_temp_mask.mif ../dwiintensitynorm/mask_input/IN.mif
```

Perform intensity normalisation:

```
dwiintensitynorm ../dwiintensitynorm/dwi_input/ ../dwiintensitynorm/mask_input/ ../
↳dwiintensitynorm/dwi_output/ ../dwiintensitynorm/fa_template.mif ../
↳dwiintensitynorm/fa_template_wm_mask.mif
```

Link the output files back to the subject directories:

```
foreach ../dwiintensitynorm/dwi_output/* : ln -sr IN PRE/dwi_denoised_unringed_
↳preproc_unbiased_normalised.mif
```

The *dwiintensitynorm* script also outputs the study-specific FA template and white matter mask. **It is recommended that you check that the white matter mask is appropriate** (i.e. does not contain CSF or voxels external to the brain. It needs to be a rough WM mask). If you feel the white matter mask needs to be larger or smaller you can re-run *dwiintensitynorm* with a different `-fa_threshold` option. Note that if your input brain masks include CSF then this can cause spurious high FA values outside the brain which are then included in the template white matter mask.

Keeping the FA template image and white matter mask is also handy if additional subjects are added to the study at a later date. New subjects can be intensity normalised in a single step by *piping* the following commands together. Run from the subjects directory:

```
dwi2tensor new_subject/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased.mif -mask new_subject/
↳dwi_temp_mask.mif - | tensor2metric -fa - | mrregister -force ../dwiintensitynorm/
↳fa_template.mif - -mask2 new_subject/dwi_temp_mask.mif -nl_scale 0.5,0.75,1.0 -nl_
↳niter 5,5,15 -nl_warp - /tmp/dummy_file.mif | mrtransform ../dwiintensitynorm/fa_
↳template_wm_mask.mif -template new_subject/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased.
↳mif -warp - - | dwinormalise new_subject/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased.mif
↳- ../dwiintensitynorm/dwi_output/new_subject.mif
```

(continues on next page)

**Note:** The above command may also be useful if you wish to alter the mask and re-apply the intensity normalisation to all subjects in the study. For example, you may wish to edit the mask using the ROI tool in `mrview` to *remove* white matter regions that you hypothesise are affected by the disease (e.g. removing the corticospinal tract in a study of motor neurone disease due to T2 hyperintensity). You also may wish to redefine the mask entirely, for example in an elderly population (with enlarged ventricles) it may be possible, or even preferable, to normalise using the median  $b=0$  CSF. This could be performed by manually masking partial-volume-free CSF voxels, then running the above command with the CSF mask instead of the `fa_template_wm_mask.mif`.

**Warning:** We strongly recommend you that you check the scale factors applied during intensity normalisation are not influenced by the variable of interest in your study. For example if one group contains global changes in white matter T2 then this may directly influence the intensity normalisation and therefore bias downstream AFD analysis. To check this, you can perform an equivalence test to ensure mean scale factors are the same between groups. To output the scale factor applied for all subjects use `mrinfo ../dwiintensitynorm/dwi_output/* -property dwi_norm_scale_factor`.

## 18.4 Fixel-based analysis steps

### 18.4.1 6. Computing an (average) white matter response function

A robust and fully automated (unsupervised) method to obtain single-shell response functions representing single-fibre white matter from your data, is the approach proposed in [Tournier2013], which can be run by:

```
foreach * : dwi2response tournier IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_
↳normalised.mif IN/response.txt
```

It is crucial for fixel-based analysis to only use a single *unique* response function to perform spherical deconvolution of all subjects: as all resulting fibre orientation distributions will be expressed in function of it, it can (in an abstract way) be seen as the unit of the final apparent fibre density metric. A possible way to obtain a unique response function, is to average the response functions obtained from all subjects:

```
average_response */response.txt ../group_average_response.txt
```

There is however no strict requirement for the (one) final response function to be the average of *all* subject response functions. In certain very specific cases, it may even be wise to leave out subjects (for this step) where a response function could not reliably be obtained, or where pathology affected the brain globally.

### 18.4.2 7. Upsampling DW images

Upsampling DWI data *before* computing FODs can increase anatomical contrast and improve downstream template building, registration, tractography and statistics. We recommend upsampling to an isotropic voxel size of 1.3 mm for human brains (if your original resolution is already higher, you can skip this step):

```
foreach * : mrresize IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_normalised.mif -vox 1.
↳3 IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_normalised_upsampled.mif
```

### 18.4.3 8. Compute upsampled brain mask images

Compute a whole brain mask from the upsampled DW images:

```
foreach * : dwi2mask IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_normalised_upsampled.
↳mif IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif
```

**Warning:** It is absolutely **crucial** to check at this stage that *all* individual subject masks include *all* regions of the brain that are intended to be analysed. Fibre orientation distributions will *only* be computed within these masks; and at a later step (in template space) the analysis mask will be restricted to the *intersection* of all masks, so *any* individual subject mask which excludes a certain region, will result in this region being excluded from the entire analysis. Masks appearing too generous or otherwise including non-brain regions should generally not cause any concerns at this stage. Hence, if in doubt, it is advised to always err on the side of *inclusion* (of regions) at this stage. Manually correct the masks if necessary.

### 18.4.4 9. Fibre Orientation Distribution estimation (spherical deconvolution)

When performing fixel-based analysis, constrained spherical deconvolution (CSD) should be performed using the unique (average) white matter response function obtained before. Note that `dwi2fod csd` can be used, however here we use `dwi2fod msmt_csd` (even with single shell data) to benefit from the hard non-negativity constraint, which has been observed to lead to more robust outcomes:

```
foreach * : dwiextract IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_normalised_upsampled.
↳mif - \| dwi2fod msmt_csd - ../group_average_response.txt IN/wmfod.mif -mask IN/dwi_
↳mask_upsampled.mif
```

### 18.4.5 10. Generate a study-specific unbiased FOD template

Population template creation is one of the most time consuming steps in a fixel-based analysis. If you have a very large number of subjects in your study, you can opt to create the template from a limited subset of 30-40 individuals. Typically, subjects are chosen so the generated template is representative of your population (e.g. similar number of patients and controls, though avoid patients with excessive abnormalities compared to the rest of the population). To build a template, put all FOD images in a single folder and put a set of corresponding mask images (with the same prefix as the FOD images) in another folder (using masks speeds up registration significantly):

```
mkdir -p ../template/fod_input
mkdir ../template/mask_input
```

Symbolic link all FOD images (and masks) into a single input folder. To use the entire population to build the template:

```
foreach * : ln -sr IN/wmfod.mif ../template/fod_input/PRE.mif
foreach * : ln -sr IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/mask_input/PRE.mif
```

If you opt to create the template from a limited subset of (e.g. 30-40) subjects and your study has multiple groups, then you can aim for a similar number of subjects from each group to make the template more representative of the population as a whole. Assuming the subject directory labels can be used to identify members of each group, you could use:

```
foreach `ls -d *patient | sort -R | tail -20` : ln -sr IN/wmfod.mif ../template/fod_
↳input/PRE.mif ";" ln -sr IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/mask_input/PRE.mif
foreach `ls -d *control | sort -R | tail -20` : ln -sr IN/wmfod.mif ../template/fod_
↳input/PRE.mif ";" ln -sr IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/mask_input/PRE.mif
```

Run the template building script as follows:

```
population_template ../template/fod_input -mask_dir ../template/mask_input ../  
↪template/wmfod_template.mif -voxel_size 1.3
```

The voxel size is typically set to match the voxel size of the input FOD images (which, in this pipeline, would typically be the resolution the preprocessed data was upsampled to, earlier on in the pipeline).

### 18.4.6 11. Register all subject FOD images to the FOD template

Register the FOD image from each subject to the FOD template:

```
foreach * : mrregister IN/wmfod.mif -mask1 IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/  
↪wmfod_template.mif -nl_warp IN/subject2template_warp.mif IN/template2subject_warp.  
↪mif
```

### 18.4.7 12. Compute the template mask (intersection of all subject masks in template space)

Different subjects have different brain coverage. To ensure subsequent analysis is performed in voxels that contain data from all subjects, we warp all subject masks into template space and compute the template mask as the intersection of all subject masks in template space. To warp all masks into template space:

```
foreach * : mrtransform IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif -warp IN/subject2template_warp.mif -  
↪interp nearest -datatype bit IN/dwi_mask_in_template_space.mif
```

Compute the template mask as the intersection of all warped masks:

```
mrmath */dwi_mask_in_template_space.mif min ../template/template_mask.mif -datatype_  
↪bit
```

**Warning:** It is absolutely **crucial** to check at this stage that the resulting template mask includes *all* regions of the brain that are intended to be analysed. If this is not the case, the cause will be either an individual subject mask which did not include a certain region, or the template building process or individual subject registrations having gone wrong for one or more subjects. It is advised to **go back** to these steps, and identify and resolve the cause of the problem before continuing any further.

---

**Note:** It is possible at this stage to edit the template mask and remove certain regions that are either not part of the brain (though these are unlikely to survive the intersection step to begin with, as they would have to be present in *all* subject masks for this to happen), or otherwise not of interest. However, **do not add regions to the mask** at this stage. If there is a genuine need to do this, go back to the relevant steps which caused the exclusion of these regions to begin with (see also the above warning).

---

### 18.4.8 13. Compute a white matter template analysis fixel mask

Here we perform a 2-step threshold to identify template white matter fixels to be included in the analysis. Fixels in the template fixel analysis mask are also used to identify the best fixel correspondence across all subjects (i.e. match fixels across subjects within a voxel).

Compute a template AFD peaks fixel image:

```
fod2fixel ../template/wmfod_template.mif -mask ../template/template_mask.mif ../
↳template/fixel_temp -peak peaks.mif
```

**Note:** Fixel images, which appear in the pipeline from this step onwards, are stored using the *Fixel image (directory) format*, which stores all fixel data for a fixel image in a directory (i.e. a folder).

Next view the peaks file using the fixel plot tool in *mrview* and identify an appropriate threshold that removes peaks from grey matter, yet does not introduce any large gaps in your white matter (e.g. 0.25; this should be tuned manually to be suitable for your data).

Threshold the peaks fixel image:

```
mrthreshold ../template/fixel_temp/peaks.mif -abs 0.25 ../template/fixel_temp/mask.mif
```

Generate an analysis voxel mask from the fixel mask. The median filter in this step should remove spurious voxels outside the brain, and fill in the holes in deep white matter where you have small peaks due to 3-fibre crossings:

```
fixel2voxel ../template/fixel_temp/mask.mif max - | mrfilter - median ../template/
↳voxel_mask.mif
rm -rf ../template/fixel_temp
```

Recompute the fixel mask using the analysis voxel mask. Using the mask allows us to use a lower AFD threshold than possible in the steps above, to ensure we have included fixels with low AFD inside white matter (e.g. regions with fibre crossings):

```
fod2fixel -mask ../template/voxel_mask.mif -fmls_peak_value 0.1 ../template/wmfod_
↳template.mif ../template/fixel_mask
```

**Warning:** This step ultimately determines the fixel mask in which statistical analysis will be performed, and hence also which fixels' statistics can contribute to others via the CFE mechanism; so it may have a substantial impact on the final result. Essentially, it can be detrimental to the result if the threshold value specified via the `-fmls_peak_value` is *too high* and hence *excludes* genuine white matter fixels. This risk is substantially higher in voxels containing crossing fibres (and higher the more fibres are crossing in a single voxel). Even though 0.1 has been observed to be a reasonable value for single-tissue CSD population templates, it is still **strongly advised** to visualise the output fixel mask using *mrview*. Do this by opening the `index.mif` found in `../template/fixel_mask` via the *fixel plot tool*. If, with respect to known or normal anatomy, fixels are missing (especially paying attention to crossing areas), regenerate the mask with a lower value supplied to the `-fmls_peak_value` option. At the same time, try to avoid introducing too many noisy fixels, especially in gray matter areas. For single-tissue CSD, this balance is however not always easy to find. For an *adult human* brain template, and using an isotropic template voxel size of 1.3 mm, it is expected to have several *hundreds of thousands* of fixels in the fixel mask (you can check this by `mrinfo -size ../template/fixel_mask/directions.mif`, and looking at the size of the image along the first dimension).

## 18.4.9 14. Warp FOD images to template space

Note that here we warp FOD images into template space *without* FOD reorientation, as reorientation will be performed in a separate subsequent step (after fixel segmentation):

```
foreach * : mrtransform IN/wmfod.mif -warp IN/subject2template_warp.mif -
↳noreorientation IN/fod_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED.mif
```

### 18.4.10 15. Segment FOD images to estimate fixels and their apparent fibre density (FD)

Here we segment each FOD lobe to identify the number and orientation of fixels in each voxel. The output also contains the apparent fibre density (AFD) value per fixel (estimated as the FOD lobe integral):

```
foreach * : fod2fixel -mask ../template/template_mask.mif IN/fod_in_template_space_
↳NOT_REORIENTED.mif IN/fixel_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED -afd fd.mif
```

Note that in the following steps we will use the more generic shortened acronym Fibre Density (FD) to refer to the AFD metric.

### 18.4.11 16. Reorient fixels

Here we reorient the fixels of all subjects in template space based on the local transformation at each voxel in the warps used previously:

```
foreach * : fixelreorient IN/fixel_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED IN/
↳subject2template_warp.mif IN/fixel_in_template_space
```

After this step, the `fixel_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED` folders can be safely removed.

### 18.4.12 17. Assign subject fixels to template fixels

While each subject's data has already been (spatially) warped to the common template space, and subject fixels have been reoriented accordingly, there is still no specification of which fixels match (across subjects, and between the subject and template fixels). This step establishes exactly that, by matching the fixels of each individual subject to the single common set of template fixels (which then inherently also defines how they match across subjects). This is achieved by, for each fixel in the template fixel mask, identifying the corresponding fixel in the matching voxel of the subject image and assigning the FD value of this corresponding subject fixel to that fixel in template space. If no fixel exists or can be found in a subject that corresponds to a given template fixel then it is assigned a value of zero (as the absence of a subject fixel at this stage is most likely due to a very low, or even zero, FD). This step is performed as follows:

```
foreach * : fixelcorrespondence IN/fixel_in_template_space/fd.mif ../template/fixel_
↳mask ../template/fd PRE.mif
```

Note that the output fixel directory `../template/fd` is the same for all subjects. This makes sense, since after this operation, there is only a single remaining set of fixels (i.e. the template fixels), with corresponding FD values as obtained from each subject. This resulting directory `../template/fd` now stores these data as individual fixel data files: one for each subject, and all with respect to a single set of corresponding template fixels. This way of storing the entire population's FD data is then ready for input to `fixelcfestats` later on.

### 18.4.13 18. Compute the fibre cross-section (FC) metric

The fibre density metric, mapped directly without any modulation to the fixel template space as above, is only sensitive to the original density of intra-axonal space in each voxel. In other words, it ignores the cross-sectional size of the bundle, which is another property that would factor into the bundle's total intra-axonal space across its full cross-sectional extent, and hence influence its total capacity to carry information. In certain cases, for example, atrophy may impact this cross-sectional size, but not per se the local fibre density metric.

In this step, we compute a fixel-based metric related to morphological differences in fibre cross-section (FC), where information is derived entirely from the warps generated during registration (see [Raffelt2017] for more information):

```
foreach * : warp2metric IN/subject2template_warp.mif -fc ../template/fixel_mask ../
↳template/fc IN.mif
```

However, for group statistical analysis of FC we recommend calculating the  $\log(\text{FC})$  to ensure data are centred around zero and normally distributed. Here, we create a separate fixel directory to store the  $\log(\text{FC})$  data and copy the fixel index and directions file across:

```
mkdir ../template/log_fc
cp ../template/fc/index.mif ../template/fc/directions.mif ../template/log_fc
foreach * : mrcalc ../template/fc/IN.mif -log ../template/log_fc/IN.mif
```

**Note:** The FC (and hence also the  $\log(\text{FC})$ ) as calculated here, is a *relative* metric, expressing the local fixel-wise cross-sectional size *relative* to this study's population template. While this makes it possible to interpret differences of FC *within* a single study (because only a single unique template is used in the study), the FC values should not be compared across different studies that each have their own population template. Reporting absolute quantities of FC, or absolute effect sizes of FC, also provides little information; as again, it is only meaningful with respect to the template.

#### 18.4.14 19. Compute a combined measure of fibre density and cross-section (FDC)

The total capacity of a fibre bundle to carry information, is modulated both by the local fibre density at the voxel (fixel) level, as well as its cross-sectional size. Here we compute a combined metric, which factors in the effects of both FD and FC, resulting in a fibre density and cross-section (FDC) metric:

```
mkdir ../template/fdc
cp ../template/fc/index.mif ../template/fdc
cp ../template/fc/directions.mif ../template/fdc
foreach * : mrcalc ../template/fd/IN.mif ../template/fc/IN.mif -mult ../template/fdc/
↳IN.mif
```

This is also a nice example of how calculations across multiple fixel data files can be performed. However, note that this is only valid if these both share the same set of original fixels (in this case, the template fixel mask). Because the fixels also have to be stored in *exactly* the same order for this to work correctly, great care has to be taken the `index.mif` files (in this case of the `../template/fd` and `../template/fc` folders) related to all input fixel data files that are used in the `mrcalc` command are *exact copies* of each other.

#### 18.4.15 20. Perform whole-brain fibre tractography on the FOD template

Statistical analysis using connectivity-based fixel enhancement (CFE) [Raffelt2015] exploits local connectivity information derived from probabilistic fibre tractography, which acts as a neighbourhood definition for threshold-free enhancement of locally clustered statistic values. To generate a whole-brain tractogram from the FOD template (note the remaining steps from here on are executed from the template directory):

```
cd ../template
tckgen -angle 22.5 -maxlen 250 -minlen 10 -power 1.0 wmfod_template.mif -seed_image_
↳template_mask.mif -mask template_mask.mif -select 20000000 tracks_20_million.tck
```

#### 18.4.16 21. Reduce biases in tractogram densities

Perform SIFT to reduce tractography biases in the whole-brain tractogram:

```
tcksift tracks_20_million.tck fod_template.mif tracks_2_million_sift.tck -term_number_↵  
↵2000000
```

### 18.4.17 22. Perform statistical analysis of FD, FC, and FDC

Statistical analysis using CFE is performed separately for each metric (FD, log(FC), and FDC) as follows:

```
fixelcfe stats fd files.txt design_matrix.txt contrast_matrix.txt input_tracks_2_↵  
↵million_sift.tck stats_fd  
fixelcfe stats log_fc files.txt design_matrix.txt contrast_matrix.txt input_tracks_2_↵  
↵million_sift.tck stats_log_fc  
fixelcfe stats fdc files.txt design_matrix.txt contrast_matrix.txt input_tracks_2_↵  
↵million_sift.tck stats_fdc
```

The input `files.txt` is a text file containing the filename of each file (i.e. *not* the full path) to be analysed inside the input fixel directory, each filename on a separate line. The line ordering should correspond to the lines in the file `design_matrix.txt`.

---

**Note:** For correlation analysis, a column of 1's will *not be automatically included* (as per FSL randomise).

---

---

**Note:** `fixelcfe stats` currently only accepts a single contrast. However if the opposite (negative) contrast is also required (i.e. a two-tailed test), then use the `-neg` option. Several output files will be generated all starting with the supplied prefix.

---

**Warning:** Running `fixelcfe stats` requires *a lot* of memory (for about 500,000 fixels in the template analysis fixel mask, 128GB of RAM is required; you can check the number of fixels in your template analysis fixel mask by `mrinfo -size ../template/fixel_template/mask.mif`, and looking at the size of the image along the first dimension). Should hardware related limitations force you to reduce the number of fixels, it is *not* advised to change the threshold to derive the white matter template analysis fixel mask, as it may remove crucial fixels deep in the white matter (e.g. in crossing areas). Rather, consider slightly increasing the template voxel size, or spatially removing regions that are not of interest from the template mask (which was earlier obtained in this pipeline as the intersections of all subject masks in template space). Refer to this section for more information: *Commands crashing due to memory requirements*.

### 18.4.18 23. Visualise the results

To view the results load the population FOD template image in `mrview`, and overlay the fixel images using the vector plot tool. Note that p-value images are saved as 1-p-value. Therefore to visualise all p-values < 0.05, threshold the fixels using the fixel plot tool at 0.95.

---

## Fibre density and cross-section - Multi-tissue CSD

---

### 19.1 Introduction

This tutorial explains how to perform fixel-based analysis of fibre density and cross-section [Raffelt2017] with fibre orientation distributions (FODs) computed using multi-tissue (3-tissue) CSD variants [Jeurissen2014] [Dhollander2016a]. We note that high b-value ( $>2000\text{s/mm}^2$ ) data is recommended to aid the interpretation of apparent fibre density (AFD) being related to the intra-axonal space. See [Raffelt2012] for some details about AFD; though note that the interpretation can be altered for multi-tissue (3-tissue) CSD, depending on the context and tissues in the model.

All steps in this tutorial are written as if the commands are being **run on a cohort of images**, and make extensive use of the *foreach script to simplify batch processing*. This tutorial also assumes that the imaging dataset is organised with one directory identifying each subject, and all files within identifying the image type (i.e. processing step outcome). For example:

```
study/subjects/001_patient/dwi.mif
study/subjects/001_patient/wmfod.mif
study/subjects/002_control/dwi.mif
study/subjects/002_control/wmfod.mif
```

---

**Note:** All commands at the start of this tutorial are run **from the subjects path**. From the step where tractography is performed on the template onwards, we change directory **to the template path**.

---

For all MRtrix scripts and commands, additional information on the command usage and available command-line options can be found by invoking the command with the `-help` option.

## 19.2 Pre-processing steps

### 19.2.1 1. Denoising and unringing

If denoising and/or Gibbs ringing removal are performed as part of the preprocessing, they *must* be performed *prior* to any other processing steps: most other processing steps, in particular those that involve interpolation of the data, will invalidate the original properties of the image data that are exploited by *dwidenoise* and *mrdegibbs* at this stage, and would render the result prone to errors.

If denoising is included, it's performed as the first step:

```
foreach * : dwidenoise IN/dwi.mif IN/dwi_denoised.mif
```

If Gibbs ringing removal is included, it follows immediately after:

```
foreach * : mrdegibbs IN/dwi_denoised.mif IN/dwi_denoised_unringed.mif -axes 0,1
```

**Warning:** The `-axes` option to *mrdegibbs* is used to specify in which plane the slices were acquired. The `-axes 0,1` in the example above refers to the x-y plane, which is appropriate for data consisting of a stack of *axial* slices (assuming a typical human scanner and subject). For typical human data, change this to `-axes 0,2` for *coronal* slices or `-axes 1,2` for *sagittal* slices.

### 19.2.2 2. Motion and distortion correction

The *dwipreproc* command handles motion and distortion correction for DWI data (including eddy current distortions and optionally susceptibility-induced EPI distortions). Even though the command works seamlessly like any other MRtrix3 command, it is in fact a script that interfaces with the *FSL* package to perform most of its core functionality and algorithms. For this command to work, *FSL* (including *eddy*) needs to be installed. Also remember to cite the relevant articles with respect to the specific algorithms (see the *dwipreproc* help page).

The simplest scenario is to (only) correct for motion and eddy current-induced distortions:

```
foreach * : dwipreproc IN/dwi_denoised_unringed.mif IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc.  
↪mif -rpe_none -pe_dir AP
```

**Warning:** The `-pe_dir` option to *dwipreproc* is used to specify the phase encoding direction of the acquisition. The `-pe_dir AP` in the example above refers to an *anterior-posterior* phase encoding direction, which is relatively commonly used for acquiring human data. For typical human data, change this to `-pe_dir LR` for a *left-right* phase encoding direction or `-pe_dir SI` for a *superior-inferior* phase encoding direction.

For different, more advanced, scenarios and acquisitions (e.g. the common case of correcting for susceptibility-induced EPI distortions using a pair of reverse phase-encoded b=0 images), refer to the *DWI distortion correction using dwipreproc* section and the *dwipreproc* documentation.

### 19.2.3 3. Bias field correction

The multi-tissue FBA pipeline corrects for bias fields (and jointly performs global intensity normalisation) at the later *mtnormalise* step. The only incentive for running the (less robust and accurate) *dwibiascorrect* at this stage in the pipeline is to *improve brain mask estimation* (at the later *dwi2mask* step, in case severe bias fields are present in the

data). However, cases have been reported where running *dwibiascorrect* at this stage resulted in *inferior* brain mask estimation later on. This is probably more likely in case bias fields are not as strongly present in the data. Whether *dwibiascorrect* is run at this stage or not, does not have any significant impact on the performance of *mtnormalise* later on.

If or when performing DWI bias field correction at this stage, it is achieved by first estimating the bias field from the DWI b=0 data, then applying the field to correct all DW volumes, which is done in a single step using the *dwibiascorrect* script with the `-ants` option in MRtrix. The script uses a bias field correction algorithm available in ANTS (the N4 algorithm). *Don't* use the `-fsl` option with this script in this fixel-based analysis pipeline. To perform bias field correction on DW images, run:

```
foreach * : dwibiascorrect -ants IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc.mif IN/dwi_denoised_
↳unringed_preproc_unbiased.mif
```

## 19.3 Fixel-based analysis steps

### 19.3.1 4. Computing (average) tissue response functions

A robust and fully automated (unsupervised) method to obtain 3-tissue response functions representing single-fibre white matter, grey matter and CSF from your data, is the approach proposed in [Dhollander2016b] (and evaluated further in [Dhollander2018a]), which can be run by:

```
foreach * : dwi2response dhollander IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased.mif IN/
↳response_wm.txt IN/response_gm.txt IN/response_csf.txt
```

It is crucial for fixel-based analysis to only use a single *unique* set of the (three) response functions to perform (3-tissue) spherical deconvolution of all subjects: as the (3-tissue) spherical deconvolution results will be expressed in function of this set of response functions, they can (in an abstract way) be seen as the units of both the final apparent fibre density metric and the other compartments estimated in the model. A possible way to obtain a unique set of response functions, is to average the response functions obtained from all subjects for each tissue type:

```
average_response */response_wm.txt ../group_average_response_wm.txt
average_response */response_gm.txt ../group_average_response_gm.txt
average_response */response_csf.txt ../group_average_response_csf.txt
```

There is however no strict requirement for the final set of response functions to be the average of *all* subject response functions (for each tissue type). In certain very specific cases, it may even be wise to leave out subjects (for this step) where the response functions could not reliably be obtained, or where pathology affected the brain globally.

### 19.3.2 5. Upsampling DW images

Upsampling DWI data *before* computing FODs increases anatomical contrast and improves downstream template building, registration, tractography and statistics. We recommend upsampling to an isotropic voxel size of 1.3 mm for human brains (if your original resolution is already higher, you can skip this step):

```
foreach * : mrresize IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased.mif -vox 1.3 IN/dwi_
↳denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_upsampled.mif
```

### 19.3.3 6. Compute upsampled brain mask images

Compute a whole brain mask from the upsampled DW images:

```
foreach * : dwi2mask IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_upsampled.mif IN/dwi_
↪mask_upsampled.mif
```

**Warning:** It is absolutely **crucial** to check at this stage that *all* individual subject masks include *all* regions of the brain that are intended to be analysed. Fibre orientation distributions will *only* be computed within these masks; and at a later step (in template space) the analysis mask will be restricted to the *intersection* of all masks, so *any* individual subject mask which excludes a certain region, will result in this region being excluded from the entire analysis. Masks appearing too generous or otherwise including non-brain regions should generally not cause any concerns at this stage. Hence, if in doubt, it is advised to always err on the side of *inclusion* (of regions) at this stage.

---

**Note:** The earlier *dwibiascorrect* step is not fundamentally important in the multi-tissue fixel-based analysis pipeline, as the later *mtnormalise* step performs more robustly (and if *dwibiascorrect* is included, *mtnormalise* will later on typically improve the result further). While performing the earlier *dwibiascorrect* step typically improves *dwi2mask* performance, cases have been observed where the opposite is true (typically if the data contains only weak bias fields). If required, experiment by either including or excluding *dwibiascorrect* in the pipeline in function of the best *dwi2mask* outcome and manually correct the masks if necessary (by *adding* regions which *dwi2mask* fails to include).

---

### 19.3.4 7. Fibre Orientation Distribution estimation (multi-tissue spherical deconvolution)

When performing fixel-based analysis, multi-tissue constrained spherical deconvolution should be performed using the unique set of (average) tissue response functions obtained before:

```
foreach * : dwi2fod msmt_csd IN/dwi_denoised_unringed_preproc_unbiased_upsampled.mif .
↪ ./group_average_response_wm.txt IN/wmfod.mif ../group_average_response_gm.txt IN/gm.
↪mif ../group_average_response_csf.txt IN/csf.mif -mask IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif
```

### 19.3.5 8. Joint bias field correction and intensity normalisation

To perform joint bias field correction and global intensity normalisation of the multi-tissue compartment parameters (in the log-domain), use *mtnormalise*:

```
foreach * : mtnormalise IN/wmfod.mif IN/wmfod_norm.mif IN/gm.mif IN/gm_norm.mif IN/
↪csf.mif IN/csf_norm.mif -mask IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif
```

If multi-tissue CSD was performed with the same single set of (three) tissue response functions for all subjects, then the resulting output of *mtnormalise* makes the absolute amplitudes comparable between those subjects as well. Note that this step is **crucial** in the FBA pipeline, even if bias field correction was applied earlier using *dwibiascorrect*, since *dwibiascorrect* does *not* correct for *global* intensity differences between subjects. The performance of *mtnormalise* is not significantly impacted by either having run *dwibiascorrect* before or not. In case prior bias field correction was run in the pipeline, *mtnormalise* will further correct for residual intensity inhomogeneities.

### 19.3.6 9. Generate a study-specific unbiased FOD template

Population template creation is one of the most time consuming steps in a fixel-based analysis. If you have a very large number of subjects in your study, you can opt to create the template from a limited subset of 30-40 individuals.

Typically, subjects are chosen so the generated template is representative of your population (e.g. similar number of patients and controls, though avoid patients with excessive abnormalities compared to the rest of the population). To build a template, put all FOD images in a single folder and put a set of corresponding mask images (with the same prefix as the FOD images) in another folder (using masks speeds up registration significantly):

```
mkdir -p ../template/fod_input
mkdir ../template/mask_input
```

Symbolic link all FOD images (and masks) into a single input folder. To use the entire population to build the template:

```
foreach * : ln -sr IN/wmfod_norm.mif ../template/fod_input/PRE.mif
foreach * : ln -sr IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/mask_input/PRE.mif
```

If you opt to create the template from a limited subset of (e.g. 30-40) subjects and your study has multiple groups, then you can aim for a similar number of subjects from each group to make the template more representative of the population as a whole. Assuming the subject directory labels can be used to identify members of each group, you could use:

```
foreach `ls -d *patient | sort -R | tail -20` : ln -sr IN/wmfod_norm.mif ../template/
↪fod_input/PRE.mif ";" ln -sr IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/mask_input/PRE.
↪mif
foreach `ls -d *control | sort -R | tail -20` : ln -sr IN/wmfod_norm.mif ../template/
↪fod_input/PRE.mif ";" ln -sr IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/mask_input/PRE.
↪mif
```

Run the template building script as follows:

```
population_template ../template/fod_input -mask_dir ../template/mask_input ../
↪template/wmfod_template.mif -voxel_size 1.3
```

The voxel size is typically set to match the voxel size of the input FOD images (which, in this pipeline, would typically be the resolution the preprocessed data was upsampled to, earlier on in the pipeline).

### 19.3.7 10. Register all subject FOD images to the FOD template

Register the FOD image from each subject to the FOD template:

```
foreach * : mregister IN/wmfod_norm.mif -mask1 IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif ../template/
↪wmfod_template.mif -nl_warp IN/subject2template_warp.mif IN/template2subject_warp.
↪mif
```

### 19.3.8 11. Compute the template mask (intersection of all subject masks in template space)

Different subjects have different brain coverage. To ensure subsequent analysis is performed in voxels that contain data from all subjects, we warp all subject masks into template space and compute the template mask as the intersection of all subject masks in template space. To warp all masks into template space:

```
foreach * : mrtransform IN/dwi_mask_upsampled.mif -warp IN/subject2template_warp.mif -
↪interp nearest -datatype bit IN/dwi_mask_in_template_space.mif
```

Compute the template mask as the intersection of all warped masks:

```
mrmath */dwi_mask_in_template_space.mif min ../template/template_mask.mif -datatype_↵  
↵bit
```

**Warning:** It is absolutely **crucial** to check at this stage that the resulting template mask includes *all* regions of the brain that are intended to be analysed. If this is not the case, the cause will be either an individual subject mask which did not include a certain region, or the template building process or individual subject registrations having gone wrong for one or more subjects. It is advised to **go back** to these steps, and identify and resolve the cause of the problem before continuing any further.

**Note:** It is possible at this stage to edit the template mask and remove certain regions that are either not part of the brain (though these are unlikely to survive the intersection step to begin with, as they would have to be present in *all* subject masks for this to happen), or otherwise not of interest. However, **do not add regions to the mask** at this stage. If there is a genuine need to do this, go back to the relevant steps which caused the exclusion of these regions to begin with (see also the above warning).

### 19.3.9 12. Compute a white matter template analysis fixel mask

In this step, we segment fixels from the FOD template. The result is the *fixel mask* that defines the fixels for which statistical analysis will later on be performed (and hence also which fixels' statistics can support others via the mechanism of connectivity-based fixel enhancement (CFE) [Raffelt2015]):

```
fod2fixel -mask ../template/template_mask.mif -fmls_peak_value 0.06 ../template/wmfod_↵  
↵template.mif ../template/fixel_mask
```

**Note:** Fixel images, which appear in the pipeline from this step onwards, are stored using the *Fixel image (directory) format*, which stores all fixel data for a fixel image in a directory (i.e. a folder).

**Warning:** This step ultimately determines the fixel mask in which statistical analysis will be performed, and hence also which fixels' statistics can contribute to others via the CFE mechanism; so it may have a substantial impact on the final result. Essentially, it can be detrimental to the result if the threshold value specified via the `-fmls_peak_value` is *too high* and hence *excludes* genuine white matter fixels. This risk is substantially higher in voxels containing crossing fibres (and higher the more fibres are crossing in a single voxel). Even though 0.06 has been observed to be a decent default value for 3-tissue CSD population templates, it is still **strongly advised** to visualise the output fixel mask using *mrview*. Do this by opening the `index.mif` found in `../template/fixel_mask` via the *fixel plot tool*. If, with respect to known or normal anatomy, fixels are missing (especially paying attention to crossing areas), regenerate the mask with a lower value supplied to the `-fmls_peak_value` option (of course, avoid lowering it *too* much, as too many false or noisy fixels may be introduced). For an *adult human* brain template, and using an isotropic template voxel size of 1.3 mm, it is expected to have several *hundreds of thousands* of fixels in the fixel mask (you can check this by `mrinfo -size ../template/fixel_mask/directions.mif`, and looking at the size of the image along the first dimension).

### 19.3.10 13. Warp FOD images to template space

Note that here we warp FOD images into template space *without* FOD reorientation, as reorientation will be performed in a separate subsequent step (after fixel segmentation):

```
foreach * : mrtransform IN/wmfod_norm.mif -warp IN/subject2template_warp.mif -
↳noreorientation IN/fod_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED.mif
```

### 19.3.11 14. Segment FOD images to estimate fixels and their apparent fibre density (FD)

Here we segment each FOD lobe to identify the number and orientation of fixels in each voxel. The output also contains the apparent fibre density (AFD) value per fixel (estimated as the FOD lobe integral):

```
foreach * : fod2fixel -mask ../template/template_mask.mif IN/fod_in_template_space_
↳NOT_REORIENTED.mif IN/fixel_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED -afd fd.mif
```

Note that in the following steps we will use the more generic shortened acronym Fibre Density (FD) to refer to the AFD metric.

### 19.3.12 15. Reorient fixels

Here we reorient the fixels of all subjects in template space based on the local transformation at each voxel in the warps used previously:

```
foreach * : fixelreorient IN/fixel_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED IN/
↳subject2template_warp.mif IN/fixel_in_template_space
```

After this step, the `fixel_in_template_space_NOT_REORIENTED` folders can be safely removed.

### 19.3.13 16. Assign subject fixels to template fixels

While each subject's data has already been (spatially) warped to the common template space, and subject fixels have been reoriented accordingly, there is still no specification of which fixels match (across subjects, and between the subject and template fixels). This step establishes exactly that, by matching the fixels of each individual subject to the single common set of template fixels (which then inherently also defines how they match across subjects). This is achieved by, for each fixel in the template fixel mask, identifying the corresponding fixel in the matching voxel of the subject image and assigning the FD value of this corresponding subject fixel to that fixel in template space. If no fixel exists or can be found in a subject that corresponds to a given template fixel then it is assigned a value of zero (as the absence of a subject fixel at this stage is most likely due to a very low, or even zero, FD). This step is performed as follows:

```
foreach * : fixelcorrespondence IN/fixel_in_template_space/fd.mif ../template/fixel_
↳mask ../template/fd PRE.mif
```

Note that the output fixel directory `../template/fd` is the same for all subjects. This makes sense, since after this operation, there is only a single remaining set of fixels (i.e. the template fixels), with corresponding FD values as obtained from each subject. This resulting directory `../template/fd` now stores these data as individual fixel data files: one for each subject, and all with respect to a single set of corresponding template fixels. This way of storing the entire population's FD data is then ready for input to `fixelcfestats` later on.

### 19.3.14 17. Compute the fibre cross-section (FC) metric

The fibre density metric, mapped directly without any modulation to the fixel template space as above, is only sensitive to the original density of intra-axonal space in each voxel. In other words, it ignores the cross-sectional size of the

bundle, which is another property that would factor into the bundle's total intra-axonal space across its full cross-sectional extent, and hence influence its total capacity to carry information. In certain cases, for example, atrophy may impact this cross-sectional size, but not per se the local fibre density metric.

In this step, we compute a fixel-based metric related to morphological differences in fibre cross-section (FC), where information is derived entirely from the warps generated during registration (see [Raffelt2017] for more information):

```
foreach * : warp2metric IN/subject2template_warp.mif -fc ../template/fixel_mask ../  
↳template/fc IN.mif
```

However, for group statistical analysis of FC we recommend calculating the  $\log(\text{FC})$  to ensure data are centred around zero and normally distributed. Here, we create a separate fixel directory to store the  $\log(\text{FC})$  data and copy the fixel index and directions file across:

```
mkdir ../template/log_fc  
cp ../template/fc/index.mif ../template/fc/directions.mif ../template/log_fc  
foreach * : mrcalc ../template/fc/IN.mif -log ../template/log_fc/IN.mif
```

---

**Note:** The FC (and hence also the  $\log(\text{FC})$ ) as calculated here, is a *relative* metric, expressing the local fixel-wise cross-sectional size *relative* to this study's population template. While this makes it possible to interpret differences of FC *within* a single study (because only a single unique template is used in the study), the FC values should not be compared across different studies that each have their own population template. Reporting absolute quantities of FC, or absolute effect sizes of FC, also provides little information; as again, it is only meaningful with respect to the template.

---

### 19.3.15 18. Compute a combined measure of fibre density and cross-section (FDC)

The total capacity of a fibre bundle to carry information, is modulated both by the local fibre density at the voxel (fixel) level, as well as its cross-sectional size. Here we compute a combined metric, which factors in the effects of both FD and FC, resulting in a fibre density and cross-section (FDC) metric:

```
mkdir ../template/fdc  
cp ../template/fc/index.mif ../template/fdc  
cp ../template/fc/directions.mif ../template/fdc  
foreach * : mrcalc ../template/fd/IN.mif ../template/fc/IN.mif -mult ../template/fdc/  
↳IN.mif
```

This is also a nice example of how calculations across multiple fixel data files can be performed. However, note that this is only valid if these both share the same set of original fixels (in this case, the template fixel mask). Because the fixels also have to be stored in *exactly* the same order for this to work correctly, great care has to be taken the `index.mif` files (in this case of the `../template/fd` and `../template/fc` folders) related to all input fixel data files that are used in the `mrcalc` command are *exact copies* of each other.

### 19.3.16 19. Perform whole-brain fibre tractography on the FOD template

Statistical analysis using connectivity-based fixel enhancement (CFE) [Raffelt2015] exploits local connectivity information derived from probabilistic fibre tractography, which acts as a neighbourhood definition for threshold-free enhancement of locally clustered statistic values. To generate a whole-brain tractogram from the FOD template (note the remaining steps from here on are executed from the template directory):

```
cd ../template  
tckgen -angle 22.5 -maxlen 250 -minlen 10 -power 1.0 wmfod_template.mif -seed_image_  
↳template_mask.mif -mask template_mask.mif -select 20000000 tracks_20_million.tck (continues on next page)
```

(continued from previous page)

### 19.3.17 20. Reduce biases in tractogram densities

Perform SIFT to reduce tractography biases in the whole-brain tractogram:

```
tcksift tracks_20_million.tck fod_template.mif tracks_2_million_sift.tck -term_number_
↪2000000
```

### 19.3.18 21. Perform statistical analysis of FD, FC, and FDC

Statistical analysis using CFE is performed separately for each metric (FD, log(FC), and FDC) as follows:

```
fixelcfestats fd files.txt design_matrix.txt contrast_matrix.txt input_tracks_2_
↪million_sift.tck stats_fd
fixelcfestats log_fc files.txt design_matrix.txt contrast_matrix.txt input_tracks_2_
↪million_sift.tck stats_log_fc
fixelcfestats fdc files.txt design_matrix.txt contrast_matrix.txt input_tracks_2_
↪million_sift.tck stats_fdc
```

The input `files.txt` is a text file containing the filename of each file (i.e. *not* the full path) to be analysed inside the input `fixel` directory, each filename on a separate line. The line ordering should correspond to the lines in the file `design_matrix.txt`.

**Note:** For correlation analysis, a column of 1's will *not be automatically included* (as per FSL randomise).

**Note:** `fixelcfestats` currently only accepts a single contrast. However if the opposite (negative) contrast is also required (i.e. a two-tailed test), then use the `-neg` option. Several output files will generated all starting with the supplied prefix.

**Warning:** Running `fixelcfestats` requires *a lot* of memory (for about 500,000 fixels in the template analysis fixel mask, 128GB of RAM is required; you can check the number of fixels in your template analysis fixel mask by `mrinfo -size ../template/fixel_template/mask.mif`, and looking at the size of the image along the first dimension). Should hardware related limitations force you to reduce the number of fixels, it is *not* advised to change the threshold to derive the white matter template analysis fixel mask, as it may remove crucial fixels deep in the white matter (e.g. in crossing areas). Rather, consider slightly increasing the template voxel size, or spatially removing regions that are not of interest from the template mask (which was earlier obtained in this pipeline as the intersections of all subject masks in template space). Refer to this section for more information: *Commands crashing due to memory requirements.*

### 19.3.19 22. Visualise the results

To view the results load the population FOD template image in `mrview`, and overlay the fixel images using the vector plot tool. Note that p-value images are saved as 1-p-value. Therefore to visualise all p-values < 0.05, threshold the fixels using the fixel plot tool at 0.95.



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## Expressing the effect size relative to controls

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The apparent Fibre Density (FD) and Fibre Density and Cross-section (FDC) are relative measures and have arbitrary units. Therefore the units of `abs_effect.mif` output from *fixelcfstats* are not directly interpretable. In a patient-control group comparison, one way to present results is to express the absolute effect size as a percentage relative to the control group mean.

To compute FD and FDC percentage decrease effect size use:

```
mrcalc fd_stats/abs_effect.mif fd_stats/beta1.mif -div 100 -mult fd_stats/percentage_
↪effect.mif
```

where `beta1.mif` is the beta output that corresponds to your control population mean.

Because the Fibre Cross-section (FC) measure is a scale factor it is slightly more complicated to compute the percentage decrease. The FC ratio between two subjects (or groups) tells us the direct scale factor between them.

For example, for a given fixel if the patient group mean FC is 0.7, and control mean is 1.4, then this implies encompassing fibre tract in the patients is half as big as the controls:  $0.7/1.4 = 0.5$ . I.e. this is a 50% reduction wrt to the controls:  $1 - (FC\_patients/FC\_controls)$

Because we perform FBA of  $\log(FC)$ , the `abs_effect` that is output from *fixelcfstats* is:  $abs\_effect = \log(FC\_controls) - \log(FC\_patients) = \log(FC\_controls/FC\_patients)$ . Therefore to get the percentage effect we need to perform  $1 - 1/\exp(abs\_effect)$ :

```
mrcalc 1 1 fc_stats/abs_effect.mif -exp -div -sub fc_stats/fc_percentage_effect.mif
```



---

## Displaying results with streamlines

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Fixels rendered directly as lines using the *fixel plot tool* of *mrview* are appropriate for viewing 2D slices; however, to better appreciate all the fibre pathways affected and to visualise the full extent of the results in 3D, it's also possible to use a visualisation based on the whole-brain template-derived tractogram [Raffelt2017].

First use `tckedit` to reduce the whole-brain template tractogram to a sensible number of streamlines (2 million is quite a lot for certain graphics cards to render smoothly). This step assumes you have the same folder structure and filenames from the FBA tutorials. From the `template` directory:

```
tckedit tracks_2_million_sift.tck -num 200000 tracks_200k_sift.tck
```

Map fixel values to streamline points, save them in a “track scalar file”. For example:

```
fixel2tsf stats_fdc/fwe_pvalue.mif tracks_200k_sift.tck fdc_fwe_pvalue.tsf  
fixel2tsf stats_fdc/abs_effect_size.mif tracks_200k_sift.tck fdc_abs_effect_size.tsf
```

Visualise track scalar files using the tractogram tool in MRview. First load the streamlines (`tracks_200k_sift.tck`). Then right click and select ‘colour by (track) scalar file’. For example you might load the `abs_effect_size.tsf` file. Then to dynamically threshold (remove) streamline points by p-value select the “Thresholds” dropdown and select “Separate Scalar file” to load `fwe_pvalue.tsf`.

Note that you can also threshold and view all brain fixels by deselecting “crop to slice” in the fixel plot tool. However it can be harder to appreciate the specific pathways affected. The downside to viewing and colouring results by streamline, then viewing all streamlines (uncropped to slice), is that without transparency you only see the colours on the outside of the significant pathways, where normally the effect size/p-value is most severe in the ‘core’ of the fibre pathway.

Good examples of both fixel as well as streamline visualisations of FBA results can be found in [Mito2018a].



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## Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT)

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This page describes the recommended processing steps for taking advantage of the Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT) framework [Smith2012], the image format used, and the commands available for manipulating these data. There are also instructions for anyone looking to make use of alternative tissue segmentation approaches.

### 22.1 Pre-processing steps

#### 22.1.1 DWI distortion correction

For the anatomical information to be incorporated accurately during the tractography reconstruction process, any geometric distortions present in the diffusion images must be corrected. The FSL 5.0 commands `topup` and `eddy` are effective in performing this correction based on a reversed phase-encode acquisition, though their interfaces can be daunting. We therefore provide a wrapper script, `dwipreproc`, which interfaces with these tools to perform correction of multiple forms of image distortion (motion, eddy current and inhomogeneity). Please read the *DWI distortion correction using dwipreproc* page, and the *dwipreproc* help page for further details.

#### 22.1.2 Image registration

My personal preference is to register the T1-contrast anatomical image to the diffusion image series before any further processing of the T1 image is performed. By registering the T1 image to the diffusion series rather than the other way around, reorientation of the diffusion gradient table is not necessary; and by doing this registration before subsequent T1 processing, any subsequent images derived from the T1 are inherently aligned with the diffusion image series. This registration should be rigid-body only; if the DWI distortion correction is effective, a higher-order registration is likely to only introduce errors.

#### 22.1.3 DWI pre-processing

Because the anatomical image is used to limit the spatial extent of streamlines propagation rather than a binary mask derived from the diffusion image series, I highly recommend dilating the DWI brain mask prior to computing FODs;

this is to make sure that any errors in derivation of the DWI mask do not leave gaps in the FOD data within the brain white matter, and therefore result in erroneous streamlines termination.

### 22.1.4 Tissue segmentation

So far I have had success with using FSL tools to also perform the anatomical image segmentation; FAST is not perfect, but in most cases it's good enough, and most alternative software I tried provided binary mask images only, which is not ideal. The `5ttgen` script using the `fsl` algorithm interfaces with FSL to generate the necessary image data from the raw T1 image, using BET, FAST and FIRST. Note that this script also crops the resulting image so that it contains no more than the extracted brain (as this reduces the file size and therefore improves memory access performance during tractography); if you want the output image to possess precisely the same dimensions as the input T1 image, you can use the `-nocrop` option.

## 22.2 Using ACT

Once the necessary pre-processing steps are completed, using ACT is simple: just provide the tissue-segmented image to the `tckgen` command using the `-act` option.

In addition, since the propagation and termination of streamlines is primarily handled by the 5TT image, it is no longer necessary to provide a mask using the `-mask` option. In fact, for whole-brain tractography, it is recommended that you `_not_` provide such an image when using ACT: depending on the accuracy of the DWI brain mask, its inclusion may only cause erroneous termination of streamlines inside the white matter due to exiting this mask. If the mask encompasses all of the white matter, then its inclusion does not provide any additional information to the tracking algorithm.

## 22.3 The 5TT format

When the ACT framework is invoked, it expects the tissue information to be provided in a particular format; this is referred to as the 'five-tissue-type (5TT)' format. This is a 4D, 32-bit floating-point image, where the dimension of the fourth axis is 5; that is, there are five 3D volumes in the image. These five volumes correspond to the different tissue types. In all brain voxels, the sum of these five volumes should be 1.0, and outside the brain it should be zero. The tissue type volumes must appear in the following order for the anatomical priors to be applied correctly during tractography:

0. Cortical grey matter
1. Sub-cortical grey matter
2. White matter
3. CSF
4. Pathological tissue

The first four of these are described in the ACT NeuroImage paper. The fifth can be optionally used to manually delineate regions of the brain where the architecture of the tissue present is unclear, and therefore the type of anatomical priors to be applied are also unknown. For any streamline entering such a region, *no anatomical priors are applied* until the streamline either exists that region, or stops due to some other streamlines termination criterion.

The following binaries are provided for working with the 5TT format:

- `5tt2gmwmi`: Produces a mask image suitable for seeding streamlines from the grey matter - white matter interface (GMWMI). The resulting image should then be provided to the `tckgen` command using the `-seed_gmwmi` option.

- `5tt2vis`: Produces a 3D greyscale image suitable for visualisation purposes.
- `5ttcheck`: Check that one or more input images conform to the 5TT format.
- `5ttedit`: Allows the user to edit the tissue segmentations. Useful for manually correcting tissue segmentations that are known to be erroneous (e.g. dark blobs in the white matter being labelled as grey matter); see the command's help page for more details.

## 22.4 Alternative tissue segmentation software

Users who wish to experiment with using tissue segmentations from different software sources are encouraged to do so; if a particular approach is shown to be effective we can add an appropriate script to MRtrix. The `5ttgen` script has a second algorithm, `freesurfer`, which demonstrates how the output of different software can be manipulated to provide the tissue segmentations in the appropriate format. It is however not recommended to actually use this alternative algorithm for patient studies; many midbrain structures are not segmented by FreeSurfer, so the tracking may not behave as desired.

Users who wish to try manipulating the tissue segmentations from some alternative software into the 5TT format may find it most convenient to make a copy of one of the existing algorithms within the `lib/mrtrix3/_5ttgen/` directory, and modify accordingly. The `5ttgen` script will automatically detect the presence of the new algorithm, and make it available at the command-line.



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## Spherical-deconvolution Informed Filtering of Tractograms (SIFT)

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SIFT [Smith2013], or ‘Spherical-deconvolution Informed Filtering of Tractograms’, is a novel approach for improving the quantitative nature of whole-brain streamlines reconstructions. By producing a reconstruction where the streamlines densities are proportional to the fibre densities as estimated by spherical deconvolution throughout the white matter, the number of streamlines connecting two regions becomes a proportional estimate of the cross-sectional area of the fibres connecting those two regions. We therefore hope that this method will attract usage in a range of streamlines tractography applications.

The actual usage of SIFT can be found in the help page of the `ticksift` command. In this page I’ll outline some issues that are worth thinking about if you are looking to apply this method.

### 23.1 DWI bias field correction

DWI volumes often have a non-negligible  $B1$  bias field, mostly due to high-density receiver coils. If left uncorrected, SIFT will incorrectly interpret this as a spatially-varying fibre density. Therefore bias field correction is highly recommended. We generally estimate the bias field based on the mean  $b=0$  image, and apply the estimated field to all DWI volumes. This can currently be achieved using the `dwibiascorrect` script, which can employ either the FAST tool in FSL or the N4 algorithm in ANTS to perform the field estimate.

### 23.2 Number of streamlines pre / post SIFT

In diffusion MRI streamlines tractography, we generate discrete samples from a continuous fibre orientation field. The more streamlines we generate, the better our reconstruction of that field. Furthermore, the greater number of streamlines we generate, the less influence the discrete quantification of connectivity has on the connectome (e.g. would rather be comparing 1,000 v.s. 2,000 streamlines to 1 v.s. 2; it’s less likely to be an artefact of random / discrete sampling). So the more streamlines the better, at the cost of execution speed & hard drive consumption.

However we also have the added confound of SIFT. The larger the number of streamlines that can be fed to SIFT the better, as it can make better choices regarding which streamlines to keep/remove; but it also introduces a memory constraint. SIFT can deal with approximately 4-8 million streamlines per GB of RAM (depending on the seeding

mechanism used and the spatial resolution of your diffusion images), so ideally you'll want access to dedicated high-performance computing hardware. On top of this, there's the issue of how many streamlines to have remaining in the reconstruction after SIFT; the more streamlines that SIFT removes, the better the streamlines reconstruction will fit the image data, but the more likely you are to run into quantisation issues with the resulting tractogram.

So when you design your image processing pipeline, you need to consider the compromise between these factors:

- Initially generating a larger number of streamlines is beneficial for both the quality and the density of the filtered reconstruction, at the expense of longer computation time (both in generating the streamlines, and running SIFT), and a higher RAM requirement for running SIFT.
- Filtering a greater number of streamlines will always produce a superior fit to the image data, at the expense of having a lower-density reconstruction to work with afterwards, and a slightly longer computation time.

Unfortunately there's no single answer of how many streamlines are required, as it will depend on the diffusion model, tractography algorithm, and spatial extent of your target regions / connectome parcellation granularity. There are a couple of papers / abstracts on the topic if you look hard enough, but nothing definitive, and nothing involving SIFT. I would recommend testing using your own data to find numbers that are both adequate in terms of test-retest variability, and computationally reasonable.

Personally I have been using a FreeSurfer parcellation (84 nodes), generating 100 million streamlines and filtering to 10 million using SIFT (I'm a physicist; I like orders of magnitude). In retrospect, I would say that when using white matter seeding, filtering by a factor of 10 is inadequate (i.e. the fit of the reconstruction to the data is not good enough); and with grey matter - white matter interface seeding, a final number of 10 million is inadequate (the streamlines are mostly very short, so the appearance of the reconstruction is quite sparse). Another alternative is 'dynamic seeding', which uses the SIFT model during tractogram generation to only seed streamlines in pathways that are poorly reconstructed (see the `-seed_dynamic` option in `tckgen`); this provides a better initial estimate, so the percentage of streamlines that need to be removed in order to achieve a good fit is reduced. I will leave it to the end user to choose numbers that they deem appropriate (unless we do a paper on the topic, in which case you will use our published values without question).

## 23.3 Normalising connection density between subjects

An ongoing issue with our Apparent Fibre Density (AFD) work is how to guarantee that a smaller FOD in a subject actually corresponds to a reduced density of fibres. Structural connectome studies have a similar issue with regards to streamline counts; Even if SIFT is applied, this only guarantees correct proportionality between different connection pathways within a subject, not necessarily between subjects. The simplest and most common solution is simply to use an identical number of streamlines for every subject in connectome construction; however this isn't perfect:

- The distribution of streamlines lengths may vary between subjects, such that the reconstructed streamlines 'density' differs.
- A subject may have decreased fibre density throughout the brain, but be morphologically normal; if the same number of streamlines are generated, this difference won't be reflected in the tractogram post-SIFT.
- If the white matter volume varies between subjects, but the actual number of fibres within a given volume is consistent, then the subject with a larger brain may have an elevated total number of fibre connections; this would also be missed if the number of streamlines were fixed between subjects.

It's also possible to scale by the total white matter volume of each subject; this would however fail to take into account any differences in the density of fibres within a fixed volume between subjects.

An alternative approach is to try to achieve normalisation of FOD amplitudes across subjects, as is done using AFD. This requires a couple of extra processing steps, namely inter-subject intensity normalisation and use of a group average response function, which are also far from error-free. But if this can be achieved, it means that a fixed density of streamlines should be used to reconstruct a given FOD amplitude between subjects, and then the cross-sectional area of fibres represented by each streamline is also identical between subjects; this can be achieved by terminating

SIFT at a given value of the proportionality coefficient using the `-term_mu` option. One potential disadvantage of this approach (in addition to the issues associated with intensity normalisation) is that using a group average response function instead of the individual subject response may result in spurious peaks or incorrect relative volume fractions in the FODs, which could influence the tracking results.

Ideally, a diffusion model would provide the absolute partial volume of each fibre population, rather than a proportional quantity: this could then be used directly in SIFT. However the diffusion models that do provide such information tend to get the crossing fibre geometry wrong in the first place...

If anyone has any ideas on how to solve this pickle, let us know.

## 23.4 No DWI distortion correction available

SIFT should ideally be used in conjunction with ACT; by passing the ACT 5TT image to `tcksift` using the `-act` option, the command will automatically derive a processing mask that will limit the contribution of non-pure-white-matter voxels toward the model. Without this information, non-pure-white-matter voxels adversely affect both streamlines tractography, and the construction of the SIFT model.

If you are looking to apply SIFT without correction of DWI geometric distortions (and therefore without reliable high-resolution co-registered anatomical image data), these are some points that you may wish to consider:

- The spatial extent of the DWI mask may have a large influence on your streamlines tractography results. Therefore greater care should perhaps be taken to validate this mask, including manual editing if necessary.
- It is possible to manually provide a processing mask to `tcksift` using the `-proc_mask` option. If users are capable of heuristically generating an approximate white matter partial volume image from the DWI data alone, this may be appropriate information to provide to the SIFT model.

## 23.5 Use of SIFT for quantifying pathways of interest

In some circumstances, researchers may be interested in the connection density of one or two specific pathways of interest, rather than that of the whole brain. SIFT is still applicable in this scenario; however the SIFT algorithm itself is only applicable to whole-brain fibre-tracking data. Therefore, the workflow in this scenario should be: \* Generate a whole-brain tractogram; \* Apply SIFT; \* Extract the pathway(s) of interest using `tckedit`. \* Get the streamline count using `tckinfo`.

The SIFT algorithm is *not directly applicable to targeted tracking data*. The underlying biophysical model in SIFT assumes that the estimated density of each fibre population in every voxel of the image should be proportionally reconstructed by streamlines; if only a subset of pathways in the brain are permitted to be reconstructed by the tractography algorithm, this will clearly not be the case, so application of SIFT in this instance will provide erroneous results.



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## Structural connectome construction

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Included in this new version of MRtrix are some useful tools for generating structural connectomes based on streamlines tractography. Here I will describe the steps taken to produce a connectome, and some issues that should be taken into consideration. Note that I will **not** be going into appropriate parcellations or network measures or anything like that; once you've generated your connectomes, you're on your own.

### 24.1 Preparing a parcellation image for connectome generation

Parcellations are typically provided as an integer image, where each integer corresponds to a particular node, and voxels where there is no parcellation node have a value of 0. However, for all of the parcellation schemes I've looked at thus far, the values used for the nodes do not increase monotonically from 1, but rather have some non-linear distribution; a text file (or 'lookup table') is then provided that links node indices to structure names. This is however undesirable for connectome construction; it would be preferable for the node indices to increase monotonically from 1, so that each integer value corresponds to a row/column position in the connectome matrix.

This functionality is provided in the command `labelconvert`. It takes as its input a parcellation image that has been provided by some other software package, and converts the label indices; this is done so that the code that actually generates the connectome can be 'dumb and blind', i.e. the integer values at the streamline endpoints correspond to the row & column of the connectome matrix that should be incremented. In addition, this processing chain design provides flexibility in terms of both the source of the parcellation data, and the way in which the user wishes to customise the layout of their connectome.

Please consult the tutorial *labelconvert: Explanation & demonstration* for a guide on how to use the `labelconvert` command.

### 24.2 Generating the connectome

The command `tck2connectome` is responsible for converting the tractogram into a connectome matrix, based on the provided parcellation image. By default, the streamline count is used as the connectivity metric; run `tck2connectome -help` to see alternative heuristics / measures.

A factor in structural connectome production commonly overlooked or not reported in the literature is the mechanism used to assign streamlines to grey matter parcels. If done incorrectly this can have a large influence on the resulting connectomes. This is one aspect where *Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT)* really shines; because streamlines can only terminate precisely at the grey matter - white matter interface, within sub-cortical grey matter, or at the inferior edge of the image, this assignment becomes relatively trivial. The default assignment mechanism is a radial search outwards from the streamline termination point, out to a maximum radius of 2mm; and the streamline endpoint is only assigned to the first non-zero node index. If you do not have the image data necessary to use the ACT framework, see the ‘No DWI distortion correction available’ section below.

## 24.3 SIFT and the structural connectome

If you are generating structural connectomes, you should be using *Spherical-deconvolution Informed Filtering of Tractograms (SIFT)*.

## 24.4 Extracting pathways of interest from a connectome

The command `connectome2tck` can be used to extract specific connections of interest from a connectome for further interrogation or visualisation. Note that since the resulting connectome matrix does not encode precisely which parcellation node pair each streamline was assigned to, the streamlines are re-assigned to parcellation nodes as part of this command. Run `connectome2tck -help` to see the various ways in which streamlines may be selected from the connectome.

Also: Beware of running this command on systems with distributed network file storage. This particular command uses an un-buffered file output when writing the streamlines files, which re-opens the output file and writes data for individual streamlines at a time (necessary as many files may be generated at once); such systems tend to be optimised for large-throughput writes, so this command may cause performance issues.

## 24.5 No DWI distortion correction available

If you can’t perform DWI susceptibility distortion correction, it severely limits how accurately you can estimate the structural connectome. If this is the case for you, below is a few points that are worth considering.

### 24.5.1 Non-linear registration

Rather than actually correcting the DWI geometric distortions, some people try to do a non-linear registration between DWI and T1 images. In general I’m against this: the registration is fairly ill-posed due to the differing contrasts, and an off-the-shelf non-linear registration will have too many degrees of freedom. Pursue at your own risk.

### 24.5.2 Grey matter parcellation

With good spatial alignment, parcellations that highlight only the cortical ribbon (e.g. FreeSurfer) are highly accurate and effective, and the assignment of streamlines to those parcellations will also be robust if ACT is used. But without these, residual registration errors may have a large influence, and assigning streamlines to parcellations only as thick as the cortex may also be erroneous (streamlines may terminate prior to the parcel, or travel through and extend well beyond it). A parcellation with large-volume nodes that is based on atlas registration (e.g. AAL) is likely more appropriate in this case.

### 24.5.3 Assignment of streamlines to parcellation nodes

Without ACT, streamlines will terminate pretty much anywhere within the DWI brain mask. Not only this, but they may traverse multiple parcellation nodes, turn around within a node and traverse elsewhere, terminate just prior to entering a node, all sorts of weirdness. I have provided a few assignment mechanisms that you can experiment with - run `tck2connectome -help` to see the list and parameters for each. Alternatively if anyone has a better idea for how this could potentially be done, I'd love to hear it.



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## Using the connectome visualisation tool

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The connectome tool bar in *MRtrix3* has been designed from scratch, with the intention of providing a simple, data-driven mechanism for visually assessing individual connectomes as well as the results of network-based group statistics. The interface may therefore vary considerably from other connectome visualisation packages, and may be intimidating for new users who simply want to ‘see the connectome’. I hope I can convince you in this tutorial that the design of this tool allows you, the user, to dictate exactly *how* you want to visualise the connectome, rather than being forced to conform to a particular prior expectation of how such things should be visualised.

### 25.1 Initialising the tool

My suspicion is that new users will load the tool, and immediately think: ‘Where do I load my connectome?’. Well, let’s take a step backwards. If you were to give the software a connectome matrix, with no other data, there would be no way to visualise that connectome in the space of an MR image: the software has no information about the spatial locations of the nodes upon which that connectome is based. So the first step is actually to load an image to provide the tool with this information, using the “Node image” button at the top of the toolbar. The desired image is the output of the `labelconvert` command, as detailed in the *Structural connectome construction* guide: the tool uses this image to localise each parcel in 3D space in preparation for visualisation. Alternatively, you can load the relevant parcellation image from the command-line when you first run `mrview`, using the `-connectome.init` option.

**Attention:** If you still do not see anything in the `mrview` main window, this is likely because you have not yet opened a primary image in `mrview`. This is currently necessary for `mrview` to correctly set up the camera positioning. The easiest solution is to open your parcellation image not only to initialise the connectome tool, but also as a standard image in `mrview`; then simply *hide* the main image using the ‘View’ menu.

With the basis parcellation image loaded, the tool will display the location of each node; note however that all of the nodes are exactly the same colour, and exactly the same size, and there are no connections shown between them - it’s an entirely dis-connected network. This makes sense - we haven’t actually provided the tool with any information regarding which connections are present and which are absent. We can also do the opposite: change the “Edge visualisation” - “Visibility” from ‘None’ to ‘All’, and now the software shows every edge in the connectome non-discriminantly.

Therefore, we need some mechanism of informing the software of which edges should be drawn, and which should not. Most logically, this could be achieved by loading a structural connectome, and perhaps applying some threshold. So now, for the “Edge visualisation” - “Visibility” option, select “Matrix file”, and load your connectome. The software now uses the data from this external file to threshold which edges are drawn and which are not, and also allows you to vary that threshold interactively. (You can also load a connectome matrix from the command line using the `-connectome.load` option.)

The connectome still however has a binary appearance; every edge in the connectome is either present or absent, and they all have the same size and the same colour. We know that our connectome contains weights distributed over a wide scale, and would like to be able to see this as part of our visualisation; for instance, we may decide that more dense connections should have a ‘hot’ colour appearance, whereas less dense connections should be darker. We can achieve this by changing the “Edge visualisation” - “Colour” from ‘Fixed’ to ‘Matrix file’, and selecting an appropriate matrix file (perhaps the same file as was used for the visibility threshold, perhaps not).

For most users, connectome data will be loaded using the ‘open’ button in the ‘connectome matrices’ section, or at the command-line when `mrview` is first run using the `-connectome.load` option.

## 25.2 Basis of connectome visualisation customisation

With the above steps completed, you should obtain a fairly rudimentary visualisation of the connectome you have loaded. The plethora of buttons and gadgets in the connectome tool user interface is however a clue regarding the scope of customisation available for precisely how the connectome data will be displayed.

As an example, consider the ‘Edge visualisation - Colour’ entry. These options control how the colour of each individual edge in the connectome will be determined, based on the data the tool is provided with. Clicking on the main combo box shows that there are a few options available:

- *Fixed*: Use the same fixed colour to display all visible edges.
- *By direction*: The XYZ spatial offset between the two nodes connected by an edge is used to derive an RGB colour (much like the default streamlines colouring).
- *Connectome*: The colour of each edge will depend on the value for that edge in the connectome you have loaded, based on some form of value  $\rightarrow$  colour mapping (a ‘colour map’).
- *Matrix file*: Operates similarly to the *connectome* option; except that the value for each edge is drawn from a matrix file that is *not* the connectome matrix you have loaded (though it must be based on the same parcellation to have any meaning). So for instance: You could load a structural connectome file as your connectome matrix and show only those edges where the connection density is above a certain threshold, but then set the *colour* of each edge based on a *different matrix file* that contains functional connectivity values.

If the *Connectome* or *Matrix file* options are used, it is also possible to alter the colour map used, and modify the values at which the edges will reach the colours at either extreme of the colour map.

Hopefully, this simple demonstration will be enough to highlight the design principle of this tool, and therefore the frame of mind necessary to use it effectively:

### **What *\*data\** do I want to determine a specific *\*visual property\** of my connectome?**

There is tremendous power in separating these two entities. For instance, consider a use case where I have performed network-based group statistics, and wish to visualise my result. I may choose to threshold the connectome edges based on statistical significance, but set the width of the connections based on the mean connection strength to get an idea of the density of connections in the detected network, but set the colour of each edge based on the effect size to see which components of the network are most affected. I can even automatically hide any nodes that are not involved in the detected network by selecting “Node visualisation” - “Visibility” - ‘Degree  $\geq 1$ ’.

## 25.3 Importing detailed node information

When the parcellation image is first loaded, the software has no information regarding the designations of the underlying nodes, so it simply labels them as “Node 1”, “Node 2” etc.. To show the anatomical name of each node in the list, you must load the connectome lookup table that was used as the target output in the `labelconvert` step during [structural connectome construction]. This file provides a list of node indices and their corresponding names, so is perfect for subsequent assessment of the resulting connectomes, whether using this tool or in other contexts (e.g. Matlab). Such a lookup table may also include a pre-defined colour for each node, which can then be used during visualisation by selecting “Node Visualisation -> Colour -> LUT”.

## 25.4 Advanced visualisation

There are a couple of neat tricks that can be used to produce impressive-looking visualisations, but need some pre-processing or careful consideration in order to achieve them.

### 25.4.1 Visualising edges as streamlines / streamtubes

Rather than drawing a straight line between connected nodes to represent an edge, it is possible with tractography-based connectome construction to instead represent each connection based on the structural trajectory by which those nodes are inter-connected. This can be achieved as follows:

- When generating the connectome using `tck2connectome`, use the `-out_assignments` option. This will produce a text file where each line contains the indices of the two nodes to which that particular streamline was assigned.
- Use the `connectome2tck` command to produce a single track file, where every streamline represents the mean, or *exemplar*, trajectory between two nodes. This is achieved using two command-line options: `-exemplars` to instruct the command to generate the exemplar trajectory for each edge, rather than keeping all streamlines (you will need to provide your parcellation image); and `-files single` to instruct the command to place all computed exemplars into a single output file.
- In the `mrview` connectome toolbar, select “Edge visualisation” - “Geometry” - ‘Streamlines / Streamtubes’, and select the exemplar track file just generated.

### 25.4.2 Visualising nodes as triangulated meshes

Although the node parcellations are represented as volumetric segmentations, and we do not yet have support for importing mesh-based parcellations, it is still possible to visualise the connectome nodes using a mesh-based representation. This is done by explicitly converting the volume of each parcel to a triangulated mesh. The process is as follows:

- Compute a triangular mesh for each node, and store the results in a single file. The command is called `label2mesh`. Note that the output file *must* be in the `.obj` file format: this is the only format currently supported that is capable of storing multiple mesh objects in a single file.
- (Optional) Smooth the meshes to make them more aesthetically pleasing (the results of the conversion process used in `label2mesh` appear very ‘blocky’). Apply the `meshfilter` command, using the `smooth` operator. Again, the output must be in the `.obj` format.
- In the `mrview` connectome toolbar, select “Node visualisation” - “Geometry” - ‘Mesh’, and select the mesh file just generated.

### 25.4.3 Using node selection to highlight features of interest

The table in the connectome toolbar that lists the node names and colours can also be used to select and highlight particular nodes. In most cases, this will simply be an additional ‘toy’ for navigating the data; however it’s also possible that this capability will prove to be a powerful tool for demonstrating network features.

In any connectome visualisation software, when the user selects one or more particular nodes of interest, some modification must be applied to the visual features of the nodes in order to ‘highlight’ the nodes of interest. In many cases, this may be hard-wired to behave in a particular way. In the case of `mrview` in *MRtrix3*, this highlighting mechanism is entirely flexible: the user can control the visual modifications applied to both those network elements selected and those not selected. For instance, you may choose for nodes to become completely opaque when you select them, while other un-selected nodes remain transparent; or they may grow in size with respect to the rest of the connectome; or they may change in colour to highlight them; or those nodes not selected may disappear entirely. This flexibility is accessed via the “Selection visualisation settings” button, which will open a dialog window providing access to these settings.

As manual selection applies to nodes only, the behaviour for edges is as follows:

- When no nodes are selected, all edges are drawn according to their standard settings.
- If a single node is selected, all edges emanating from that node are considered to be ‘selected’, and the relevant visual modifiers will be applied.
- If two or more nodes are selected, only connections exclusively connecting between the nodes of interest are considered to be ‘selected’.

### 25.4.4 Node visualisation using matrices

When using external data files to control the visual properties of the connectome, most commonly *vector files* will be used to determine visual properties of nodes, and *matrix files* will be used to determine visual properties of edges. These provide precisely one scalar value per connectome element, and therefore provide a static visual configuration.

It is however also possible to set any visual property of the connectome nodes based on a *matrix file*. In this scenario, the values to be drawn from the matrix - and hence their influence on the relevant visual property of the nodes - depends on the *current node selection*. That is: once you select a node of interest, the software extracts the relevant row from the matrix, and uses only that row to influence the node visual property to which it has been assigned. In the case where multiple nodes of interest are selected, an additional drop-down menu is provided, that allows you to prescribe how those multiple rows of matrix data are combined in order to produce a single scalar value per node, which can then be used to influence its relevant visual property.

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## labelconvert: Explanation & demonstration

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The `labelconvert` (previously `labelconfig`) step in *Structural connectome construction* has proven to be a hurdle for many. It may be a ‘unique’ step in so far as that other software packages probably deal with this step implicitly, but in MRtrix we prefer things to be explicit and modular. So here I’ll go through an example to demonstrate exactly what this command does.

### 26.1 Worked example

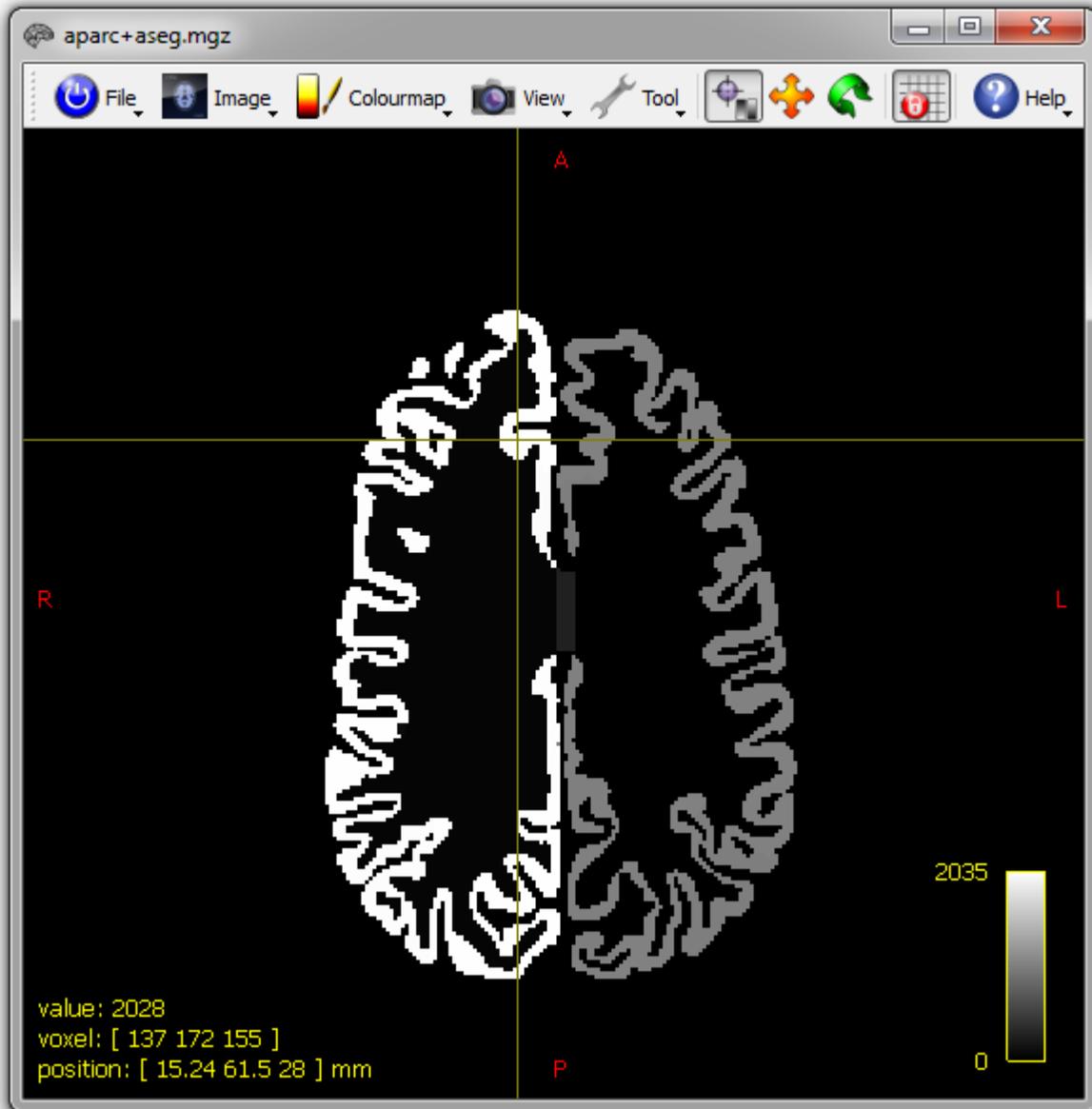
For this example, let’s imagine that we’re going to generate a structural connectome for Bert, the quintessential FreeSurfer subject. Also, we’re going to generate the connectome based on the Desikan-Killiany atlas. The default FreeSurfer pipeline provides the volumetric image `aparc+aseg.mgz`; this is the file that will be used to define the nodes of our connectome.

Looking at the raw image itself, each node possesses a particular intensity, corresponding to a particular integer value. If we focus on the superior frontal gyrus in the right hemisphere, we can see that the image intensity is 2028 for this structure.

This immediately presents a problem for constructing a connectome: if any streamline encountering this region were written to row/column 2028, our connectome would be enormous, and consist mostly of zeroes (as most indices between 1 and 2028 do not correspond to any structure). Therefore, what we’d prefer is to map the unique integer index of this structure to a particular row/column index of the connectome; this should be done in such a way that all structures of interest have a unique integer value between 1 and  $N$ , where  $N$  is the number of nodes in the connectome.

Now looking at the file `FreeSurferColorLUT.txt` provided with FreeSurfer, we see the following:

```
...
2026   ctx-rh-rostralanteriorcingulate      80  20  140  0
2027   ctx-rh-rostralmiddlefrontal        75  50  125  0
2028   ctx-rh-superiorfrontal              20  220 160  0
2029   ctx-rh-superiorparietal             20  180 140  0
2030   ctx-rh-superiortemporal             140 220 220  0
...
```



This gives us a *meaningful name* for this structure based on the integer index. It also gives us some colour information, but let's not worry about that for now.

Our goal then is to determine a *new integer index* for this structure, that will determine the row/column of our connectome matrix that this structure corresponds to. This is dealt with by mapping the structure indices of this lookup table to a *new* lookup table. For this example, let's imagine that we're using the default MRtrix lookup table for the FreeSurfer Desikan-Killiany atlas segmentation: this is provided at `shared/mrtrix3/labelconvert/fs_default.txt`. Examining this file in detail, we see the following:

```
...
74  R.RACG  ctx-rh-rostralanteriorcingulate 80 20 140 255
75  R.RMFG  ctx-rh-rostralmiddlefrontal    75 50 125 255
76  R.SFG   ctx-rh-superiorfrontal        20 220 160 255
77  R.SPG   ctx-rh-superiorparietal       20 180 140 255
78  R.STG   ctx-rh-superiortemporal       140 220 220 255
...
```

(This file is in a slightly different format to `FreeSurferColorLUT.txt`; don't worry about this for the time being)

This file contains the *same structure name* as the FreeSurfer look-up table, but it is assigned a *different integer index* (76)! What's going on?

The following is what the `labelconvert` command is actually going to do under the bonnet, using these two lookup table files:

1. Read the integer value at each voxel of the input image
2. Convert the integer value into a string, based on the *input lookup table file* (`FreeSurferColorLUT.txt`)
3. Find this string in the *output lookup table file* (`fs_default.txt`)
4. Write the integer index stored in the *output lookup table file* for this structure to the voxel in the output image

This is what the actual command call looks like:

```
labelconvert $FREESURFER_HOME/subjects/bert/mri/aparc+aseg.mgz $FREESURFER_HOME/
↪FreeSurferColorLUT.txt ~/mrtrix3/src/connectome/config/fs_default.txt bert_parcel.
↪mif
```

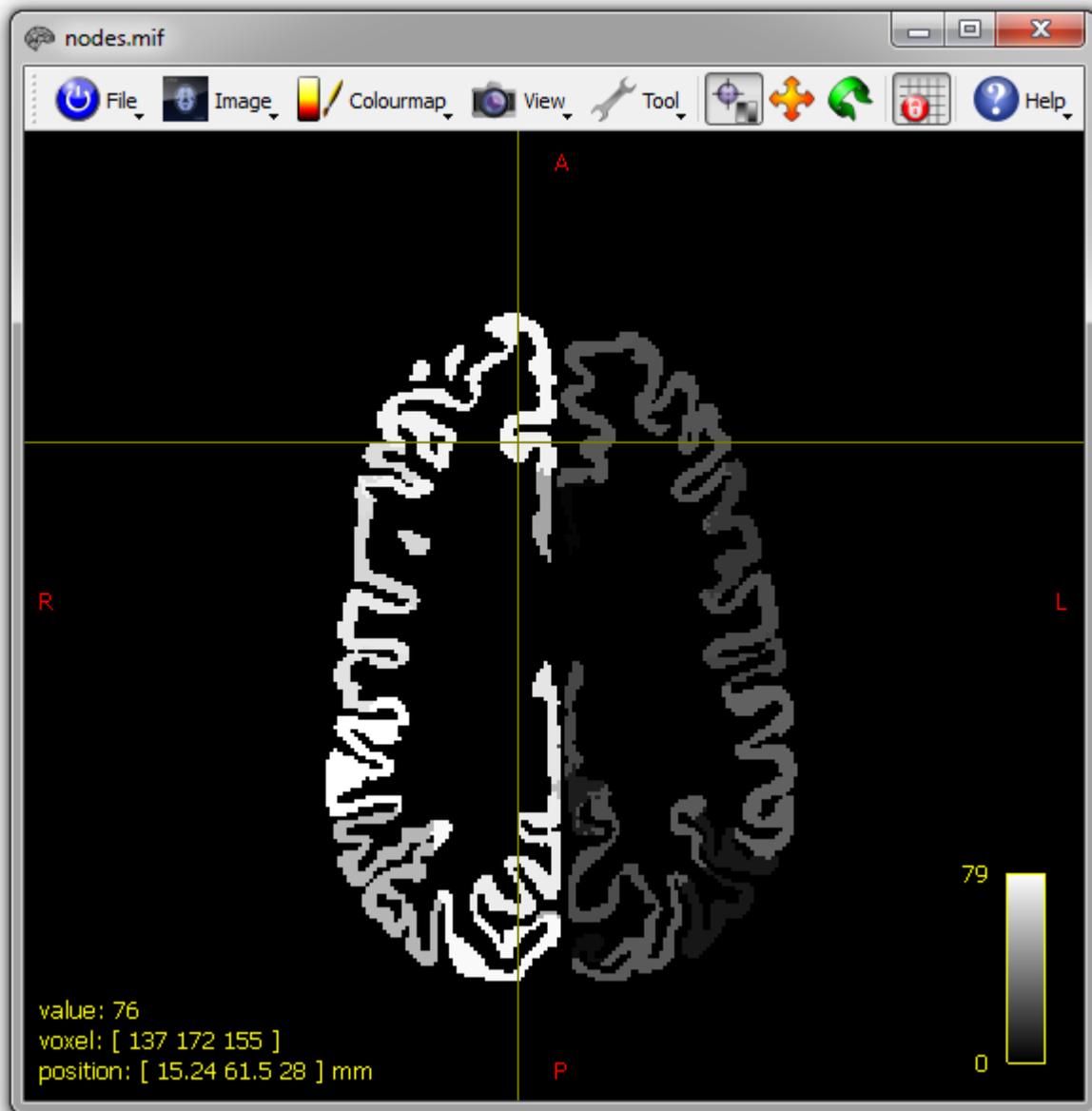
And this is what the resulting image looks like:

The integer labels of the underlying grey matter parcels have been *converted* from the input lookup table to the output lookup table (hence the name `labelconvert`). They now increase monotonically from 1 to the maximum index, with no 'gaps' (i.e. unused integer values) in between. Therefore, when you construct your connectome using `tck2connectome`, the connectome matrix will only be as big as it needs to be to store all of the node-node connectivity information.

## 26.2 Design rationale

Making this step of re-indexing parcels explicit in connectome construction has a few distinct advantages:

- You can use parcellations from any software / atlas: just provide the structure index / name lookup table that comes with whatever software / atlas provides the parcellation, and define an appropriate target lookup table that defines which index you want each structure to map to.
- `tck2connectome` can be 'dumb and blind': it reads the integer indices at either end of the streamline, and that's the row/column of the connectome matrix that needs to be incremented.



- You can have your grey matter parcels appear in any order in your matrices: just define a new lookup table file. Doing this prior to connectome construction is less likely to lead to heartache than re-ordering the rows and columns in e.g. Matlab, where you may lose track of which matrices have been re-ordered and which have not.
- You can remove structures from the connectome, or merge multiple structures into a single parcel, just by omitting or duplicating indices appropriately in the target lookup table file.
- Looking at your matrices and need to find out what structure corresponds to a particular row/column? Just look at the config file!

Obviously if your parcellation image already has node indices that increase monotonically from 1, and you're happy enough with the numerical order of the nodes, you don't actually need to use the `labelconvert` step at all.

## 26.3 Custom design connectomes

Some notes for anybody that wishes to define their own configuration files (either for re-ordering nodes, changing selection of nodes, or using parcellations from alternative sources):

- If you wish to omit nodes from your connectome (e.g. the cerebellar hemispheres), you may be better off making these nodes the largest indices in your connectome, but then cropping them from the connectome matrices retrospectively, rather than omitting them from the parcellation image entirely: If you were to do the latter, streamlines that would otherwise be assigned to your unwanted nodes may instead be erroneously assigned to the nearest node that is part of your connectome (exactly what happens here will depend on the streamline-node assignment mechanism used).
- The command `labelconvert` is capable of reading in look-up tables in a number of formats. If you wish to define your own lookup table, you will need to conform to one of these formats in order for MRtrix commands to be able to import it. If you are using an atlas where the look-up table does not conform to any of these formats (and hence MRtrix refuses to import it), you can either manually manipulate it into a recognized format, or if it is likely that multiple users will be using that parcellation scheme, we may choose to add a parser to the MRtrix code: contact the developers directly if this is the case.



## 27.1 Introduction

Global tractography is the process of finding the full track configuration that best explains the measured DWI data. As opposed to streamline tracking, global tractography is less sensitive to noise, and the density of the resulting tractogram is directly related to the data at hand.

As of version 3.0, MRtrix supports global tractography using a multi-tissue spherical convolution model, as introduced in [Christiaens2015]. This method extends the method of [Reisert2011] to multi-shell response functions, estimated from the data, and adopts the multi-tissue model presented in [Jeurissen2014] to account for partial voluming.

## 27.2 User guide

### 27.2.1 Prerequisites

This global tractography implementation relies on *multi-shell* high angular resolution diffusion imaging (HARDI) data, containing at least 3 unique *b*-values (i.e 2 shells along with the *b*=0 volumes).

In addition, this command expects that suitable *multi-shell multi-tissue response functions* have already been computed. A number of approaches are available for this, please refer to the [Response function estimation](#) page for details.

### 27.2.2 Invocation

For multi-shell DWI data, the most common use will be:

```
tckglobal dwi.mif wm_response.txt -riso csf_response.txt -riso gm_response.txt -mask_↵  
↵mask.mif -niter 1e9 -fod fod.mif -fiso fiso.mif tracks.tck
```

In this example, `dwi.mif` is the input dataset, including the gradient table, and `tracks.tck` is the output tractogram. `wm_response.txt`, `gm_response.txt` and `csf_response.txt` are the corresponding tissue response functions (as estimated in a previous [Response function estimation](#) step). Optional output images `fod.mif`

and `fiso.mif` contain the predicted WM fODF and isotropic tissue fractions of CSF and GM respectively, estimated as part of the global optimization and thus affected by spatial regularization.

### Parameters

`-niter`: The number of iterations in the optimization. Although the default value is deliberately kept low, a full brain reconstruction will require at least 100 million iterations.

`-lmax`: Maximal order of the spherical harmonics basis.

`-length`: Length of each track segment (particle), which determines the resolution of the reconstruction.

`-weight`: Weight of each particle. Decreasing its value by a factor of two will roughly double the number of reconstructed tracks, albeit at increased computation time.

Particle potential `-ppot`: The particle potential essentially associates a *cost* to each particle, relative to its weight. As such, we are in fact trying to reconstruct the data as well as possible, with as few particles as needed. This ensures that there is sufficient *proof* for each individual particle, and hence avoids that a bit of noise in the data spurs generation of new (random) particles. Think of it as a parameter that balances sensitivity versus specificity. A higher particle potential requires more *proof* in the data and therefore leads to higher specificity; a smaller value increases sensitivity.

Connection potential `-cpot`: The connection potential is the driving force for connecting segments and hence building tracks. Higher values increase connectivity, at the cost of increased invalid connections.

### Ancillary outputs

`-fod`: Outputs the predicted fibre orientation distribution function (fODF) as an image of spherical harmonics coefficients. This fODF is estimated as part of the global track optimization, and therefore incorporates the spatial regularization that it imposes. Internally, the fODF is represented as a discrete sum of apodized point spread functions (aPSF) oriented along the directions of all particles in the voxel, akin to track orientation distribution imaging (TODI, [Dhollander2014]). This internal representation is used to predict the DWI signal upon every change to the particle configuration.

`-fiso`: Outputs the estimated density of all isotropic tissue components, as multiple volumes in one 4-D image in the same order as their respective `-riso` kernels were provided.

`-eext`: Outputs the residual data energy image, including the L1-penalty imposed by the particle potential.

---

# ISMRM tutorial - Structural connectome for Human Connectome Project (HCP)

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**Warning:** This page describes an outdated example from 2015, currently retained only for historical reference. The steps described in this page are not up to date with current optimised practices. We do not recommend to use the steps below in connectomics processing for any project, using either HCP or other data.

This document duplicates the information provided during the *MRtrix3* demonstration at ISMRM 2015 in Toronto. We will generate a structural connectome for quintessential Human Connectome Project subject 100307. Some of these instructions will be specific to HCP data, others will be more general recommendations.

Note that this page is being retained as a reference of the steps demonstrated during the ISMRM 2015 meeting; it does *not* constitute an up-to-date 'recommended' processing pipeline for HCP data.

## 28.1 Necessary files

To duplicate our methods and results, you will need to download the appropriate files, accessible through the following steps:

- <https://db.humanconnectome.org/>
- WU-Minn HCP Data - 900 Subjects + 7T
- Download Image Data: Single subject
- Session Type: 3T MRI
- Processing level: Preprocessed
- Package Type: MSM-Sulc + MSM-All
- add Structural Preprocessed and Diffusion Preprocessed to queue

The actual files within these compressed downloads that we will make use of are:

### 28.1.1 Diffusion preprocessed files

- bvals
- bvecs
- data.nii.gz
- nodif\_brain\_mask.nii.gz

### 28.1.2 Structural preprocessed files

- aparc+aseg.nii.gz
- T1w\_acpc\_dc\_restore\_brain.nii.gz

## 28.2 Structural image processing

1. Generate a tissue-segmented image appropriate for [Anatomically-Constrained Tractography](#):

```
5ttgen fsl T1w_acpc_dc_restore_brain.nii.gz 5TT.mif -premasked
```

Note that it is *not necessary* to use a tissue-segmented image that has the same resolution as the diffusion images; *MRtrix3* will happily acquire interpolated values from each of them separately as tracking is performed. This allows ACT to exploit the higher spatial resolution of the tissue-segmented anatomical image, but still use the diffusion image information at its native resolution also.

2. Collapse the multi-tissue image into a 3D greyscale image for visualisation:

```
5tt2vis 5TT.mif vis.mif; mrview vis.mif
```

If the tissue segmentation image contains clearly erroneous tissue labels, you can delineate them manually using the ROI editor tool in *mrview*, then apply your corrections to the tissue data using the *5tedit* command.

3. Modify the integer values in the parcellated image, such that the numbers in the image no longer correspond to entries in FreeSurfer's colour lookup table, but rows and columns of the connectome:

```
labelconvert aparc+aseg.nii.gz FreeSurferColorLUT.txt fs_default.txt nodes.mif
```

File `FreeSurferColorLUT.txt` is provided with FreeSurfer in its root directory. The target lookup table file (`fs_default.txt` in this case) is a handy text file that provides a structure name for every row / column of the connectome matrix: it is provided as part of *MRtrix3*, and located at `shared/mrtrix3/labelconvert/fs_default.txt` within the *MRtrix3* folder.

4. Replace FreeSurfer's estimates of sub-cortical grey matter structures with estimates from FSL's FIRST tool:

```
labelsgmfix nodes.mif T1w_acpc_dc_restore_brain.nii.gz fs_default.txt  
nodes_fixSGM.mif -premasked
```

## 28.3 Diffusion image processing

1. Convert the diffusion images into a non-compressed format (not strictly necessary, but will make subsequent processing faster), embed the diffusion gradient encoding information within the image header, re-arrange the data strides to make volume data contiguous in memory for each voxel, and convert to floating-point representation (makes data access faster in subsequent commands):

```
mrconvert data.nii.gz DWI.mif -fslgrad bvecs bvals -datatype float32 -strides
0,0,0,1
```

2. Generate a mean  $b=0$  image (useful for visualisation):

```
dwextract DWI.mif - -bzero | mrmath - mean meanb0.mif -axis 3
```

(If you are not familiar with the ‘|’ piping symbol, read more about it [here](#))

3. Estimate the response function; note that here we are estimating *multi-shell, multi-tissue* response functions:

```
dw2response msmt_5tt DWI.mif 5TT.mif RF_WM.txt RF_GM.txt RF_CSF.txt -voxels
RF_voxels.mif
```

```
mrview meanb0.mif -overlay.load RF_voxels.mif -overlay.opacity 0.5 (check appropri-
ateness of response function voxel selections)
```

4. Perform Multi-Shell, Multi-Tissue Constrained Spherical Deconvolution:

```
dw2fod msmt_csd DWI.mif RF_WM.txt WM_FODs.mif RF_GM.txt GM.mif RF_CSF.txt
CSF.mif -mask nodif_brain_mask.nii.gz
```

```
mrconvert WM_FODs.mif - -coord 3 0 | mrcat CSF.mif GM.mif - tissueRGB.mif
-axis 3
```

This generates a 4D image with 3 volumes, corresponding to the tissue densities of CSF, GM and WM, which will then be displayed in *mrview* as an RGB image with CSF as red, GM as green and WM as blue (as was presented in the MSMT CSD manuscript).

```
mrview tissueRGB.mif -odf.load_sh WM_FODs.mif (visually make sure that both the tissue segmen-
tations and the white matter FODs are sensible)
```

## 28.4 Connectome generation

1. Generate the initial tractogram:

```
tckgen WM_FODs.mif 100M.tck -act 5TT.mif -backtrack -crop_at_gmwm
- -seed_dynamic WM_FODs.mif -maxlength 250 -select 100M -cutoff 0.06
```

Explicitly setting the maximum length is highly recommended for HCP data, as the default heuristic - 100 times the voxel size - would result in a maximum length of 125mm, which would preclude the reconstruction of some longer pathways.

We also suggest a reduced FOD amplitude cutoff threshold for tracking when using the MSMT CSD algorithm in conjunction with ACT; this allows streamlines to reach the GM-WM interface more reliably, and does not result in significant false positives since the MSMT algorithm does not produce many erroneous small FOD lobes.

2. Apply the Spherical-deconvolution Informed Filtering of Tractograms (SIFT) algorithm

This method reduces the overall streamline count, but provides more biologically meaningful estimates of structural connection density:

```
tcksift 100M.tck WM_FODs.mif 10M_SIFT.tck -act 5TT.mif -term_number 10M
```

If your system does not have adequate RAM to perform this process, the first recommendation is to reduce the spatial resolution of the FOD image and provide this alternative FOD image to SIFT (this should have little influence on the outcome of the algorithm, but will greatly reduce memory consumption):

```
mrresize WM_FODs.mif FOD_downsampled.mif -scale 0.5 -interp sinc
```

If this still does not adequately reduce RAM usage, you will need to reduce the number of input streamlines to a level where your processing hardware can successfully execute the *tcksift* command, e.g.:

```
tckedit 100M.tck 50M.tck -number 50M
```

Alternatively, if you're feeling brave, you can give [SIFT2](#) a try...

3. Map streamlines to the parcellated image to produce a connectome:

```
tck2connectome 10M_SIFT.tck nodes_fixSGM.mif connectome.csv
```

```
mrview nodes_fixSGM.mif -connectome.init nodes_fixSGM.mif -connectome.load  
connectome.csv
```

---

## Warping images using warps generated from other packages

---

The `mrtransform` command applies warps in a deformation field format (i.e. where each voxel specifies the scanner space position in the corresponding image). However, you can also use `mrtransform` to apply warps generated from other packages that are in any format using the following steps.

1. **Generate an identity warp** using the input moving image (i.e. the image you wish to warp):

```
warpinit input_fod_image.mif identity_warp[].nii
```

2. **Compute a MRtrix compatible warp** by transforming the identity warp using your registration of choice. For example if you are using the ANTs registration package:

```
for i in {0..2};
do;
  WarpImageMultiTransform 3 identity_warp${i}.nii mrtrix_warp${i}.nii -R template.
  ↪nii ants_warp.nii ants_affine.txt;
done;
```

3. **Correct the mrtrix warp.** When transforming *identity\_warp.nii* and producing the *mrtrix\_warp* images, most registration packages will output 0.0 as the default value when the transformation maps outside the input image. This will result in many voxels in the output *mrtrix\_warp* (which is a deformation field) pointing to the origin (0.0, 0.0, 0.0), particularly around the edge of the warp if an affine registration was performed. To correct this and convert all voxels with 0.0,0.0,0.0 to nan,nan,nan (suitable for *mrtransform*):

```
warpcorrect mrtrix_warp[].nii mrtrix_warp_corrected.mif
```

4. **Warp the image.** `mrtransform` can warp any 3D or 4D image, however if the number of volumes in the 4th dimension equals the number of coefficients in an antipodally symmetric spherical harmonic series (i.e. 6, 15, 28 etc), then it assumes the image to be an FOD image and **reorientation** is automatically applied. Also note that **FOD modulation** can be applied using the option `-modulation`. This preserves the total apparent fibre density across the width of each bundle before and after warping:

```
mrtransform input_fod_image.mif -warp mrtrix_warp_corrected.mif warped_fod_image.
↪mif
```



---

## Diffusion gradient scheme handling

---

An essential piece of information for DWI processing is the diffusion-weighted (DW) gradient scheme, also known as the “*DW gradient table*”, the “*DW encoding*”, the “*b-vectors*”, the “*bvecs*”, and other variations on the theme. This table provides information about the diffusion sensitisation gradients applied during acquisition of each imaging volume in a DWI dataset, usually in the form of the *b*-value and the (unit) vector for the DW gradient direction. In this page we will describe the details of how this information is typically stored / represented, and how *MRtrix3* handles / manipulates this data.

### 30.1 Gradient table storage

*MRtrix3* allows the DW gradient table to be read directly from, or written to, the image headers for specific image formats; notably *DICOM* (*folder or .dcm*) (read-only) and the *MRtrix image formats* (*.mih / .mif*) (read/write). *MRtrix3* applications will automatically make use of this information when it is available for the input dataset through storage of the table within the *image header*, without requiring explicit intervention from the user. In addition, *MRtrix3* commands can also import or export this information from/to two different external file formats: typically referred to as the *MRtrix format* and the *FSL format*. These differ in a number of respects, as outlined below.

#### 30.1.1 MRtrix format

This format consists of a single ASCII text file, with no restrictions on the filename. It consists of one row per entry (i.e. per DWI volume), with each row consisting of 4 space-separated floating-point values; these correspond to  $[ \ x \ y \ z \ b ]$ , where  $[ \ x \ y \ z ]$  are the components of the gradient vector, and *b* is the *b*-value in units of  $\text{s/mm}^2$ . A typical *MRtrix* format DW gradient table file might look like this:

Listing 1: **grad.b:**

0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
-0.0509541	0.0617551	-0.99679	3000
0.011907	0.955047	0.296216	3000
-0.525115	0.839985	0.136671	3000

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-0.785445	-0.6111	-0.0981447	3000
0.060862	-0.456701	0.887536	3000
0.398325	0.667699	0.6289	3000
-0.680604	0.689645	-0.247324	3000
0.237399	0.969995	0.0524565	3000
0.697302	0.541873	-0.469195	3000
-0.868811	0.407442	0.28135	3000
...			

It is important to note that in this format, the direction vectors are assumed to be provided with respect to *real* or *scanner* coordinates. This is the same convention as is used in the DICOM format. Also note that the file does not need to have the file type extension `.b` (or any other particular suffix); this is simply a historical convention.

### 30.1.2 Image header

When using the *MRtrix image formats* (`.mih` / `.mif`), *MRtrix3* has the capability of *embedding* the diffusion gradient table *within the header of the image file*. This provides significant advantages when performing image processing:

- The table accompanies the image data at all times, which means that the user is not responsible for tracking which diffusion gradient table corresponds to which image file, or whether or not a particular gradient table file reflects some manipulation that has been applied to an image.
- In *MRtrix3* commands that require a diffusion gradient table, and/or make modifications to the image data that require corresponding modifications to the diffusion gradient table, these data will be utilised (and/or modified) *automatically*, without requiring explicit intervention from the user.

For these reasons, the general recommendation of the *MRtrix3* team is to make use of the *MRtrix image formats* (`.mih` / `.mif`) whenever possible.

This embedding is achieved by writing an entry into the Image *Header key-value pairs*, using the key `dw_scheme`. The value of this entry is the complete diffusion gradient table, stored in the *MRtrix format*. However, this entry should generally *not be accessed or manipulated directly* by users; instead, users should rely on the internal handling of these data as performed by *MRtrix3* commands, or where relevant, use the command-line options provided as part of specific *MRtrix3 commands*, as detailed later.

### 30.1.3 FSL format

This format consists of a pair of ASCII text files, typically named `bvecs` & `bvals` (or variations thereof). The `bvals` file consists of a single row of space-separated floating-point values, all in one row, with one value per volume in the DWI dataset. The `bvecs` file consists of 3 rows of space-separated floating-point values, with the first row corresponding to the *x*-component of the DW gradient vectors, one value per volume in the dataset; the second row corresponding to the *y*-component, and the third row to the *z*-component. A typical pair of FSL format DW gradient files might look like:

Listing 2: `bvecs`:

```
0 0 -4.30812931665e-05 -0.00028279245503 -0.528846962834659 -0.781281266220383 0.
↪ 014299684287952 0.36785999072309 -0.66507232482745 0.237350171404029 0.
↪ 721877079467007 -0.880754419294581 0 -0.870185851757858 ...
0 0 -0.002606397951389 -0.97091525561761 -0.846605326714759 0.615840299891175 0.
↪ 403330065122241 -0.70377676751476 -0.67378508548543 -0.971399047063277 -0.
↪ 513131073140676 -0.423391107245363 0 -0.416501756655988 ...
0 0 -0.999996760803023 0.23942421337746 0.059831733802001 -0.101684552642539 0.
↪ 914942902775223 -0.60776414747636 -0.32201498900359 -0.007004078617919 -0.
↪ 464317089148873 0.212157919445896 0 -0.263255013300656 ...
```

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Listing 3: `bvals`:

```
0 0 3000 3000 3000 3000 3000 3000 3000 3000 3000 3000 ...
```

It is important to note that in this format, the gradient vectors are provided *with respect to the image axes*, **not** in real or scanner coordinates (actually, it's a little bit more complicated than that, refer to the [FSL wiki](#) for details). This is a rich source of confusion, since seemingly innocuous changes to the image can introduce inconsistencies in the *b*-vectors. For example, simply reformatting the image from sagittal to axial will effectively rotate the *b*-vectors, since this operation changes the image axes. It is also important to remember that a particular `bvals/bvecs` pair is only valid for the particular image that it corresponds to.

## 30.2 Using the DW gradient table in *MRtrix3* applications

### 30.2.1 Querying the DW gradient table

As mentioned above, *MRtrix3* will use the DW gradient table from the image headers when it is available. Currently, only the *DICOM* (*folder or .dcm*) and *MRtrix image formats* (*.mih / .mif*) support this. The DW gradient table can be queried for any particular image using the `mrinfo` command in combination with the `-dwgrad` option. For example:

```
$ mrinfo DICOM/ -dwgrad
mrinfo: [done] scanning DICOM folder "DICOM/"
mrinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "BRI 64 directions ep2d_diff_3scan_trace_p2"
      0          0          0          0
-0.999994  0.00167109  0.00300897    3000
      -0        0.999996  0.00299996    3000
 0.0261389  0.65148    -0.758215    3000
-0.590138  -0.767763   -0.249553    3000
 0.236087  -0.527069   -0.816371    3000
 0.893005  -0.261931   -0.36597    3000
-0.797405  0.126351   -0.590068    3000
-0.233751  0.930868   -0.280794    3000
-0.936406  0.141569   -0.321095    3000
-0.505355  -0.845584    0.17206    3000
-0.346203  -0.848909    0.39937    3000
-0.457204  -0.633042    0.624678    3000
 0.48716   -0.391994   -0.780395    3000
 0.617871  0.674589   -0.403938    3000
 0.577709  -0.102522    0.809779    3000
 0.825818  -0.523076   -0.210752    3000
...

```

### 30.2.2 Exporting the DW gradient table

This information can also be exported from the image headers using the `-export_grad_mrtrix` option (for the *MRtrix format*) or `-export_grad_fsl` option (for the *FSL format*) in commands that support it. For example:

```
$ mrinfo dwi.mif -export_grad_mrtrix grad.b
```

results in a `grad.b` file in *MRtrix format*, while:

```
$ mrconvert DICOM/ dwi.nii.gz -export_grad_fsl bvecs bvals
mrconvert: [done] scanning DICOM folder "DICOM/"
mrconvert: [100%] reading DICOM series "BRI 64 directions ep2d_diff_3scan_trace_p2"
mrconvert: [100%] reformatting DICOM mosaic images
mrconvert: [100%] copying from "DICOM data...ns ep2d_diff_3scan_trace_p2" to "dwi.nii.
↳gz"
mrconvert: [100%] compressing image "dwi.nii.gz"
```

converts the DWI data in the `DICOM/` folder to *Compressed NIfTI (.nii.gz)*, and exports the DW gradient table to *FSL format* if found in the DICOM headers, resulting in a pair of `bvecs` & `bvals` files.

### 30.2.3 Importing the DW gradient table

If the *image header* already contain the DW information, then no further action is required - the *MRtrix3* application will be able to find it and use it directly. If this is not the case (e.g. the image format does not support including it in the header), or the information contained is not correct, *MRtrix3* applications also allow the DW gradient table to be imported using the `-grad` option (for the *MRtrix format*) or the `-fslgrad` option (for the *FSL format*). Note that this will override the information found in the image headers if it was there. This can be used during conversion using `mrconvert`, or at the point of use. For example:

```
$ mrconvert dwi.nii -fslgrad dwi_bvecs dwi_bvals dwi.mif
```

will convert the `dwi.nii` from *NIfTI & NIfTI-2 (.nii)* to *MRtrix image formats (.mih / .mif)*, embedding the DW gradient table information found in the `dwi_bvecs` & `dwi_bvals` files (in *FSL format*) directly into the output image header. As another example:

```
$ dwi2tensor DICOM/ -grad encoding.b tensor.nii
```

will process the DWI dataset found in the `DICOM/` folder (in *DICOM (folder or .dcm)* format), but *override* any DW gradient information in the DICOM data with the table stored in the *MRtrix format* file `encoding.b`.

## 30.3 Operations performed by *MRtrix3* when handling DW gradient tables

*MRtrix3* applications will perform a number of sanity checks and modifications to the information in the DW gradient table, depending on the nature of the operation, and its original format.

### 30.3.1 When using the FSL format

In this format, the gradient vectors are provided relative to the image axes (as detailed in the [FSL wiki](#)). To convert them to the internal representation used in *MRtrix3* (and in the *MRtrix format* gradient table), these vectors need to be transformed into the real / scanner coordinate system. To do this requires knowledge of the DWI dataset these vectors correspond to, in particular the image transform. In essence, this consists of rotating the gradient vectors according to the rotation part of the transform (i.e. the top-left 3×3 part of the matrix). This will introduce differences between the components of the gradient vectors when stored in *MRtrix format* compared to the *FSL format*, particularly for images not acquired in a pure axial orientation (i.e. images where the rotation part of the image transform is identity). Indeed, as mentioned earlier, there is an additional confound related to the handed-ness of the coordinate system; see the [FSL wiki](#) for details.

**Warning:** Never perform a manual conversion between MRtrix and FSL gradient table formats using a text editor or basic shell script. This poses a risk of introducing an unwanted rotation / reflection of the gradient directions, with concomitant errors in later processing.

Note that in this operation, what matters is the transform as stored in the NIfTI headers (i.e. the `sform` / `qform`); the transform as reported by `mrinfo` can differ substantially from this (while still being consistent with the data), as the `MRtrix3` image loading backend will try to provide the image transform in a near-axial orientation (by inverting / exchanging columns of the transform, and adjusting the `Strides` to match - see *The image transform* for details). To find out the actual transform that was stored in the NIfTI header, use `mrinfo` with the `-norealign` option.

### 30.3.2 When copying or converting

Applications like `mrconvert` that don't actually need to interpret the DW gradient table will simply pass the information through to the output unmodified. If the DW gradient table was found in the input image header, it will be written to the output image header if the image format supports it (i.e. if the output is in *MRtrix image formats* (`.mih` / `.mif`) - DICOM is not supported for writing). If the DW gradient table is imported via the `-grad` or `-fslgrad` option, it will also be passed through as-is (although including the modifications mentioned above in the *When using the FSL format* section). If the output image format does not allow storing the DW gradient table in the image header, the `-export_grad_mrtrix` or `-export_grad_fsl` options can be used to write it out to separate files, ready for use with third-party applications, or directly within `MRtrix3` if users prefer to keep their data organised in this way.

### 30.3.3 When using the information for processing

Applications that actually need to make use of the DW gradient information (e.g. `dwi2tensor`, `dwi2fod`, `dwiextract`, ...) will perform additional sanity checks and modifications of these data, beyond those described above. These include:

- verifying that the number of volumes in the DWI dataset matches the number of entries in the DW gradient table;
- where relevant, verifying that the DW gradient tables contains the data in a shell structure, by clustering similar *b*-values together (see `mrinfo`'s `-shell_bvalues` and `-shell_sizes` options);
- normalising the gradient vectors to unit amplitude;
- scaling the *b*-values by the square of the gradient vector amplitude - see *b-value scaling* for details.

---

**Note:** `mrinfo` will also perform most of these checks. While there is no technical reason for it to interpret the DW gradient information, in practice it is generally helpful to view the information as it would be interpreted by other `MRtrix3` applications. If this is not desired, you can add the `-raw_dwgrad` option to `mrinfo` to disable these modifications when querying the DW gradient table.

---

## 30.4 *b*-value scaling

On MRI scanners that do not explicitly allow for multi-shell datasets, a common workaround is to set the scanning protocol according to the largest desired *b*-value, but use gradient vector directions that have *less than unit norm*. This results in diffusion sensitisation gradients with reduced strength, and hence images with lower *b*-values.

For example, if this was the desired gradient table:

```
0 0 0 0
1 0 0 700
1 0 0 2800
```

This could be achieved on some systems by supplying this custom diffusion vectors file, now nominally containing only  $b = 0$  and  $b = 2800$  s/mm<sup>2</sup>:

```
0 0 0 0
0.5 0 0 2800
1 0 0 2800
```

By default, *MRtrix3* applications will **automatically** scale the  $b$ -values by the squared amplitude of the gradient vectors (so that the stored gradient table is equivalent to the first example), in order to more sensibly reflect the nature of the image data.

While this scaling allows such datasets to be processed seamlessly, it will introduce minor variations in the  $b$ -values for other datasets, due to minor rounding errors in the components of the direction vectors. These are benign, and have no consequence on the correct operation of *MRtrix3* applications, since the deviations are typically very small, and the strategy used to group  $b$ -values into shells is robust to such variations. Alternatively, if the provided diffusion gradient table is malformed, and contains the correct  $b$ -values but non-unity-norm directions, this scaling will result in a reported diffusion gradient table that contains  $b$ -values other than those expected.

If this scaling becomes a problem (e.g. for third-party applications), this feature can be disabled using the `-bvalue_scaling` option for those applications that support it.

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## Phase encoding scheme handling

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From version 3.0RC1 onwards, *MRtrix3* is capable of importing information from DICOM relating to the phase encoding of the acquired images, and encoding this information within key-value fields inside an image header. This information can then later be used by the `dwipreproc` script, specifically using its `-rpe_header` command-line option, to automatically set up and execute FSL's `topup` and `eddy` commands without requiring explicit input from the user regarding the phase encoding design of the imaging experiment. This page explains how this information is encoded and manipulated by *MRtrix3*.

---

**Note:** Due to variations in sequences, acquisition protocols, DICOM encoding, and image manipulation operations, *MRtrix3* cannot be guaranteed to obtain or retain the phase encoding information correctly in all circumstances. Manual inspection of these data and/or the outcomes of image processing when making use of these data is advocated. If circumstances leading to incorrect import or encoding of this information in *MRtrix3* is reproducible, please report this to the *MRtrix3* developers so that the software can be updated to support such data.

---

### 31.1 Phase encoding information storage

The phase encoding information for a particular image file can be stored in one of two ways.

- The most convenient of these is storage of (one or more) key-value field(s) encapsulated within the image header, just as can be used for the diffusion gradient scheme. This ensures that the information is retained through image processing, as each *MRtrix3* command passes the header entries of the input image through to the output image.
- Alternatively, this information can be stored within a JSON file that accompanies the relevant image file(s). This information would then typically be imported / exported using the `-json_import` and `-json_export` options in `mrconvert`.

Precisely *how* this phase encoding information is *encoded* however depends on the nature of the phase encoding information for that image; specifically, whether the phase encoding information is *identical* for all volumes within an image file (or if it contains just one volume), or whether the phase encoding information *varies* between volumes within the image series.

### 31.1.1 Fixed phase encoding

In the case where both the phase encoding *direction* and the EPI *total readout time* are equivalent for all volumes within an image, this information is encoded within two fields: “PhaseEncodingDirection” and “TotalReadoutTime”. These fields are consistent with BIDS (the Brain Imaging Data Structure).

PhaseEncodingDirection can take one of six values: “i”, “i-”, “j”, “j-”, “k”, “k-”. These correspond to the first, second and third axes of the corresponding image. Exactly how these axes map to “real” / “scanner” space axes (i.e. left-right, posterior-anterior, inferior-superior) depends on the *The image transform* that is stored in the respective image header, which may potentially have been modified internally by MRtrix3 on image load (discussed further in the *Non-axial acquisitions* section). Here, we begin with the most simple use case:

Take an image that conforms to the RAS (Right-Anterior-Superior) convention common to both NIfTI and MRtrix3. If the phase encoding is applied A>>P (anterior-posterior), this is the *second* spatial axis, or axis “j”. However, the phase encoding is also *reversed* along that axis (“RAS” indicates that voxel positions along the second axis *increase* when moving toward the anterior of the brain, whereas “A>>P” indicates the opposite). Hence, in this example, PhaseEncodingDirection would have the value “j-”.

---

**Note:** The phase encoding direction is defined specifically with respect to *image axes*. It is therefore *not* affected by the image *strides*, which only affect how the data for these axes are arranged when they are stored as a one-dimensional list of values within a file.

---

---

**Note:** The phase encoding direction does *not* relate to “x”, “y” and “z” axis directions in “real” / “scanner” space, as do other representations of orientation information in MRtrix3. This is because phase encoding specifically affects the appearance of the image *along the image axis in which phase encoding was applied*. The mapping from image axes to real-space axes is determined by the image header transform.

To demonstrate this: Imagine if an EPI image were to undergo a rigid-body rotation. The EPI field inhomogeneity distortions would *still align* with the relevant image axis after this rotation; but the effective x-y-z direction of phase encoding in real-space would change.

---

TotalReadoutTime provides the total time required for the EPI readout train. Specifically, this is the time between the centre of the first echo, and the centre of the last echo, in the train; this is consistent with BIDS, and is sometimes referred to as the “FSL definition”, since it is consistent with relevant calculations performed within FSL tools. It should be defined in seconds.

### 31.1.2 Variable phase encoding

If the phase encoding direction and/or the total readout time varies between different volumes within a single image series, then the two key-value fields described above are not sufficient to fully encode this information. In this situation, MRtrix3 will instead use a key-value entry “pe\_scheme” (similar to the “dw\_scheme” entry used for the diffusion gradient scheme).

This information is stored as a *table*, where each row contains the phase encoding direction and the readout time for the corresponding volume; the number of rows in this table must therefore be equal to the number of volumes in the image. In each row, the first three numbers encode the phase encoding direction, and the fourth number is the total readout time. The direction is specified as a unit direction in the image coordinate system; for instance, a phase encoding direction of A>>P would be encoded as [ 0 -1 0 ].

## 31.2 Non-axial acquisitions

When images are acquired in such a manner that the axes do not approximately correspond to RAS convention (i.e. first axis increases from left to right, second axis increases from posterior to anterior, third axis increases from inferior to superior), *MRtrix3* will automatically alter the axis strides & transform in order to make the image *appear* as close to an axial acquisition as possible. This is briefly mentioned in the *The image transform* section. The behaviour may also be observed by running `mrinfo` with and without the `-norealign` option, which temporarily disables this behaviour.

Because phase encoding is defined with respect to the image axes, any transformation of image axes must correspondingly be applied to the phase encoding data. This is done automatically by *MRtrix3* as the transformation occurs. Consequently, the phase encoding direction “reported” by *MRtrix3* may in fact be different to that stored within the image header itself (or indeed within a sidcar JSON file); but it is vital that this information remain consistent with the image data, and *MRtrix3* does its best to do so.

---

**Note:** This process has consequences for the `dwipreproc` script when manually providing the phase encoding direction. The axis and sign of phase encoding provided to the script must reflect the direction of phase encoding *after* *MRtrix3* has performed this transformation, i.e. as it is read by any *MRtrix3* command or as it appears in `mrview`, *not* the actual encoding of axes within the file.

---

When exporting a sidcar JSON file to accompany an output NIfTI image, the direction of phase encoding may also be transformed from that stored in the input image, in order to reflect any transformation that occurs when writing an output image specifically to the NIfTI format.

## 31.3 Manipulation of phase encoding data

The primary purpose of storing this phase encoding information is to automate the correction of EPI susceptibility distortions. However this can only occur if the information stored is not invalidated through the manipulation of the corresponding image data. Therefore, any *MRtrix3* command that is capable of manipulating the image data in such a way as to invalidate the phase encoding information will *automatically* modify this phase encoding information appropriately. This includes modifying the representation of this information between the fixed and variable phase encoding cases.

Consider, for instance, a pair of `b=0` images, where the first was acquired with phase encoding direction `A>>P`, and the second was acquired using phase encoding direction `P>>A`:

```
$ mrinfo AP.mif
*****
Image:                AP.mif
*****
...
PhaseEncodingDirection: j-
TotalReadoutTime:    0.0575
...

$ mrinfo PA.mif
*****
Image:                PA.mif
*****
...
PhaseEncodingDirection: j
TotalReadoutTime:    0.0575
...
```

Now watch what happens when we concatenate these two images together:

```
$ mrcat AP.mif PA.mif AP_PA_pair.mif -axis 3
mrcat: [100%] concatenating "AP.mif"
mrcat: [100%] concatenating "PA.mif"
# mrinfo AP_PA_pair.mif
*****
Image:                AP_PA_pair.mif
*****
...
pe_scheme:           0,-1,0,0.0575
                    0,1,0,0.0575
...

```

When the two input images are concatenated, *MRtrix3* additionally concatenates the phase encoding information of the input volumes; since it detects that these are not consistent between volumes, it stores this information using the `pe_scheme` header entry, rather than `PhaseEncodingDirection` and `TotalReadoutTime`.

The `mrconvert` command has a number of additional functionalities that can be used to manipulate this information:

- The `-import_pe_table` and `-export_pe_table` options can be used to import/export the phase encoding information from / to file as a table, i.e. in the format used for the `pe_scheme` header entry described above. Note that even if all volumes in the image have the same phase encoding direction and total readout time, these options will still import / export these data in table format.
- The `-import_pe_eddy` and `-export_pe_eddy` options can be used to import/export the phase encoding information in the format required by FSL's eddy tool. The [FSL documentation page](#) describes this format in more detail.
- The `-json_import` and `-json_export` options can be used to import/export *all* header key-value entries from/to an external JSON file. This may be useful in particular for operating within the BIDS specification. There is a caveat here: If you use the `-json_export` option on an image with *fixed* phase encoding, the `PhaseEncodingDirection` and `TotalReadoutTime` fields will be written as expected by BIDS; however if the image contains *variable* phase encoding, then the `pe_scheme` header entry will be written to the JSON file, and this will not be appropriately interpreted by other BIDS tools.
- The `-set_property` option may be useful to *override* these header entries if they are deemed incorrect by some other source of information.

---

## Global intensity normalisation

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Several existing DWI models derive quantitative measures by fitting a model to the ratio of the DW signal to the  $b=0$  signal within each voxel. Such a voxel-wise division by the original  $b=0$  signal removes intensity variations due to T2-weighting and RF inhomogeneity. However, unless all compartments within white matter (e.g. intra- and extra-axonal space, myelin, cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) and grey matter partial volumes) are modelled accurately (i.e. with appropriate assumptions/modelling of both the compartment diffusion and T2), the proportion of one compartment in a voxel may influence another. For *example*, if CSF partial volume (e.g. at the border of white matter and the ventricles) is not taken into account, then a voxel-wise division by the  $b=0$  (which has a long T2 and appears much brighter in CSF than in white matter in the T2-weighted  $b=0$  image), will artificially overreduce the DW signal from the white matter intra-axonal (restricted) compartment, ultimately changing several derived quantitative measures.

A previous work investigating differences in Apparent Fibre Density (AFD) [Raffelt2012] opted to instead perform a *global* intensity normalisation between subjects. This avoids the aforementioned issues, but also comes with its own set of challenges and assumptions inherent to specific strategies to deal with intensity normalisation for diffusion MRI data. Aside from the problem of how to define a reference region for global intensity normalisation (that is unbiased with respect to the groups in the analysis), the data must also be *bias field* corrected, to eliminate low frequency (spatially smooth) intensity inhomogeneities across the image.

In theory, an approach to global intensity normalisation could for example be to normalise using the median CSF  $b=0$  intensity for each subject as a reference (under the assumption that the CSF T2 is unlikely to be affected by pathology). However, in practice it is surprisingly difficult to obtain a robust partial-volume-free estimate of the CSF intensity due to the typical low resolution of DW images. For healthy participants less than 50 years old, reasonably small ventricles make it quite difficult to identify *pure* CSF voxels at 2-2.5mm resolutions. Therefore, performing global intensity normalisation using the median *white matter*  $b=0$  intensity may be easier to achieve. While the white matter  $b=0$  intensity may be influenced by pathology-induced changes in T2, the assumption then becomes that such changes would be (spatially) quite local and therefore have little influence on the median white matter  $b=0$  value.

The *dwintensitynorm* script is included in MRtrix to perform an automatic global normalisation using the *median white matter  $b=0$  intensity*. The script input requires two folders: a folder containing all DW images in the study (in .mif format) and a folder containing the corresponding whole brain mask images (with the same filename prefix). The script runs by first computing diffusion tensor Fractional Anisotropy (FA) maps, registering these to a groupwise template, then thresholding the template FA map to obtain an *approximate* white matter mask. The mask is then transformed back into the space of each subject image and used in the *dwnormalise* command to normalise the input DW images to have the same  $b=0$  white matter median value. All intensity normalised data will be output in a single folder. As previously mentioned, all DWI data must be bias field corrected *before* applying *dwintensitynorm*,

for example using `dwibiascorrect`. Users are well advised to (manually) check the results of `dwintensifynorm` closely though, as occasional instabilities have been observed in the outcomes of particular subjects.

In case of pipelines that include a multi-tissue spherical deconvolution algorithm yielding compartment estimates for multiple different tissues [Jeurissen2014] [Dhollander2016a], a *new* command called `mtnormalise` can be used instead, which performs multi-tissue informed intensity normalisation in the log-domain, correcting simultaneously for both global intensity differences as well as bias fields. The benefit of the `mtnormalise` command is that normalisation can be performed *independently* on each subject, and therefore does *not* require a computationally expensive (and potentially not entirely accurate) registration step to a group template.

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## Orthonormal Spherical Harmonic basis

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An important difference between the old (0.2.x) and new (0.3.x and 3.x.x) versions of MRtrix is a change to the Spherical Harmonic (SH) basis functions. This change has important consequences for data that may be used interchangeably between the two versions.

**Important:** note that although it is possible to use and display FODs generated using MRtrix 0.2.x in the newer *MRtrix3* applications (and vice-versa), the FODs will *NOT* be correct. Moreover, it is very difficult to tell the difference by simple visual inspection - the FODs may still *look* reasonable, but will give incorrect results if used for tractography or in quantitative analyses. To ensure your images are correct, you should use the *shbasis* application included in *MRtrix3*, as described below.

### 33.1 The problem

For Spherical Deconvolution (SD) as implemented in MRtrix, processing is done in the Spherical Harmonic (SH) basis; this mathematical formulation provides a smooth representation of data distributed on the sphere. When we do SD, the resulting Fibre Orientation Distributions (FODs) are written to an image. These FOD images contain coefficients in this SH basis, that when interpreted correctly, produce the FOD butterflies we all know and love. If you've ever looked at the raw image volumes from an FOD image, you'll know that all but the first one are basically not interpretable.

Here's where it gets tricky. In all previous versions of MRtrix, there was a 'bug' in the SH basis functions. Mathematically, the basis was 'non-orthonormal'; you don't necessarily need to know what this means, just appreciate that the formulation of this mathematical basis was not optimal.

This 'bug' didn't actually cause any problems; the previous version of MRtrix was self-consistent in its handling of the issue throughout the code. It was annoying for any users transferring data between MRtrix and other packages though. For the release of the new *MRtrix3*, we have decided to correct the underlying error in the SH basis once and for all, as there are various mathematical operations that are greatly simplified when the basis is orthonormal. This does however introduce a problem for anyone that has done prior image processing using the old MRtrix 0.2 and wants to be able to use that data with *MRtrix3*: if you have image data that was generated using the *old* SH basis, but read it using MRtrix code that was compiled using the *new* SH basis, the data will *not be interpreted correctly*.

## 33.2 The solution

There is a solution, but it takes a bit of manual labour on your part. We have provided a new command called `shbasis`. This command will read your image data, and tell you which SH basis it thinks your image data are stored in (or if it's unable to make this decision).

Furthermore, it includes a command-line option for *changing* the SH basis of the underlying image data: `-convert`. The most important choice for this option is `-convert native`. This option identifies the SH basis that *MRtrix3* is compiled for (this is the new orthonormal basis by default); and if the image data is not currently stored in this basis, it *modifies the image data in-place* so that it conforms to the correct basis.

Any data that you generate after this update has occurred will automatically be produced in the new SH basis, and therefore will not need to be converted using `shbasis`. However if you are uncertain whether or not a particular image does or does not need to be converted, `shbasis` can always be used to verify whether or not the image data are in the correct SH basis; and if you provide the `-convert native` option despite the image data already being in the new SH basis, no modification of the image data will take place.

My recommendation is therefore as follows. When you commit to using the new version of MRtrix, you should go through *all* of your diffusion image data on *all* systems that you use, and run `shbasis -convert native` on all images that contain spherical harmonic data (only FOD images; raw DWIs / response functions / TDIs / etc. do not need to be converted).

Also: Remember that data previously generated will not be interpreted correctly by *MRtrix3* commands without the SH basis conversion? The same applies in the other direction. So if you load FOD images that have either been generated using *MRtrix*, or have been previously converted using `shbasis`, commands from the previous version of MRtrix (0.2) won't interpret them correctly. We hope that once we have feature completeness in *MRtrix3*, the old version will no longer be necessary, and therefore this will not be a problem.

## 33.3 Problematic data

In some circumstances, the `shbasis` command will give an error something like this:

```
shbasis [WARNING]: Cannot make unambiguous decision on SH basis of image csd.  
mif (power ratio regressed to l=0 is 1.58446)
```

`shbasis` uses a data-driven approach to automatically determine the SH basis that the image data are currently stored in; however a number of issues can arise that lead to a breakdown of the numerical assumption that it is based on, and it can no longer make this decision.

If this occurs, but you are confident that your image data are in the old non-orthonormal basis and need to be converted to the new orthonormal basis, you can run: `shbasis <image> -convert force_oldtonew`. This will inform `shbasis` that even though it's unable to determine the current SH basis, you're confident that you do know it, and therefore it should perform the conversion anyway. It will give you a couple of loud warnings just to make sure you appreciate the danger in what you're doing, so you should only ever use this setting for problematic data; for the vast majority of conversions, `-convert native` is much better.

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Maximum spherical harmonic degree  $l_{\max}$ 


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### 34.1 What determines $l_{\max}$ for my image data?

For any command or script operating on data in the spherical harmonic basis, it should be possible to manually set the maximum harmonic degree of the output using the `-lmax` command-line option. If this is *not* provided, then an appropriate value will be determined automatically.

The mechanisms by which this automatic determination of  $l_{\max}$  occurs are as follows:

- Determine the maximum value for  $l_{\max}$  that is supported by the number of DWI volumes in the shell being processed (or the total number of non- $b=0$  volumes in a single-shell acquisition). This is the number of coefficients required to store an antipodally-symmetric spherical harmonic function:

$l_{\max}$	Required volumes
2	6
4	15
6	28
8	45
10	66
12	91
...	...

- If  $l_{\max}$  exceeds 8, reduce to 8. This is primarily based on the findings in [this paper](#).
- Check the condition of the transformation between DWIs and spherical harmonics. If the transformation is ill-conditioned (usually indicating that the diffusion sensitisation gradient directions are not evenly distributed over the sphere or half-sphere), reduce  $l_{\max}$  until the transformation is well-conditioned.

As an example: concatenating two repeats of a 30 direction acquisition to produce 60 volumes will *not* support an  $l_{\max}=8$  fit: the angular resolution of the data set is equivalent to 30 *unique* directions, and so  $l_{\max}=6$  would be selected (and this would be accompanied by a command-line warning to the user).

- In the case of spherical deconvolution, the  $l_{\max}$  selected for FOD estimation will also be reduced if  $l_{\max}$  of the provided response function is less than that calculated as above.

The *exception* to these rules is the new `amp2response` command, which is now called by default in all `dwi2response` script algorithms. This command converts *amplitudes* on the half-sphere (most likely in the form of raw DWI image intensities) into a *response function* intended for use in spherical deconvolution. This command behaves differently for two reasons in combination:

- The image data from multiple voxels are combined together in a single fitting procedure, therefore having a much greater number of samples when performing the transformation.
- The data are transformed not to the spherical harmonic basis, but directly to the *zonal* spherical harmonic basis (this is the spherical harmonic basis containing only the  $m = 0$  terms). This basis requires far fewer coefficients for any given value of  $l_{\max}$ : 2 for  $l_{\max}=2$ , 3 for  $l_{\max}=4$ , 4 for  $l_{\max}=6$ , 5 for  $l_{\max}=8$  and so on.

The value of  $l_{\max}$  that can be used in this command is therefore practically unconstrained; though the power in higher harmonic degrees is much smaller than that in lower degrees. The command is currently configured to select  $l_{\max}=10$  by default, regardless of  $b$ -value; interested readers can find the discussion [here](#).

## 34.2 Reduced $l_{\max}$ in particular subjects

If you find that certain subjects within a cohort have a reduced  $l_{\max}$  compared to the rest of the cohort when using any command relating to spherical harmonics, the most likely cause is premature termination of the diffusion sequence during scanning of those subjects, resulting in a reduced number of diffusion volumes, and therefore a reduced  $l_{\max}$  according to the table above.

## 34.3 Setting $l_{\max}$ in different applications

The range of permissible values for  $l_{\max}$  depends on the particular command being used; e.g.:

- For any command that maps image data directly to spherical harmonics, it is impossible to set  $l_{\max}$  to a value higher than that supported by the image data. The transformation from DWI data to spherical harmonics simply cannot be done in such a case, as the problem is under-determined. You can of course set  $l_{\max}$  to a lower value than that supported by the data.
- In spherical deconvolution, it *is* possible to set a higher  $l_{\max}$  than that supported by the data - so-called *super-resolved* spherical deconvolution. Here, additional information is provided by the non-negativity constraint to make estimation of additional spherical harmonic coefficients possible.
- If performing Track Orientation Density Imaging (TODI) using `tockmap -tod`, then the apodized point spread functions (aPSFs) can be generated at any value of  $l_{\max}$  for which aPSF data are available (currently  $l_{\max}=16$ , since the angular resolution of the original image data is not a limiting factor here).
- As described previously, the `amp2response` command is a special case, and the maximum permissible  $l_{\max}$  is vastly greater than the maximum practical value.

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## “Fixels” (and “Dixels”)

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Internally we have created a couple of new terms that we find invaluable when discussing diffusion MRI processing methods and statistics. We’d like to share these with our user base in the hope that others will gain advantages from using the same terminology, and also so that we all know what everyone else is talking about! Anyone using *MRtrix3* to develop their own software may also see these terms scattered throughout the library code, so will need to know what they represent.

All *MRtrix3* users should be familiar with the terms ‘pixel’ and ‘voxel’; these are abbreviations of “picture element” and “volume element”, corresponding to the smallest element within a 2D picture and 3D volume respectively. However in Diffusion MRI we also deal with *orientation* information within each image volume element; so we wanted terminology to allow us to convey the types of discrete elements that we deal with on a daily basis.

We have settled on the following two terms. The first of these, ‘fixel’, will appear frequently throughout the *MRtrix3* documentation and in online discussions, and will therefore satisfy the requirements of the majority of users. The second, ‘dixel’, is typically reserved for internal technical discussion; however due to its occasional usage (and its inconsistent use in early presentations, see final note below), we are additionally providing its full definition here for interested readers.

### 35.1 ‘Fixel’: *Fibre bundle element*

The term *fixel* refers to a *specific fibre bundle* within a *specific voxel*. Alternatively, consistently with the definitions of ‘pixel’ and ‘voxel’, it can be thought of as a “fibre bundle element”: the smallest discrete component of a fibre bundle. Each fixel is parameterized by the voxel in which it resides, the estimated mean orientation of the underlying fibres attributed to that bundle, a fibre density (or partial volume fraction), and potentially other metrics.

In reality, fixels have been used in the field of Diffusion MRI for a long time: multi-tensor fitting, ball-and-sticks, any diffusion model that is capable of fitting multiple anisotropic elements to each image voxel, can be considered as estimating fixels. However in the past, researchers have resorted either to lengthy descriptive labels in an attempt to express the nature of the data being manipulated, or have adopted existing terms, which can lead to confusion with the original sense of the terms. Furthermore, these labels are not applied inconsistently between publications; we hope that the term ‘fixel’, being unambiguous with other interpretations of “fibre bundle” or “fascicle” or other examples, will slowly become the standard term for describing these data.

Historically, in MRtrix we are accustomed to dealing with FODs that are *continuous* functions on the sphere, rather than having a discrete number of fibre directions in each voxel. However, if the FOD is *segmented* in any way (either through peak-finding as shown in [this paper](#) and implemented in the `sh2peaks` command, the segmentation algorithm described in the appendices of the [SIFT NeuroImage paper](#) and provided in the `fod2fixel` command, or more advanced methods), each discrete feature of a particular FOD can be labelled a ‘fixel’, as each represents a set of fibres within that voxel that form a coherent bundle in orientation space.

The term ‘fixel’ has now appeared in the literature with the publication of the statistical method, [Connectivity-based Fixel Enhancement](#), as well as the more general framework of [Fixel-Based Analysis](#), which together allow for the inference of group differences not just at the voxel level, but the *fixel* level; that is, if only one fibre bundle within a crossing-fibre voxel is affected in a cohort, we hope to both identify the bundle affected, and quantify the group effect that is specific to that bundle.

## 35.2 ‘Dixel’: *Directional Element*

This term is used less frequently, and hence may not be relevant for all readers. If you have not seen it used before, you may in fact prefer to avoid the following text in order to keep things simple. . .

Imagine a single image voxel, the data for which is in fact a function on the sphere (i.e. varies with orientation). We now take samples of that function along a set of pre-defined directions on the unit sphere. Each of those samples is referred to as a ‘dixel’: a *directional element* within a *specific voxel*. Each dixel is described by the voxel in which it resides, the direction along which the relevant spherical function was sampled, and the intensity of the function in that direction.

Importantly, it is the *combination* of the voxel location and sampling direction that describe the dixel. If a different direction were used to sample the spherical function, this would be a different dixel with a different associated value; likewise, if the spherical function in an adjacent voxel were sampled along the same direction, that would also be a different dixel with a different associated value. Each dixel is a unique sample of a particular spatially-varying spherical function.

Most commonly, the term ‘dixel’ is used to refer to the situation where a *set of directions* on the unit sphere has been used to sample some function; for instance, sampling the amplitudes of a Fibre Orientation Distribution (FOD), which is otherwise a continuous function expressed in the Spherical Harmonic (SH) basis. However, by the definition of the term, ‘dixel’ could also be used to describe a single voxel within a particular image volume in a HARDI experiment; if the HARDI signal in a single voxel is considered to be discrete samples of the orientation dependence of the diffusion signal in that voxel, then each of those samples could be labelled a ‘dixel’.

Therefore, the fundamental disambiguation between ‘fixels’ and ‘dixels’ is as follows:

- A ‘dixel’ is typically assumed to represent a sample of a spherical function along some pre-determined direction, where that direction belongs to some dense *basis set* of equally-distributed unit directions that has been used to sample an otherwise continuous (hemi-)spherical function.
- ‘Fixel’, on the other hand, is used to describe a *set of fibres* within a voxel that are sufficiently similar in orientation that they are indistinguishable from one another, and therefore form a fibre ‘bundle’ within that voxel.

Some observations / contexts in which the term ‘dixel’ may be useful:

- The `mrview` “ODF overlay” tool is capable of loading “Dixel ODFs”. These can be either a set of direction-based samples on the sphere, or it can be used to directly visualise the diffusion signal within a particular *b*-value shell, since both of these cases correspond to a set of directions on the unit hemisphere, where each direction has associated with it an ‘intensity’ / ‘amplitude’.
- In the original Apparent Fibre Density (AFD) [manuscript](#), the statistical analysis was performed by performing a t-test in each of 200 directions in each voxel, and then detecting connected clusters in position & orientation space. This can be thought of as “dixel-based cluster statistics”.

- In the FOD segmentation method provided in the `fod2fixel` command mentioned earlier, the algorithm first samples the amplitude of the FOD along a set of 1,281 directions, before identifying fixels based on accumulating these directions / samples. So this process can be thought of as converting the FOD from a continuous SH representation, to a dixel representation, then finally to a fixel representation.

---

**Note:** During the development of many of the aforementioned methods, a presentation was made at ISMRM demonstrating “Tractographic threshold-free cluster enhancement” (this is now referred to as “Connectivity-based Fixel Enhancement (CFE)”). During the presentation itself, the term ‘dixel’ was used to refer to a specific direction within a specific voxel; but a direction that corresponds to a particular fibre bundle in that voxel. You may observe that this definition is in fact consistent with what we have labelled here as a ‘fixel’, rather than a ‘dixel’; this is because at the time when this presentation was made, these two terms had not yet been disambiguated. The definitions made within this documentation page are what will be used from now on by the *MRtrix3* developers; and we hope by the wider community as well.

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## Motivation for `afdconnectivity`

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Due to the interest in the `afdconnectivity` command, I thought I'd explain the reasoning behind the approach, the rationale behind the improvements made in commit 40ccdb62, and the argument for why we recommend the use of *Spherical-deconvolution Informed Filtering of Tractograms (SIFT)* as an alternative if possible.

The `afdconnectivity` command was originally written as a 'hack' for a colleague who wanted to obtain quantitative measures of 'connectivity' in the absence of EPI distortion correction. Without EPI distortion correction *Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT)* cannot be applied, and consequently streamlines may terminate within white matter. Streamline count (as a measure of connectivity) between two grey matter regions will therefore not include those streamlines that terminate in white matter (and therefore the estimated connectivity may not be accurate).

The `afdconnectivity` command attempts to get around this issue by estimating a measure of 'connectivity' as follows:

- The integral of a discrete lobe of an FOD (*fixel*) is proportional to the volume of the MR-visible tissue (intracellular at high *b*-value) aligned in that direction.
- By taking a set of streamlines corresponding to a pathway of interest, and summing the integrals of all FOD lobes traversed by the bundle, you obtain an estimate of the total fibre volume of the pathway of interest.
- If you then divide by the length of the bundle (taken as the mean streamline length), you get an estimate of the cross-sectional area of the bundle, which is a measure of 'connectivity' independent of fibre length.

The major problem with this approach is the assumption that *all* of the fibre volume in each fixel traversed by the streamlines of interest belong to the bundle of interest; clearly not the case in various circumstances. The changes I have made to `afdconnectivity` are aimed at improving the behaviour in the presence of partial volume and erroneous streamlines.

The default behaviour is as before: determine a fixel mask using some bundle of streamlines, sum the apparent fibre density (a volume) of the fixels within the mask, and divide by mean streamline length (to get an estimate of cross-sectional area of the pathway).

Now, you can optionally provide a whole-brain fibre-tracking data set using the `-wbft` option (your bundle `.tck` file should then be a subset of this tractogram). In this case, the program determines the total streamlines density attributed to each fixel, and for those fixels traversed by the streamlines of interest, some fraction of the fibre volume of that fixel is contributed to the result. This fraction is determined for each fixel by the ratio of streamlines density from the bundle of interest, to the total streamlines density from the tractogram. The fibre volume of each fixel is therefore divided 'fairly' between the bundle of interest and the rest of the tractogram.

Although this may be an improvement in many circumstances, it's still not our recommended method. Effectively what's happening in this scenario is that for each streamline, a fibre volume is determined, based on its 'fair share' of each fixel it traverses. However this means that the effective cross-sectional area of that streamline is *allowed to vary drastically along its length*; this is clearly not physically realistic. Furthermore, due to the relative over- or under-reconstruction of different pathways in whole-brain fibre-tracking, there's no guarantee that this proportional 'sharing' of fibre volume between streamlines is biologically accurate.

Now consider the alternative: filtering a tractogram using *Spherical-deconvolution Informed Filtering of Tractograms (SIFT)*, then selecting a subset of the remaining streamlines corresponding to your pathway of interest. By the model underlying SIFT, each streamline represents a constant cross-sectional area of fibres; so the *streamline count* becomes your estimate of bundle cross-sectional area and therefore 'connectivity' (with the SIFT proportionality coefficient providing the conversion between streamline count and AFD if you so choose).

This argument also holds if you are looking to use the image output from `afdconnectivity`, which provides the estimated fibre volume of the pathway of interest within each voxel. I have already stated why this is a poor interpretation with the default `afdconnectivity` behaviour; it's improved with use of the `-wbft` option, but is noisy in regions where fixels are traversed by very few streamlines, and still may not share the fibre volume of each fixel appropriately. Again, SIFT provides the better alternative: an equivalent map can be produced by selecting your streamlines of interest post-SIFT, and running `tkcmap -precise` (sums streamline lengths within each voxel rather than counting streamlines). Remember: a product of cross-sectional area and length gives a volume!

This is also an important message for interpretation of AFD results, both in this context and others. FOD amplitude (in any guise) is *in no way* a measure of "tissue integrity", no matter how many quotation marks you use; it's a measure of *density*. This is the reasoning behind the modulation step in **AFD**, and is the entire premise behind the SIFT method.

Anyways, rant over. We are considering writing a technical note that will discuss this issue, so we are trusting the *MRtrix3* beta user base not to do anything scientifically unethical with this information / command until we can create the relevant article for citation.

*MRtrix3* includes its own fast DICOM handling backend, allowing all *MRtrix3* applications to seamlessly support DICOM images as input. While this works well in most cases, it can fail in some circumstances. Issues specific to this format are outlined below.

## 37.1 How MRtrix3 handles DICOM data

When interpreting the argument provided for an input image to any *MRtrix3* command, the image handling backend will assume that the data are in DICOM format if the argument corresponds to a *folder*, or ends with the `.dcm` suffix. The DICOM handling backend will then quickly scan through the files (recursively through the entire folder if one was provided), and build a table of contents. This consists of a *tree*, containing one or more *patients*, each containing one or more *studies*, each of which consists of one or more image *series*. When multiple choices are possible (e.g. multiple series are available), the application will present a menu to select the data of interest. For example:

```
$ mrimfo "Siemens Trio/"
mrimfo: [done] scanning DICOM folder "Siemens Trio/"
Select series ('q' to abort):
 0 -   9 MR images 10:20:52 localizer_sf (*fl2d1) [1]
 1 -  21 MR images 10:24:39 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL (*ep_b1000#17) [2]
 2 -  54 MR images 10:24:40 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL_ADC (*ep_b0_1000) [3]
 3 -  54 MR images 10:24:40 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL_TRACEW (*ep_b1000t) [4]
 4 -  54 MR images 10:24:40 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL_FA (*ep_b0_1000) [5]
 5 -  21 MR images 10:28:52 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP (ep_b1000#2) [7]
 6 -  54 MR images 10:28:53 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP_ADC (ep_b0_1000) [8]
 7 -  54 MR images 10:28:53 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP_TRACEW (ep_b1000t) [9]
 8 -  54 MR images 10:28:54 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP_FA (ep_b0_1000) [10]
?
```

The user should then enter the integer corresponding to the study of interest, for example (following from the above):

```
...
```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```
? 5
mrinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP"
*****
Image:          "TOURNIER DONALD (1) [MR] ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP"
*****
Dimensions:    84 x 84 x 54 x 21
Voxel size:    2.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 x ?
Data strides:  [-1 -2 3 4 ]
Format:        DICOM
Data type:     unsigned 16 bit integer (little endian)
Intensity scaling: offset = 0, multiplier = 1
Transform:     0.9986   4.186e-08   -0.05229   -99.76
               -0.002193   0.9991   -0.04188   -83.83
               0.05224   0.04193   0.9978   -43.07

EchoTime:      0.08
PhaseEncodingDirection: j-
TotalReadoutTime: 0.0252
comments:      TOURNIER DONALD (1) [MR] ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP
               study: Head Brain_basic
               DOS: 11/05/2007 10:28:52
dw_scheme:     0,0,0,0
[21 entries]   -0.99949686000000004,-0.0050327100000000001,-0.
→0050327100000000001,1000
               ...
               -0.11020774999999999,0.27551937999999998,0.95513387000000005,1000
               -0.031670320000000002,0.79175793999999999,0.57006572,1000
```

What happens at this stage is a deeper scan through those files that relate specifically to the data selected, to gather all the information required to read the data correctly. This two-stage process allows *MRtrix3* to scan through large datasets rapidly to allow the user to quickly select just those datasets of interest.

### 37.1.1 Selecting multiple matching series as a single dataset

It is also possible to load multiple series as a single dataset, when the image dimensions and other parameters match. This is done by using *Number sequences and floating-point lists* to specify the series of interest. For example:

```
$ mrinfo "Siemens Trio/"
mrinfo: [done] scanning DICOM folder "Siemens Trio/"
Select series ('q' to abort):
 0 -   9 MR images 10:20:52 localizer_sf (*f12d1) [1]
 1 -  21 MR images 10:24:39 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL (*ep_b1000#17) [2]
 2 -  54 MR images 10:24:40 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL_ADC (*ep_b0_1000) [3]
 3 -  54 MR images 10:24:40 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL_TRACEW (*ep_b1000t) [4]
 4 -  54 MR images 10:24:40 diff 20DW 2NEX ALL_FA (*ep_b0_1000) [5]
 5 -  21 MR images 10:28:52 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP (ep_b1000#2) [7]
 6 -  54 MR images 10:28:53 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP_ADC (ep_b0_1000) [8]
 7 -  54 MR images 10:28:53 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP_TRACEW (ep_b1000t) [9]
 8 -  54 MR images 10:28:54 ep2d_diff_MDDW_AT_WIP_FA (ep_b0_1000) [10]
 9 -  21 MR images 10:35:01 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE110 (*ep_b1000#1) [12]
10 -  54 MR images 10:35:01 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE110_ADC (*ep_b0_1000) [13]
11 -  54 MR images 10:35:02 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE110_TRACEW (*ep_b1000t) [14]
12 -  54 MR images 10:35:02 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE110_FA (*ep_b0_1000) [15]
13 -  21 MR images 10:39:39 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE80 (*ep_b1000#4) [17]
14 -  54 MR images 10:39:51 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE80_ADC (*ep_b0_1000) [18]
15 -  54 MR images 10:39:51 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE80_TRACEW (*ep_b1000t) [19]
```

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```

16 - 54 MR images 10:39:51 diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE80_FA (*ep_b0_1000) [20]
? 4,12,16
mrinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "diff 20DW 2NEX ALL_FA"
mrinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE110_FA"
mrinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "diff 20DW 2NEX AT TE80_FA"
*****
Image: "TOURNIER DONALD (1) [MR] diff 20DW 2NEX ALL FA"
*****
Dimensions: 84 x 84 x 54 x 3
Voxel size: 2.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 x ?
Data strides: [ -1 -2 3 4 ]
Format: DICOM
Data type: unsigned 16 bit integer (little endian)
Intensity scaling: offset = 0, multiplier = 1
Transform: 0.9986 4.186e-08 -0.05229 -99.76
           -0.002193 0.9991 -0.04188 -83.83
           0.05224 0.04193 0.9978 -43.07

EchoTime: 0.08
PhaseEncodingDirection: j-
TotalReadoutTime: 0.0249
comments: TOURNIER DONALD (1) [MR] diff 20DW 2NEX ALL FA
          study: Head Brain_basic
          DOB: 09/03/1977
          DOS: 11/05/2007 10:24:40

```

In the above example, the application accessed 3 FA maps produced with different echo times as a single 4D dataset, consisting of DICOM series 4, 12, 16.

### 37.1.2 Loading DICOM data from scripts

It is good practice to write scripts to perform the full analysis from the raw data, so that the analysis can be performed afresh if required, and so that the exact steps taken at every stage of the analysis are recorded. However, access to DICOM data requires user interaction to select the right series for each subject. Thankfully, it is simple to record these selections and use them in scripts once the correct choices are known. For example, assuming we have a data folder containing lots of data, and we are interested in Donald's T1 scan:

```

$ mrinfo DICOM_folder/
mrinfo: [done] scanning DICOM folder "DICOM_folder/"
Select patient (q to abort):
  1 - WILLATS LISA (000188) 06/04/1981
  2 - TOURNIER DONALD (BRI) 09/03/1977
? 2
patient: TOURNIER DONALD (BRI) 09/03/1977
Select series ('q' to abort):
  0 - 9 MR images 15:31:22 localiser (*f12d1) [1]
  1 - 160 MR images 15:37:34 t1_mpr_lmm iso qk (*tf13d1_ns) [2]
  2 - 60 MR images 15:38:33 AX MPR T1 (*tf13d1_ns) [3]
  3 - 60 MR images 15:38:56 COR MPR T1 (*tf13d1_ns) [4]
  4 - 51 MR images 15:39:28 SAG MPR T1 (*tf13d1_ns) [5]
  5 - 8 MR images 15:46:57 svs_se_30 PWM NWS (*tf13d1_ns) [6]
  6 - 8 MR images 15:52:32 svs_se_30 PWM WS 32 ACQ (*tf13d1_ns) [7]
  7 - 167 MR images 15:58:40 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC (*ep_b3000#93) [8]
  8 - 54 MR images 16:16:50 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC_ADC (*ep_b0_3000) [9]
  9 - 108 MR images 16:16:50 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC_TRACEW (*ep_b3000t) [10]
  10 - 54 MR images 16:16:51 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC_FA (*ep_b0_3000) [11]

```

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```
? 1
mrinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "t1_mpr_1mm iso qk"
*****
Image:          "TOURNIER DONALD (BRI) [MR] t1_mpr_1mm iso qk"
*****
Dimensions:    160 x 256 x 256
Voxel size:    1 x 1 x 1
Data strides:  [ 3 -1 -2 ]
Format:        DICOM
Data type:     unsigned 16 bit integer (little endian)
Intensity scaling: offset = 0, multiplier = 1
Transform:     0.9987      0.05056      0.003483      -85.68
               -0.05056      0.9987      -0.0001763     -106.9
               -0.003487      9.906e-09      1             -130.2
EchoTime:      0.00255
PhaseEncodingDirection: j-
TotalReadoutTime: 0
comments:      TOURNIER DONALD (BRI) [MR] t1_mpr_1mm iso qk
               study: BRI_Temp_backup Donald
               DOB: 09/03/1977
               DOS: 03/10/2007 15:37:34
```

We can see that the relevant series is obtained using the choices 2 (to get the second patient) and 1 (to get the second series for that patient). This can be scripted using the `echo` command to *pipe* these numbers directly to the relevant command, with no further user interaction required, for example:

```
$ echo "2 1" | mrconvert DICOM_folder/ T1_anat.nii
mrconvert: [done] scanning DICOM folder "DICOM_folder/"
Select patient (q to abort):
  1 - WILLATS LISA (000188) 06/04/1981
  2 - TOURNIER DONALD (BRI) 09/03/1977
? patient: TOURNIER DONALD (BRI) 09/03/1977
Select series ('q' to abort):
  0 - 9 MR images 15:31:22 localiser (*f12d1) [1]
  1 - 160 MR images 15:37:34 t1_mpr_1mm iso qk (*tfl3d1_ns) [2]
  2 - 60 MR images 15:38:33 AX MPR T1 (*tfl3d1_ns) [3]
  3 - 60 MR images 15:38:56 COR MPR T1 (*tfl3d1_ns) [4]
  4 - 51 MR images 15:39:28 SAG MPR T1 (*tfl3d1_ns) [5]
  5 - 8 MR images 15:46:57 sv_s30 PWM NWS (*tfl3d1_ns) [6]
  6 - 8 MR images 15:52:32 sv_s30 PWM WS 32 ACQ (*tfl3d1_ns) [7]
  7 - 167 MR images 15:58:40 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC (*ep_b3000#93) [8]
  8 - 54 MR images 16:16:50 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC_ADC (*ep_b0_3000) [9]
  9 - 108 MR images 16:16:50 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC_TRACEW (*ep_b3000t) [10]
 10 - 54 MR images 16:16:51 diff60_b3000_2.3_iPat2+ADC_FA (*ep_b0_3000) [11]
mrconvert: [100%] reading DICOM series "t1_mpr_1mm iso qk"
mrconvert: [100%] copying from "TOURNIER D...BRI) [MR] t1_mpr_1mm iso qk" to "T1_anat.
↪.nii"
```

## 37.2 When the DICOM import goes wrong

Errors can occur in the DICOM import for several reasons. In some cases, we can identify the problem in the *MRtrix3* code and provide a fix to handle these data. In other cases, the data are simply not complete, not standards-compliant, or stored using encodings that *MRtrix3* doesn't currently handle.

### 37.2.1 The application crashes

If running a simple command such as:

```
$ mrconvert DICOM/ out.nii
mrconvert: [SYSTEM FATAL CODE: SIGSEGV (11)] Segmentation fault: Invalid memory access
```

crashes without a relevant error message, then this is an overt bug that needs fixing within the *MRtrix3* code. Even if the data are not DICOM-compliant, the code should nonetheless be able to detect this and exit gracefully with a clear indication of what the problem is. In these cases, please send the problematic data sets to members of the *MRtrix3* team for inspection.

### 37.2.2 ERROR: missing image frames for DICOM image

**Note:** This also applies to the “dimensions mismatch in DICOM series” error message.

DICOM data are often stored with individual slices in separate files. Unfortunately, there is no requirement in the DICOM standard that the files for a given dataset should all reside within the same folder. This means that it’s not uncommon for files belonging to the same series to be spread over multiple different sub-folders. This makes it all too easy for some of the images in a DICOM series to go missing, due to users forgetting to copy over all of the folders. Another way this can happen is when users copy the data from their DICOM client (e.g. PACS system) before the DICOM sender has finished sending the data (these transfers can take a long time...). Attempts to read the data will fail with a message like this:

```
$ mrinfo DICOM/
mrinfo: [done] scanning DICOM folder "DICOM/"
mrinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "DWI_60"
mrinfo: [ERROR] missing image frames for DICOM image "Joe Bloggs [MR] DWI_60"
mrinfo: [ERROR] error opening image "DICOM/"
```

In these cases, it is simply not possible to load the data, since there are missing frames within it. The only solution here is to go back to the data source, find the missing data, and try again.

### 37.2.3 ERROR: no diffusion encoding information found in image

This indicates that *MRtrix3* was unable to find any information regarding the DW gradient directions (bvecs/bvals) in the DICOM headers, leading to errors like:

```
$ dwi2tensor DICOM/ dt.mif
dwi2tensor: [done] scanning DICOM folder "DICOM/"
dwi2tensor: [100%] reading DICOM series "DWI_60"
dwi2tensor: [ERROR] no diffusion encoding information found in image "Joe Bloggs [MR]_
↪DWI_60"
```

This can happen for a number of reasons:

- the information is simply not present. This can happen with custom sequences not explicitly designed to provide this information, or lack of support for providing this information from some manufacturers. The only possible solution in this case is to obtain the DW information from a different source, and provide it to *MRtrix3* manually using the `-grad` or `-fslgrad` options in those commands that support it.
- the information is present, but in a format that *MRtrix3* doesn’t yet support. This is a very rare occurrence these days, but still possible. If you’re convinced your data should contain this information, please get in touch with members of the *MRtrix3* team, so we can take a look and see if support can be added to the code.

- the information *was* present, but has been stripped out by third-party software, in particular anonymisation packages. These typically work by stripping out all potentially patient-identifiable information. This often includes removing any *private* (vendor-specific) DICOM entries, since it's not possible for a computer program to guarantee that these entries contain no sensitive information. Unfortunately, these entries often do contain important information, notably the DW gradient information. In these cases, the only sensible solution is to request the raw non-anonymised data, convert these correctly, and anonymise the *converted* images.
- the image series is simply *not* a DWI series. Double-check that you in fact trying to read the correct dataset.

### 37.2.4 ERROR: unsupported transfer syntax

The DICOM standard specifies a default *transfer syntax* to encode the information and the imaging data themselves. However, it also allows specifies a number of other storage formats to store the imaging data, notably compressed formats such as different variants of JPEG and MPEG (see the official [DICOM standard](#) for details). Importantly, these compressed formats are not mandatory: a compliant DICOM implementation does not need to support these features. This makes it entirely possible (and indeed, quite common) for a fully DICOM-compliant implementation to produce data that cannot be understood by another fully DICOM-compliant implementation - a less than ideal situation...

*MRtrix3* does not currently support non-default transfer syntaxes - only those that the standard defines as mandatory, and variants thereof. For reference, these are:

- Implicit VR Little Endian (1.2.840.10008.1.2)
- Explicit VR Little Endian (1.2.840.10008.1.2.1)
- Explicit VR Big Endian (1.2.840.10008.1.2.2)

Any other transfer syntax will be flagged as unsupported, and *MRtrix3* will be unable to read the data, providing an error message similar to this:

```
$ mrinfo DICOM
mrinfo: [done] scanning DICOM folder "DICOM"
mrinfo: [ERROR] unable to read DICOM images in "DICOM":
mrinfo: [ERROR]   unsupported transfer syntax found in DICOM data
mrinfo: [ERROR]   consider using third-party tools to convert your data to standard_
↳uncompressed encoding
mrinfo: [ERROR] See the MRtrix3 documentation on DICOM handling for details:
mrinfo: [ERROR]   http://mrtrix.readthedocs.io/en/latest/tips_and_tricks/dicom_
↳handling.html#error-unsupported-transfer-syntax
mrinfo: [ERROR] error opening image "DICOM"
```

Thankfully, other tools exist that should be able to convert the data to a format that *MRtrix3* (and other DICOM tools) will read. The *dcmtk* DICOM toolkit in particular provides the *dcmdjpeg* command to decompress data stored using JPEG transfer syntax. On Linux, a directory of such files can be decompressed as follows (amend the various *PATH* as required for your system):

```
$ export PATH=/opt/dcmtk/bin:$PATH
$ export DCMDICTPATH=/opt/dcmtk/share/dcmtk/dicom.dic

$ for img in dcmdir/*
> do
>   dcmdjpeg $img ${img}.tmp
>   mv ${img}.tmp $img
> done
```

*MRtrix3* commands should now be able to read the directory successfully:

```
$ mriinfo dcmdir
mriinfo: [done] scanning DICOM folder "data/driss/t1"
mriinfo: [100%] reading DICOM series "AX FSPGR 3D ASSET C+"
...
```



---

## Batch processing with `foreach`

---

Image processing often involves executing the same command on many different subjects or time points within a study. MRtrix includes a bash script called `foreach` to simplify this process. The main benefit of using `foreach` compared to a bash `for` loop is a simpler and less verbose syntax. However other benefits include multi-threaded job execution (to exploit modern multi-core CPUs when the command being run is not already multi-threaded), and automatic identification of path basenames and prefixes. To view the full help page run `foreach` on the command line with no arguments.

### 38.1 Example 1 - using `IN`

Many people like to organise their imaging datasets with one directory per subject. For example:

```
study/001_patient/dwi.mif
study/002_patient/dwi.mif
study/003_patient/dwi.mif
study/004_control/dwi.mif
study/005_control/dwi.mif
study/006_control/dwi.mif
```

The `foreach` script can be used to run the same command on each subject, for example:

```
$ foreach study/* : dwidenoise IN/dwi.mif IN/dwi_denoised.mif
```

The first part of the command above is the `foreach` script name, followed by the pattern matching string (`study/*`) to identify all the files (which in this case are directories) to be looped over. The colon is used to separate the pattern matching from the start of the command. In this example the `dwidenoise` command will be run multiple times, by substituting the keyword `IN` with each of the directories that match the pattern (`study/001_patient`, `study/002_patient`, etc).

## 38.2 Example 2 - using NAME

Other people may prefer to organise their imaging datasets with one folder per image type and have all subjects inside. For example:

```
study/dwi/001_patient.mif
study/dwi/002_patient.mif
study/dwi/003_patient.mif
study/dwi/004_control.mif
study/dwi/005_control.mif
study/dwi/006_control.mif
```

The NAME keyword can be used in this situation to obtain the basename of the file path. For example:

```
$ mkdir study/dwi_denoised
$ foreach study/dwi/* : dwidenoise IN study/dwi_denoised/NAME
```

Here, the IN keyword will be substituted with the full string from the matching pattern (`study/dwi/001_patient.mif`, `study/dwi/002_patient.mif`, etc), however the NAME keyword will be replaced with the *basename* of the matching pattern (`001_patient.mif`, `002_patient.mif`, etc).

Alternatively, the same result can be achieved by running `foreach` from inside the `study/dwi` directory. In this case NAME would not be required. For example:

```
$ mkdir study/dwi_denoised
$ cd study/dwi
$ foreach * : dwidenoise IN ../dwi_denoised/IN
```

## 38.3 Example 3 - using PRE

For this example let us assume we want to convert all `dwi.mif` files from example 2 to NIfTI file format (`*.nii`). This can be performed using:

```
$ foreach study/dwi/* : mrconvert IN study/dwi/PRE.nii
$ rm *.mif
```

There the PRE keyword will be replaced by the file basename, without the file extension.

## 38.4 Example 4 - Sequential Processing

As an example of a single `foreach` command running multiple sequential commands (e.g. with the bash `;`, `|`, `&&`, `||` operators), lets assume in the previous example we wanted to remove the `*.mif` files as they were converted. We could use the `&&` operator, which means “run next command only if current command succeeds without error”.

```
$ foreach study/dwi/* : mrconvert IN study/dwi/PRE.nii "&&" rm IN
```

As shown the `&&` operator must be escaped with quotes to prevent the shell from interpreting it. Bash operator characters can also be escaped with the `“”` character, for example to *pipe an image* between two MRtrix commands (assuming the data set directory layout from example 1):

```
$ foreach study/* : dwiextract -bzero IN/dwi.mif - \| mrmath - mean -axis 3 IN/mean_
↳b0.mif
```

## 38.5 Example 5 - Parallel Processing

To run multiple jobs at once, add the `-N` option before the colon, where `N` is the number of concurrent jobs required. For example:

```
$ foreach -8 study/* : dwidenoise IN/dwi.mif IN/dwi_denoised.mif
```

will run up to 8 of the required jobs in parallel. Note that most MRtrix commands are multi-threaded and will use all available CPU cores, and therefore running multiple jobs in parallel is unlikely to benefit the computation time.



---

## Crashes, errors and performance issues

---

Throughout *MRtrix3* we try to provide users with meaningful error messages if something does not work or sensible default behaviour cannot be determined. However in some cases, feedback to the user can be unavoidably difficult to interpret, or non-existent in cases where performance is poor but a command does not fail outright; this page is a collection of information of such cases.

### 39.1 Compiler error during build

If you encounter an error during the build process that resembles the following:

```
ERROR: (#/#) [CC] tmp/cmd/command.o

/usr/bin/g++-5.0 -c -std=c++11 -pthread -fPIC -I/home/user/mrtrix3/eigen -Wall -O2 -
↳DNDEBUG -Isrc -Icmd -I./lib -Icmd cmd/command.cpp -o release/cmd/command.o

failed with output

g++-4.8: internal compiler error: Killed (program cclplus)
Please submit a full bug report,
with preprocessed source if appropriate.
See for instructions.
```

```
ERROR: ( 9/498) [CC] tmp/src/directory/header.o
g++ -c -std=c++11 -pthread -fPIC -DMRTRIX_WORD64 -DMRTRIX_TIFF_SUPPORT -isystem /usr/
↳include/x86_64-linux-gnu -DEIGEN_FFTW_DEFAULT -Wall -O3 -DNDEBUG -Isrc -I./core -
↳Icmd -isystem /usr/include/eigen3 -DEIGEN_DONT_PARALLELIZE src/directory/header.cpp_
↳-o tmp/src/registration/transform/rigid.o_
failed with output
cclplus: out of memory allocating 4064 bytes after a total of 35667968 bytes
```

This is most typically caused by the compiler running out of RAM. This can be solved either through installing more RAM into your system, or by restricting the number of threads to be used during compilation:

```
$ NUMBER_OF_PROCESSORS=1 ./build
```

## 39.2 Commands crashing due to memory requirements

Some commands in *MRtrix3* have substantial RAM requirements, and can therefore fail even on a relatively modern machine:

- `tcksift` and `tcksift2` must store, for every streamline, a list of every `fixel` traversed, with an associated streamline length through each voxel.
- `fixelcfestats` must store a sparse matrix of fixel-fixel connectivity between fixels in the template image.

In both of these cases, the memory requirements increase in proportion to the number of streamlines (directly proportionally in the case of SIFT/SIFT2, less so in the case of Connectivity-based Fixel Enhancement (CFE)). They also depend on the spatial resolution: If the voxel size is halved, the number of unique fixels traversed by each individual streamline will go up by a factor of around 3, with a corresponding increase in RAM usage in SIFT/SIFT2; but the total number of unique fixels increases by up to 8, and hence the total number of possible fixel-fixel connections goes up by a factor of 64! The RAM usage of CFE therefore increases by a substantial amount as the resolution of the template is increased. Unfortunately in both of these cases it is theoretically impossible to reduce the RAM requirements in software any further than has already been done; the information stored is fundamental to the operation of these algorithms.

In both cases, the memory usage can be reduced somewhat by reducing the number of streamlines; this can however be detrimental to the quality of the analysis. Possibly a better solution is to reduce the spatial resolution of the underlying image, reducing the RAM usage without having too much influence on the outcomes of such algorithms.

For SIFT/SIFT2, the subject FOD image can be down-sampled using e.g.:

```
$ mrresize in.mif out.mif -scale 0.5
```

Note that it is not necessary to use this down-sampled image for tractography, nor for any other processing; it is simply used for SIFT/SIFT2 to reduce memory usage. Additionally, by performing this down-sampling using *MRtrix3* rather than some other software, it will ensure that the down-sampled image is still properly aligned with the full-resolution image in scanner space, regardless of the image header transformation.

For CFE, it is the resolution of the *population template image* that affects the memory usage; however using higher-resolution images for registration when *generating* that population template may still be beneficial. Therefore we advocate downsampling the population template image after its generation, and otherwise proceed with Fixel-Based Analysis (FBA) using this down-sampled template image.

## 39.3 Scripts crashing due to storage requirements

The Python scripts provided with *MRtrix* generate their own temporary directory in which to store various data files and image manipulations generated during their operation. In some cases - typically due to use of a temporary RAM-based file system with limited size, and/or a failure to clean up old temporary files - the location where this temporary directory is created may run out of storage space, resulting in the script crashing out.

A few pointers for anybody who encounters this issue:

- When these scripts fail to complete due to an error, they will typically *not* erase the temporary directory, instead allowing the user to investigate the contents of that directory to see what went wrong, potentially fixing any issues and continuing the script from that point. While this behaviour may be useful in this context by retaining the progress the script had made thus far, it also means that these very scripts may be contributing to filling up

your storage and thus creating further issues! We recommend that users manually delete such directories as soon as they are no longer required.

- The location where the temporary directory is created for the script will influence the amount of storage space available. For instance, the location `/tmp/` is frequently created as a temporary RAM-based file system, such that the script's temporary files are never actually written to disk and are therefore read & written very quickly; it is however also likely to have a smaller capacity than a physical hard drive.

This location can be set manually in two different ways:

- In the `MRtrix_Configuration_file`, key “ScriptTmpDir” can be used to set the location where such temporary directories will be created by default.
- When executing the script, command-line option `-tmpdir` can be used to set the location of the temporary directory for that particular script execution.

In the absence of either of these settings, `MRtrix3` will now create this temporary directory in the *working directory* (i.e. the location the terminal was navigated to when the script was called), in the hope that it will reduce the prevalence of users encountering this issue. This may however cause issues if working across a network, or using a job scheduler.

- The storage requirements can vary considerably between different scripts. For instance, `dwibiascorrect` only needs to generate a couple of temporary images per execution; whereas `population_template` must store non-linear warp fields across many subjects. This may explain why one script crashed when other scripts have completed successfully.

## 39.4 Hanging on network file system when writing images

When any `MRtrix3` command must read or write image data, there are two primary mechanisms by which this is performed:

1. **Memory mapping:** The operating system provides access to the contents of the file as though it were simply a block of data in memory, without needing to explicitly load all of the image data into RAM.
2. **Preload / delayed write-back:** When opening an existing image, the entire image contents are loaded into a block of RAM. If an image is modified, or a new image created, this occurs entirely within RAM, with the image contents written to disk storage only at completion of the command.

This design ensures that loading images for processing is as fast as possible and does not incur unnecessary RAM requirements, and writing files to disk is as efficient as possible as all data is written as a single contiguous block.

Memory mapping will be used wherever possible. However one circumstance where this should *not* be used is when *write access* is required for the target file, and it is stored on a *network file system*: in this case, the command typically slows to a crawl (e.g. progressbar stays at 0% indefinitely), as the memory-mapping implementation repeatedly performs small data writes and attempts to keep the entire image data synchronised.

`MRtrix3` will now *test* the type of file system that a target image is stored on; and if it is a network-based system, it will *not* use memory-mapping for images that may be written to. *However*, if you experience the aforementioned slowdown in such a circumstance, it is possible that the particular configuration you are using is not being correctly detected or identified. If you are unfortunate enough to encounter this issue, please report to the developers the hardware configuration and file system type in use.

## 39.5 Linux: very slow performance when writing large images

This might be due to the Linux Disk Caching or the kernel's handling of *dirty pages*.

On Ubuntu, you can get your current dirty page handling settings with `sysctl -a | grep dirty`. Those settings can be modified in `/etc/sysctl.conf` by adding the following two lines to `/etc/sysctl.conf`:

```
vm.dirty_background_ratio = 60
vm.dirty_ratio = 80
```

`vm.dirty_background_ratio` is a percentage fraction of your RAM and should be larger than the image to be written. After changing `/etc/sysctl.conf`, execute `sysctl -p` to configure the new kernel parameters at runtime. Depending on your system, these changes might not be persistent after reboot.

## 39.6 `mrview` unable to open images: “Too many open files”

It is possible to encounter this error message particularly if trying to open a large number of DICOM images. In most cases, each slice in a DICOM series is stored in an individual file; all of these files must remain open while the image is loaded. In addition, the maximum number of files open at any time (imposed by the kernel, *not MRtrix3*) may be relatively small (e.g. 256), such that very few subjects can be opened at once.

There are two ways to solve this issue:

- *Reduce the number of files opened concurrently:* By converting each series of interest to an alternative format (e.g. *MRtrix image formats (.mih / .mif)*) before opening them in `mrview`, the total number of files open at once will be drastically reduced.
- *Increase the limit on number of files opened:* If directly opening DICOM images without first converting them is more convenient, then it is possible to instead increase the kernel’s upper limit on the number of files that can remain open at once. The specific details on how this is done may vary between different OS’s / distributions, but here are a couple of suggestions to try:

- The current limit should be reported by:

```
ulimit -n
```

- Try running the following (potentially with the use of `sudo`):

```
sysctl -w fs.file-max=100000
```

If this solves the issue, the change can be made permanent by editing file `/etc/sysctl.conf`, adding the following line (replacing `<number>` with your desired upper limit):

```
fs.file-max = <number>
```

On MacOSX, you may instead need to look at the `kern.maxfiles` and `kern.maxfilesperproc` parameters.

- Set the new upper limit using `ulimit` (you can try using a number instead of “unlimited” if you choose to):

```
ulimit -n unlimited
```

If this works, you will need to add that line to a file such as `~/ .bashrc` in order for the change to be applied permanently.

### 40.1 Remote display issues

The GUI components in *MRtrix3* (`mrview` & `shview`) use the OpenGL 3.3 API to make full use of modern graphics cards. Unfortunately, X11 forwarding is not supported for OpenGL  $\geq 3$ . There are a number of reasons for this:

- OpenGL 1 & 2 used the [OpenGL fixed function pipeline](#) (now deprecated), whereas OpenGL  $\geq 3$  relies much more explicitly on [shaders](#) and [buffer objects](#). Amongst other things, the use of buffer objects implies that potentially very large amounts of data be downloaded onto the GPU. In a X11 forwarding context, this would mean transferring these data over the network, which would probably end up being prohibitively slow in a sufficient number of situations that including support for it into the [GLX](#) was not thought to be worth the effort.
- X11 is unbelievably outdated, even according to the [X.org](#) developers themselves (as very clearly explained in this [linux.conf.au talk](#)). Current development efforts are going into its replacement, [Wayland](#), which will start replacing X11 in earnest over the next few years (it's already available and usable on the latest distributions). Thankfully, remote display capability is planned for Wayland, and [support for it has already been added](#).

So it is not possible to use `mrview` or `shview` over a standard remote X11 connection.

#### 40.1.1 Why does *MRtrix3* use OpenGL 3.3 if it come with such limitations?

Because it's clearly the most future-proof option. The [older OpenGL versions are deprecated](#), and not recommended for modern applications. The OpenGL 3.3 API is much closer to the way modern graphics hardware works, and can therefore provide better performance. Finally, as explained above, X11 will eventually be phased out anyway. . .

#### 40.1.2 What can be done about this?

There are a number of options available to deal with this, each with their own idiosyncraties. The simplest is to render locally (option 1), the other options require a fair bit of setting up on the server, and potentially also on the clients.

## 1. Use MRView locally

This is the simplest option, and allows the use of the local graphics hardware (much like X11 forwarding would have). To use this relatively seamlessly, the simplest option is to access the remote data using a network filesystem, such as [SSHFS](#), [SMB](#) or [NFS](#), and run `mrview` locally, loading the data from the network share. While this may seem inefficient, bear in mind that *MRtrix3* will typically only load the data it needs to, so operation will probably not be slower than it would have been with the *MRtrix* 0.2.x version. Besides, the largest data files are likely to be track files (which will need to be loaded in their entirety); in the *MRtrix* 0.2.x version these needed to be streamed in whole over the network *for every screen update*.

Of the networked filesystems listed above, the simplest to use would probably be [SSHFS](#), since it shouldn't require any additional setup on the server (assuming users already have an SSH account), and is readily available on all platforms (using [Win-SSHFS](#) on Windows, [OSXFuse](#) on MacOSX).

## 2. Use an OpenGL-capable VNC server

Using the [VNC protocol](#), the server is responsible for doing all the rendering remotely, and sends the resulting screen updates over the network. With this approach, users are presented with a full-blown desktop environment running on the server. This may consume too many resources on the remote server, depending on the desktop environment used. Also, since rendering is performed on the remote server, it needs to be equipped with an OpenGL 3.3 capable graphics stack - this means decent hardware *and* an up to date driver. However, it has the advantage of being widely supported and readily available on all platforms, with many implementations available. The only tricky part here is ensuring the VNC server is OpenGL-capable. As far as I can tell, `x11vnc` can be used for this.

## 3. Use VirtualGL to allow OpenGL forwarding within X11

The [VirtualGL project](#) offers a means of rendering OpenGL graphics on the remote server, and sending the updated contents of the OpenGL window to the local display, alongside the normal X11 connection. This provides a means of running `mrview` in a potentially more familiar X11 over SSH session. As with the VNC solution, rendering needs to be performed on the remote server, meaning it needs to be equipped with an OpenGL 3.3 capable graphics stack - this means decent hardware *and* an up to date driver. Also, it requires the installation of additional software on the local system. Finally, for this to work, all OpenGL commands need to be prefixed with `vglrun` (not particularly problematic as this can be scripted or aliased). This has been reported to work well with *MRtrix3*.

## 40.2 OpenGL version 3.3 not supported

This will typically lead to `mrview` crashing with a message such as:

```
mrview: [ERROR] GLSL log [vertex shader]: ERROR: version '330' is not supported
```

There are three main reasons for this:

1. **Attempting to run MRView using X11 forwarding.** This will not work without some effort, see [Remote display issues](#) for details.
2. **Your installation genuinely does not support OpenGL 3.3.** In this case, the solution will involve figuring out:
  - whether your graphics hardware can support OpenGL 3.3 at all;
  - whether your Linux distribution provides any drivers for your graphics hardware that can support OpenGL 3.3;
  - if not, whether the manufacturer of your graphics hardware provides drivers for Linux that can be installed on your distribution;

- how to install these drivers - a process that is invariably distribution-specific, and beyond the scope of this document. If you're having serious issues with this, you should consider asking on the [MRtrix3 community forum](#), you will often find others have come across similar issues and can provide useful advice. If you do, make sure you provide as much information as you can (at the very least, your exact distribution, including which version of it, the exact model of your graphics hardware, and what you've tried so far).
3. **Your installation does support OpenGL 3.3, but only provides access to the 3.3 functionality through the `_compatibility_` profile, not through the (default) core profile.** To see whether this is the problem, you only need to add the line:

```
NeedOpenGLCoreProfile: 0
```

to your [MRtrix configuration file](#) (typically, `~/.mrtrix.conf`). If it doesn't work, you're probably stuck with reason 2.

### 40.3 MRView runs with visual artefacts or no display

If you find that MRView displays with visual glitches or a blank screen, particularly in volume render mode, and on ATI/AMD hardware, you may find that setting:

```
NeedOpenGLCoreProfile: 0
```

may resolve the problem.

### 40.4 Conflicts with previous versions of Qt

If previous versions of Qt were already installed on the system, they can sometimes conflict with the installation of *MRtrix3*. This can manifest in many ways, but the two most obvious one are:

- `./configure` reports using the older version, but `./build` completes without errors. However, MRView crashes, complaining about OpenGL version not being sufficient.
- `./configure` reports the correct version of Qt, but `./build` fails with various error messages (typically related to redefined macros, with previous definitions elsewhere in the code).

### 40.5 Unusual symbols on terminal

When running *MRtrix3* commands on certain terminal emulators, you may see unusual characters appearing in the terminal output, that look something like the following:

```
$ mrinfo fa.mif -debug
mrinfo: ←[00;32m[INFO] opening image "fa.mif"...←[0m
mrinfo: ←[00;34m[DEBUG] reading key/value file "fa.mif"...←[0m
mrinfo: ←[01;31m[ERROR] failed to open key/value file "fa.mif": No such file or_
↵directory←[0m
```

*MRtrix3* uses VT100 terminal control codes to add colour to the terminal output, and to clear the terminal line of text when updating the text displayed during certain processes. Some terminal emulators may not have support for these codes, in which case unwanted characters and symbols may instead be displayed.

There are two possible solutions:

1. Use a different terminal emulator. In particular, earlier instructions for installing *MRtrix3* on Windows involved the use of the terminal provided with Git for Windows; this is known to not support VT100 codes. The current recommendation for *\*MRtrix3\* Windows installation* is based on *MSYS2*; the **‘MinGW-w64 Win64 Shell’** provided in this installation is known to support VT100 codes.

2. Terminal colouring can be disabled using the MRtrix [configuration file](#). Add the following line to either the system-wide or user config file to disable these advanced terminal features:

```
TerminalColor: 0
```

---

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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This page contains a collection of topics that are frequently raised in discussions and on the [community forum](#). If you are seeking an answer to a question that specifically relates to *MRtrix3* performance issues or crashes, please check the [relevant documentation page](#).

### 41.1 Processing of HCP data

We expect that a number of users will be wanting to use *MRtrix3* for the analysis of data from the Human Connectome Project (HCP). These data do however present some interesting challenges from a processing perspective. Here I will try to list a few ideas, as well as issues that do not yet have a robust solution; I hope that any users out there with experience with these data will also be able to contribute with ideas or suggestions.

#### 41.1.1 Do my tracking parameters need to be changed for HCP data?

Probably. For instance, the default parameters for length criteria are currently set based on the voxel size rather than absolute values (so e.g. animal data will still get sensible defaults). With such high resolution data, these may not be appropriate. The default maximum length is 100 times the voxel size, or only 125mm at 1.25mm isotropic; this would preclude reconstruction of a number of long-range pathways in the brain, so should be overridden with something more sensible. The minimum length is more difficult, but in the absence of a better argument I'd probably stick with the default (5 x voxel size, or 2 x voxel size if ACT is used).

Also, the default step size for iFOD2 is 0.5 times the voxel size; this will make the track files slightly larger than normal, and will also make the tracks slightly more jittery, but actually disperse slightly less over distance, than standard resolution data. People are free to experiment with the relevant tracking parameters, but we don't yet have an answer for how these things should ideally behave.

#### 41.1.2 Is it possible to use data from all shells in CSD?

The default CSD algorithm provided in the *dwi2fod* command is only compatible with a single b-value shell, and will by default select the shell with the largest b-value for processing.

The [Multi-Shell Multi-Tissue \(MSMT\) CSD](#) method has now been incorporated into *MRtrix3*, and is provided as part of the *dwi2fod* command. There are also instructions for its use provided in the [documentation](#).

### 41.1.3 The image data include information on gradient non-linearities. Can I make use of this?

Again, unfortunately not yet. Making CSD compatible with such data is more difficult than other diffusion models, due to the canonical response function assumption. To me, there are two possible ways that this could be handled:

- Use the acquired diffusion data to interpolate / extrapolate predicted data on a fixed b-value shell.
- Generate a representation of the response function that can be interpolated / extrapolated as a function of b-value, and therefore choose an appropriate response function per voxel.

Work is underway to solve these issues, but there's nothing available yet. For those wanting to pursue their own solution, bear in mind that the gradient non-linearities will affect both the effective b-value *and* the effective diffusion sensitisation directions in each voxel. Otherwise, the FODs look entirely reasonable without these corrections...

### 41.1.4 The anatomical tissue segmentation for ACT from 5ttgen `fs1` seems even worse than for 'normal' data...?

The combination of high spatial resolution and high receiver coil density results in a pretty high noise level in the middle of the brain. This in turn can trick an intensity-based segmentation like FSL's FAST into mislabeling things; it just doesn't have the prior information necessary to disentangle what's in there. I haven't looked into this in great detail, but I would very much like to hear if users have discovered more optimal parameters for FAST, or alternative segmentation software, for which they have been impressed by the results.

## 41.2 Generating Track-weighted Functional Connectivity (TW-FC) maps

This example demonstrates how these maps were derived, *precisely* as performed in the [relevant NeuroImage paper](#). Assumes that you have a whole-brain tractogram named `tracks.tck`, and a 3D volume named `FC_map.mif` representing an extracted FC map with appropriate thresholding.

Initial TWI generation:

```
$ tckmap tracks.tck temp.mif <-template / -vox options> -contrast scalar_map -image_
↪FC_map.mif -stat_vox mean -stat_tck sum
```

Deriving the mask (voxels with at least 5 streamlines with non-zero TW values):

```
$ tckmap tracks.tck - -template temp.mif -contrast scalar_map_count -image FC_map.mif_
↪| mrcalc - 5 -ge mask.mif -datatype bit
```

Apply the mask:

```
$ mrcalc temp.mif mask.mif -mult TWFC.mif
```

## 41.3 Handling SIFT2 weights

With the original `tcksift` command, the output is a *new track file*, which can subsequently be used as input to any command independently of the fact that SIFT has been applied. SIFT2 is a little trickier: the output of the `tcksift2` command is a *text file*. This text file contains one line for every streamline, and each line contains a number; these are the weights of the individual streamlines. Importantly, the track file that was used as input to the `tcksift2` command is *unaffected* by the execution of that command.

There are therefore two important questions to arise from this:

### 41.3.1 How do I use the output from SIFT2?

Any `MRtrix3` command that receives a track file as input will also have a command-line option, `-tck_weights_in`. This option is used to pass the weights text file to the command. If this option is omitted, then processing will proceed as normal for the input track file, but without taking the weights into consideration.

### 41.3.2 Why not just add the weight information to the track data?

The `.tck` file format was developed quite a long time ago, and doesn't have the capability of storing such data. Therefore, combining per-streamline weighting data with the track data itself would require either modifying this format (which would break compatibility with MRtrix 0.2, and any other non-MRtrix code that uses this format), using some other existing format for track data (which, given our experiences with image formats, can be ill-devised), or creating a new format (which would need to support a lot more than just per-streamline weights in order to justify the effort, and would likely become a fairly lengthy endeavour).

Furthermore, writing to such a format would require duplicating all of the raw track data from the input file into a new output file. This is expensive in terms of time and HDD space; the original file could be deleted afterwards, but it would then be difficult to perform any operations on the track data where the streamline weight information should be ignored (sure, you could have a command-line option to ignore the weights, but is that any better than having a command-line option to input the weights?)

So, for now, it is best to think of the weights file provided by `tcksift2` as *accompanying* the track file, containing additional data that must be *explicitly* provided to any commands in order to be used. The track file can also be used *without* taking into account the streamline weights, simply by *not* providing the weights.

## 41.4 Making use of Python scripts library

In addition to the principal binary commands, `MRtrix3` also includes a number of Python scripts for performing common image processing tasks. These make use of a relatively simple set of library functions that provide a certain level of convenience and consistency for building such scripts (e.g. common format help page; command-line parsing; creation, use and deletion of temporary working directory; control over command-line verbosity).

It is hoped that in addition to growing in complexity and capability over time, this library may also be of assistance to users when building their own processing scripts, rather than the use of e.g. Bash. The same syntax as that used in the provided scripts can be used. If however the user wishes to run a script that is based on this library, but is *not* located within the `MRtrix3 scripts/` directory, it is necessary to explicitly inform Python of the location of those libraries; e.g.:

```
$ export PYTHONPATH=/home/user/mrtrix3/lib:$PYTHONPATH
$ ./my_script [arguments] (options)
```

(Replace the path to the `MRtrix3` "lib" directory with the location of your own installation)

## 41.5 tck2connectome no longer has the `-contrast x` option...?

The functionalities previously provided by the `-contrast` option in this command can still be achieved, but through more explicit steps:

### 41.5.1 tck2connectome `-contrast mean_scalar`

```
$ tcksample tracks.tck scalar.mif mean_scalars.csv -stat_tck mean
$ tck2connectome tracks.tck nodes.mif connectome.csv -scale_file mean_scalars.csv -
↳stat_edge mean
```

The first step samples the image `scalar.mif` along each streamline, calculates the *mean sampled value along each streamline*, and stores these values into file `mean_scalars.csv` (one value for every streamline). The second step then assigns the value associated with each streamline during connectome construction to be the values from this file, and finally calculates the value of each edge to be the *mean of the values for the streamlines in that edge*.

### 41.5.2 tck2connectome `-contrast meanlength`

```
$ tck2connectome tracks.tck nodes.mif connectome.csv -scale_length -stat_edge mean
```

For each streamline, the contribution of that streamline to the relevant edge is *scaled by the length* of that streamline; so, in the absence of any other scaling, the contribution of that streamline will be equal to the length of the streamline in mm. Finally, for each edge, take the *mean* of the values contributed from all streamlines belonging to that edge.

### 41.5.3 tck2connectome `-contrast invlength_invnodevolume`

```
$ tck2connectome tracks.tck nodes.mif connectome.csv -scale_invlength -scale_
↳invnodevol
```

Rather than acting as a single ‘contrast’, scaling the contribution of each streamline to the connectome by *both* the inverse of the streamline length *and* the inverse of the sum of node volumes is now handled using two separate command-line options. The behaviour is however identical to the old usage.

## 41.6 Visualising streamlines terminations

I am frequently asked about Figures 5-7 in the [Anatomically-Constrained Tractography](#) article, which demonstrate the effects that the ACT method has on the locations of streamlines terminations. There are two different techniques used in these figures, which I’ll explain here in full.

- Figure 6 shows *streamlines termination density maps*: these are 3D maps where the intensity in each voxel reflects the number of streamlines terminations within that voxel. So they’re a bit like Track Density Images (TDIs), except that it’s only the streamlines termination points that contribute to the map, rather than the entire streamline. The easiest way to achieve this approach is with the `tckmap` command, using the `-ends_only` option.
- Figures 5 and 7 display large dots at the streamline endpoints lying within the displayed slab, in conjunction with the streamlines themselves and a background image. This can be achieved as follows:
  - Use the `tckresample` command with the `-endpoints` option to generate a new track file that contains only the two endpoints of each streamline.

- Load this track file into `mrview`.
- Within the `mrview` tractography tool, for the “Geometry” option, select “Points”.

This will display each streamline point as a dot, rather than drawing lines between each streamline point. Since this track file contains only two points per streamline, corresponding to the streamline endpoints, this means that a dot is drawn at each streamline endpoint.

In Figure 7, each streamline endpoint is coloured red. Figure 5 is slightly trickier, and requires some image editing trickery:

- Display *only* the streamline endpoints track file.
- Colour each “track” according to direction (this will colour each point according to the “direction” between the two endpoints).
- Adjust the brightness / contrast of the background image so that it is completely black, and disable all other tools/geometry (so that only the termination points are visible).
- Take a screenshot.
- Disable the streamline endpoints track file within the tractography tool, set up whatever background image / tracks you wish to combine within your image, and take another screenshot. Make sure to not move the view focus or resize the `mrview` window, so that the two screenshots will overlay directly on top of one another.
- Open the two screenshots using image editing software such as GIMP.
- In Figure 5, a trick I used was to take the endpoint termination screenshot, and *rotate the hue* by 180 degrees: this provides a pseudo-random coloring of the termination points that contrasts well against the surrounding tracks.
- Within the image editing software, make the termination point screenshot *transparent* where the termination points are not drawn, and then overlay it with the second screenshot (in GIMP, you can use “Copy” -> “Paste as new layer”).

## 41.7 Unusual result following use of `tcknormalise`

Sometimes, following the use of the `tcknormalise` command, an unusual effect may be observed where although the bulk of the streamlines may be aligned correctly with the target volume / space, a subset of streamlines appear to converge very ‘sharply’ toward a particular point in space.

This is caused by the presence of zero-filling in the non-linear warp field image. In some softwares, voxels for which a proper non-linear transformation cannot be determined between the two images will be filled with zero values. However, `tcknormalise` will interpret these values as representing an intended warp for the streamlines, such that streamline points within those voxels will be spatially transformed to the point  $[0, 0, 0]$  in space - this results in the convergence of many streamlines toward the singularity point.

The solution is to use the `warpcorrect` command, which identifies voxels that contain the warp  $[0, 0, 0]$  and replaces them with  $[\text{NaN}, \text{NaN}, \text{NaN}]$  (“NaN” = “Not a Number”). This causes `tcknormalise` to `_discard_` those streamline points; consistently with the results of registration, where appropriate non-linear transformation of these points could not be determined.

## 41.8 Encountering errors using `5ttgen fs1`

The following error messages have frequently been observed from the `5ttgen fs1` script:

```
FSL FIRST has failed; not all structures were segmented successfully
Waiting for creation of new file "first-L_Accu_first.vtk"
FSL FIRST job has been submitted to SGE; awaiting completion
  (note however that FIRST may fail silently, and hence this script may hang,
↳ indefinitely)
```

Error messages that may be found in the log files within the script's temporary directory include:

```
Cannot open volume first-L_Accu_corr for reading!
Image Exception : #22 :: ERROR: Could not open image first_all_none_firstseg
WARNING: NO INTERIOR VOXELS TO ESTIMATE MODE
vector::_M_range_check
terminate called after throwing an instance of 'RBD_COMMON::BaseException'
/bin/sh: line 1: 6404 Aborted /usr/local/packages/fsl-5.0.1/bin/
↳ fslmerge -t first_all_none_firstseg first-L_Accu_corr first-R_Accu_corr first-L_
↳ Caud_corr first-R_Caud_corr first-L_Pall_corr first-R_Pall_corr first-L_Puta_corr,
↳ first-R_Puta_corr first-L_Thal_corr first-R_Thal_corr
```

These various messages all relate to the fact that this script makes use of FSL's FIRST tool to explicitly segment sub-cortical grey matter structures, but this segmentation process is not successful in all circumstances. Moreover, there are particular details with regards to the implementation of the FIRST tool that make it awkward for the *5ttgen fsl* script to invoke this tool and appropriately detect whether or not the segmentation was successful.

It appears as though a primary source of this issue is the use of FSL's *flirt* tool to register the T1 image to the DWIs before running *5ttgen fsl*. While this is consistent with the recommendation in the *Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT)* documentation, there is an unintended consequence of performing this registration step specifically with the *flirt* tool prior to *5ttgen fsl*. With default usage, *flirt* will not only *\_register\_* the T1 image to the DWIs, but also *\_resample\_* the T1 to the voxel grid of the DWIs, greatly reducing its spatial resolution. This may have a concomitant effect during the sub-cortical segmentation by FIRST: The voxel grid is so coarse that it is impossible to find any voxels that are entirely encapsulated by the surface corresponding to the segmented structure, resulting in an error within the FIRST script.

If this is the case, it is highly recommended that the T1 image *not* be resampled to the DWI voxel grid following registration; not only for the issue mentioned above, but also because ACT is explicitly designed to take full advantage of the higher spatial resolution of the T1 image. If *flirt* is still to be used for registration, the solution is to instruct *flirt* to provide a *transformation matrix*, rather than a translated & resampled image:

```
$ flirt -in T1.nii -ref DWI.nii -omat T12DWI_flirt.mat -dof 6
```

That transformation matrix should then applied to the T1 image in a manner that only influences the transformation stored within the image header, and does *not* resample the image to a new voxel grid:

```
$ transformconvert T12DWI_flirt.mat T1.nii DWI.nii flirt_import T12DWI_mrtrix.txt
$ mrtransform T1.nii T1_registered.mif -linear T12DWI_mrtrix.txt
```

If the T1 image provided to *5ttgen fsl* has *\_not\_* been erroneously down-sampled, but issues are still encountered with the FIRST step, another possible solution is to first obtain an accurate brain extraction, and then run *5ttgen fsl* using the *--premasked* option. This results in the registration step of FIRST being performed based on a brain-extracted template image, which in some cases may make the process more robust.

For any further issues, the only remaining recommendations are:

- Investigate the temporary files that are generated within the script's temporary directory, particularly the FIRST log files, and search for any indication of the cause of failure.
- Try running the FSL *run\_first\_all* script directly on your original T1 image. If this works, then further investigation could be used to determine precisely which images can be successfully segmented and which

cannot. If it does not, then it may be necessary to experiment with the command-line options available in the `run_first_all` script.

## 41.9 How do I use atlas / parcellation “X”?

Whether dealing with individual subject data, or a population-specific template, it can be desirable to obtain spatial correspondence between your own data and some other atlas image. This includes taking a parcellation that is defined in the space of that atlas and transforming it onto the subject / template image.

Our recommended steps for achieving this are:

1. Perform registration from image of interest to target atlas
  - Since this registration is not always intra-modal, and image intensities may vary significantly, here we recommend using FSL `flirt`.
  - 12 degrees of freedom affine registration is performed to account for gross differences in brain shape.
  - `flirt` must be explicitly instructed to provide a transformation *matrix*, rather than a transformed & re-gridded image.

```
flirt -in my_image.mif -ref target_atlas.mif -omat image2atlas_flirt.mat -dof 12
```

2. Convert the transformation matrix estimated by `flirt` into *MRtrix3* convention

```
transformconvert image2atlas_flirt.mat my_image.mif target_atlas.mif flirt_import_
↪image2atlas_mrtrix.txt
```

3. Invert the transformation matrix to obtain the transformation from atlas space to your image

```
transformcalc image2atlas_mrtrix.txt invert atlas2image_mrtrix.txt
```

4. Apply this transformation to the parcellation image associated with the atlas
  - Due to the use of a full affine registration (12 degrees of freedom) rather than a rigid-body registration (6 degrees of freedom), it is preferable to re-sample the parcellation image to the target image voxel grid, rather than altering the image header transformation only.
  - When re-sampling a parcellation image to a different image grid, nearest-neighbour interpolation must be used; otherwise the underlying integer values that correspond to parcel identification indices will be lost.

```
mrtransform target_parcellation.mif -linear atlas2image_mrtrix.txt -template my_
↪image.mif parcellation_in_my_image_space.mif
```

## 41.10 Transformation issues with the NIfTI image format

In the *NIfTI* & *NIfTI-2* (*.nii*) image format, there is not one, but `_two_` items stored in the image header that provide information regarding the localisation of the image within physical space (the image `:ref:<transform>`):

- The “`qform`” entry is intended to specify a `_rigid_` transformation from voxel coordinates into a spatial location corresponding to the subject’s position within the scanner.
- The “`sform`” entry is intended to specify an `_affine_` transformation from voxel coordinates into a spatial location within the space of some template image.

While the storage of both of these fields was *well-intentioned*, the practical reality is that there is no robust way for any software to know which of the two transforms should be used. Furthermore, while software developers will typically ensure that the handling of these fields is internally consistent within their own software, this handling can differ *between* packages, causing problems for those who utilise tools from multiple sources.

The handling of this information in `_MRtrix3_` is as follows:

- When `_reading_ NIfTI` images:
  - If `_only_ _one_` of these transformations is present and valid in the image header (as indicated by the `“sform_code”` and `“qform_code”` flags within the NIfTI image header), then the valid transformation will be used.
  - If `_both_ sform_code` and `qform_code` are set, then `_MRtrix3_` will `_compare_` these two transformations. If they are identical, then `_MRtrix3_` can proceed using either data without ambiguity. If they differ, then `_MRtrix3_` will issue a `_warning_`, and by default will use the **“qform”** data as the image transform. This is congruent with `_MRtrix3_` using the convention of storing data and performing processing within the “real” / “scanner” space of the individual subject.
- When `_writing_ NIfTI` images, `_MRtrix3_` will:
  - Write the `_same_ _transformation_` to both the `qform` and `sform` fields, based on `_MRtrix3_'s` internal representation of the header transformation for that particular image. This provides the least ambiguity, and ensures maximal compatibility with other software tools.
  - Set both `sform_code` and `qform_code` to 1, indicating that they both provide transformations to scanner-based anatomical coordinates.

---

## Advanced debugging

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On rare occasions, a user may encounter a critical error (e.g. “Segmentation fault”) within an *MRtrix3* command that does not give sufficient information to identify the cause of the problem, and that the developers are unable to reproduce. In these cases, we will often ask to be provided with example data that can consistently reproduce the problem in order to localise the issue. An alternative is for the user to perform an initial debugging experiment, and provide us with the resulting information. The instructions for doing so are below.

1. If required, install `gdb`; the [GNU Debugging Tool](#) (specific instructions for this installation will depend on your operating system). If using macOS, the equivalent debugging tool is `lldb`, which comes with the installation of Xcode.
2. *Make sure* you are using the most up-to-date *MRtrix3* code! (`git pull`)
3. Configure and compile *MRtrix3* in debug mode:

```
./build select debug
./configure -debug -assert
./build bin/command
```

(replace “command” with the name of the command you wish to compile).

Note that this process will move your existing *MRtrix3* compilation into a temporary directory. This means that your compiled binaries will no longer be in your `PATH`; but it also means that later we can restore them quickly without re-compiling all of *MRtrix3*. In addition, we only compile the command that we need to test (replace “command” with the name of the command you are testing).

4. Execute the problematic command within `gdb`:

```
gdb --args bin/command (arguments) (-options) -debug
```

or `lldb` on macOS:

```
lldb -- bin/command (arguments) (-options) -debug
```

(replace “command” with the name of the command you wish to run).

The preceding `gdb --args` or `lldb --` at the beginning of the line is simply the easiest way to execute the command within `gdb` or `lldb`. Include all of the file paths, options etc. that you used previously when the problem occurred. It is also recommended to use the `MRtrix3 -debug` option so that `MRtrix3` produces more verbose information at the command-line.

5. If running on Windows, once `gdb` has loaded, type the following into the terminal:

```
b abort
b exit
```

These ‘breakpoints’ must be set explicitly in order to prevent the command from being terminated completely on an error, which would otherwise preclude debugging once an error is actually encountered.

6. At the `gdb` or `lldb` terminal, type `r` and hit ENTER to run the command.
7. If an error is encountered, `gdb` or `lldb` will print an error, and then provide a terminal with (`gdb`) or (`lldb`) shown on the left hand side. Type `bt` and hit ENTER: This stands for ‘backtrace’, and will print details on the internal code that was running when the problem occurred.
8. Copy all of the raw text, from the command you ran in instruction 3 all the way down to the bottom of the backtrace details, and send it to us. The best place for these kind of reports is to make a new issue in the [Issues](#) tracker for the GitHub repository.
9. If `gdb` or `lldb` does not report any error, it is possible that a memory error is occurring, but even the debug version of the software is not performing the necessary checks to detect it. If this is the case, you can also try using [Valgrind](#), which will perform a more exhaustive check for memory faults (and correspondingly, the command will run exceptionally slowly):

```
valgrind bin/command (arguments) (-options)
```

(replace “command” with the name of the command you wish to run).

10. When you have finished debugging, restore your default `MRtrix3` compilation:

```
./build select default
```

Binaries compiled in debug mode run considerably slower than those compiled using the default settings (even if not running within `gdb` or `lldb`), due to the inclusion of various symbols that assist in debugging and the removal of various optimisations. Therefore it’s best to restore the default configuration for your ongoing use.

We greatly appreciate any contribution that the community can make toward making `MRtrix3` as robust as possible, so please don’t hesitate to report any issues you encounter.

## 43.1 5tt2gmwmi

### 43.1.1 Synopsis

Generate a mask image appropriate for seeding streamlines on the grey matter-white matter interface

### 43.1.2 Usage

```
5tt2gmwmi [ options ] 5tt_in mask_out
```

- *5tt\_in*: the input 5TT segmented anatomical image
- *mask\_out*: the output mask image

### 43.1.3 Options

- **-mask\_in image** Filter an input mask image according to those voxels that lie upon the grey matter - white matter boundary. If no input mask is provided, the output will be a whole-brain mask image calculated using the anatomical image only.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.

- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Anatomically-constrained tractography: Improved diffusion MRI streamlines tractography through effective use of anatomical information. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 62, 1924-1938

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## 43.2 5tt2vis

### 43.2.1 Synopsis

Generate an image for visualisation purposes from an ACT 5TT segmented anatomical image

### 43.2.2 Usage

```
5tt2vis [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input 4D tissue-segmented image
- *output*: the output 3D image for visualisation

### 43.2.3 Options

- **-bg value** image intensity of background (default: 0)
- **-cgm value** image intensity of cortical grey matter (default: 0.5)
- **-sgm value** image intensity of sub-cortical grey matter (default: 0.75)
- **-wm value** image intensity of white matter (default: 1)
- **-csf value** image intensity of CSF (default: 0.15)
- **-path value** image intensity of pathological tissue (default: 2)

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.3 5ttcheck

### 43.3.1 Synopsis

Thoroughly check that one or more images conform to the expected ACT five-tissue-type (5TT) format

### 43.3.2 Usage

```
5ttcheck [ options ] input [ input ... ]
```

- *input*: the 5TT image(s) to be tested

### 43.3.3 Options

- **-masks prefix** output mask images highlighting voxels where the input does not conform to 5TT requirements

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.

- **-debug** display debugging messages.
  - **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
  - **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.4 5ttedit

### 43.4.1 Synopsis

Manually set the partial volume fractions in an ACT five-tissue-type (5TT) image using mask images

### 43.4.2 Usage

```
5ttedit [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the 5TT image to be modified
- *output*: the output modified 5TT image

### 43.4.3 Options

- **-cgm image** provide a mask of voxels that should be set to cortical grey matter
- **-sgm image** provide a mask of voxels that should be set to sub-cortical grey matter
- **-wm image** provide a mask of voxels that should be set to white matter
- **-csf image** provide a mask of voxels that should be set to CSF
- **-path image** provide a mask of voxels that should be set to pathological tissue
- **-none image** provide a mask of voxels that should be cleared (i.e. are non-brain); note that this will supersede all other provided masks

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.5 afdconnectivity

### 43.5.1 Synopsis

Obtain an estimate of fibre connectivity between two regions using AFD and streamlines tractography

### 43.5.2 Usage

```
afdconnectivity [ options ] image tracks
```

- *image*: the input FOD image.
- *tracks*: the input track file defining the bundle of interest.

### 43.5.3 Description

This estimate is obtained by determining a fibre volume (AFD) occupied by the pathway of interest, and dividing by the streamline length.

If only the streamlines belonging to the pathway of interest are provided, then ALL of the fibre volume within each voxel selected will contribute to the result. If the `-wbft` option is used to provide whole-brain fibre-tracking (of which the pathway of interest should contain a subset), only the fraction of the fibre volume in each voxel estimated to belong to the pathway of interest will contribute to the result.

Use `-quiet` to suppress progress messages and output fibre connectivity value only.

For valid comparisons of AFD connectivity across scans, images **MUST** be intensity normalised and bias field corrected, and a common response function for all subjects must be used.

Note that the sum of the AFD is normalised by streamline length to account for subject differences in fibre bundle length. This normalisation results in a measure that is more related to the cross-sectional volume of the tract (and therefore ‘connectivity’). Note that SIFT-ed tract count is a superior measure because it is unaffected by tangential yet unrelated fibres. However, AFD connectivity may be used as a substitute when Anatomically Constrained Tractography is not possible due to uncorrectable EPI distortions, and SIFT may therefore not be as effective.

### 43.5.4 Options

- **-wbft tracks** provide a whole-brain fibre-tracking data set (of which the input track file should be a subset), to improve the estimate of fibre bundle volume in the presence of partial volume
- **-afd\_map image** output a 3D image containing the AFD estimated for each voxel.
- **-all\_fixels** if whole-brain fibre-tracking is **NOT** provided, then if multiple fixels within a voxel are traversed by the pathway of interest, by default the fixel with the greatest streamlines density is selected to contribute to the AFD in that voxel. If this option is provided, then **ALL** fixels with non-zero streamlines density will contribute to the result, even if multiple fixels per voxel are selected.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.6 amp2response

### 43.6.1 Synopsis

Estimate response function coefficients based on the DWI signal in single-fibre voxels

### 43.6.2 Usage

```
amp2response [ options ] amps mask directions response
```

- *amps*: the amplitudes image
- *mask*: the mask containing the voxels from which to estimate the response function
- *directions*: a 4D image containing the estimated fibre directions
- *response*: the output zonal spherical harmonic coefficients

### 43.6.3 Description

This command uses the image data from all selected single-fibre voxels concurrently, rather than simply averaging their individual spherical harmonic coefficients. It also ensures that the response function is non-negative, and monotonic (i.e. its amplitude must increase from the fibre direction out to the orthogonal plane).

If multi-shell data are provided, and one or more b-value shells are not explicitly requested, the command will generate a response function for every b-value shell (including b=0 if present).

### 43.6.4 Options

- **-isotropic** estimate an isotropic response function (lmax=0 for all shells)
- **-noconstraint** disable the non-negativity and monotonicity constraints
- **-directions path** provide an external text file containing the directions along which the amplitudes are sampled

#### DW shell selection options

- **-shells b-values** specify one or more b-values to use during processing, as a comma-separated list of the desired approximate b-values (b-values are clustered to allow for small deviations). Note that some commands are incompatible with multiple b-values, and will report an error if more than one b-value is provided. **WARNING**: note that, even though the b=0 volumes are never referred to as shells in the literature, they still have to be explicitly included in the list of b-values as provided to the **-shell** option! Several algorithms which include the b=0 volumes in their computations may otherwise return an undesired result.
- **-lmax values** specify the maximum harmonic degree of the response function to estimate (can be a comma-separated list for multi-shell data)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.

- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Smith, R. E.; Dhollander, T. & Connelly, A. Constrained linear least squares estimation of anisotropic response function for spherical deconvolution. ISMRM Workshop on Breaking the Barriers of Diffusion MRI, 23.

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## 43.7 amp2sh

### 43.7.1 Synopsis

Convert a set of amplitudes (defined along a set of corresponding directions) to their spherical harmonic representation

### 43.7.2 Usage

```
amp2sh [ options ] amp SH
```

- *amp*: the input amplitude image.
- *SH*: the output spherical harmonics coefficients image.

### 43.7.3 Description

The spherical harmonic decomposition is calculated by least-squares linear fitting to the amplitude data.

The directions can be defined either as a DW gradient scheme (for example to compute the SH representation of the DW signal) or a set of [az el] pairs as output by the `dirgen` command. The DW gradient scheme or direction set can be supplied within the input image header or using the `-gradient` or `-directions` option. Note that if a direction set and DW gradient scheme can be found, the direction set will be used by default.

The spherical harmonic coefficients are stored as follows. First, since the signal attenuation profile is real, it has conjugate symmetry, i.e.  $Y(l,-m) = Y(l,m)^*$  (where  $*$  denotes the complex conjugate). Second, the diffusion profile

should be antipodally symmetric (i.e.  $S(x) = S(-x)$ ), implying that all odd  $l$  components should be zero. Therefore, only the even elements are computed. Note that the spherical harmonics equations used here differ slightly from those conventionally used, in that the  $(-1)^m$  factor has been omitted. This should be taken into account in all subsequent calculations. Each volume in the output image corresponds to a different spherical harmonic component. Each volume will correspond to the following: volume 0:  $l = 0, m = 0$ ; volume 1:  $l = 2, m = -2$  (imaginary part of  $m=2$  SH); volume 2:  $l = 2, m = -1$  (imaginary part of  $m=1$  SH); volume 3:  $l = 2, m = 0$ ; volume 4:  $l = 2, m = 1$  (real part of  $m=1$  SH); volume 5:  $l = 2, m = 2$  (real part of  $m=2$  SH); etc...

### 43.7.4 Options

- **-lmax order** set the maximum harmonic order for the output series. By default, the program will use the highest possible  $l_{max}$  given the number of diffusion-weighted images, up to a maximum of 8.
- **-normalise** normalise the DW signal to the  $b=0$  image
- **-directions file** the directions corresponding to the input amplitude image used to sample AFD. By default this option is not required providing the direction set is supplied in the amplitude image. This should be supplied as a list of directions [az el], as generated using the `dirgen` command
- **-rician noise** correct for Rician noise induced bias, using noise map supplied

#### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a  $4 \times N$  text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and  $b$  gives the  $b$ -value in units of  $s/mm^2$ . If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL `bvecs/bvals` format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the  $b$ -values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the `BValueScaling` entry. Valid choices are `yes/no`, `true/false`, `0/1` (default: `true`).

#### DW shell selection options

- **-shells b-values** specify one or more  $b$ -values to use during processing, as a comma-separated list of the desired approximate  $b$ -values ( $b$ -values are clustered to allow for small deviations). Note that some commands are incompatible with multiple  $b$ -values, and will report an error if more than one  $b$ -value is provided. **WARNING:** note that, even though the  $b=0$  volumes are never referred to as shells in the literature, they still have to be explicitly included in the list of  $b$ -values as provided to the `-shell` option! Several algorithms which include the  $b=0$  volumes in their computations may otherwise return an undesired result.

#### Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.8 connectome2tck

### 43.8.1 Synopsis

Extract streamlines from a tractogram based on their assignment to parcellated nodes

### 43.8.2 Usage

```
connectome2tck [ options ] tracks_in assignments_in prefix_out
```

- *tracks\_in*: the input track file
- *assignments\_in*: text file containing the node assignments for each streamline
- *prefix\_out*: the output file / prefix

### 43.8.3 Description

The compulsory input file “assignments\_in” should contain a text file where there is one row for each streamline, and each row contains a list of numbers corresponding to the parcels to which that streamline was assigned (most typically there will be two entries per streamline, one for each endpoint; but this is not strictly a requirement). This file will most typically be generated using the tck2connectome command with the -out\_assignments option.

## 43.8.4 Options

### Options for determining the content / format of output files

- **-nodes list** only select tracks that involve a set of nodes of interest (provide as a comma-separated list of integers)
- **-exclusive** only select tracks that exclusively connect nodes from within the list of nodes of interest
- **-files option** select how the resulting streamlines will be grouped in output files. Options are: `per_edge`, `per_node`, `single` (default: `per_edge`)
- **-exemplars image** generate a mean connection exemplar per edge, rather than keeping all streamlines (the parcellation node image must be provided in order to constrain the exemplar endpoints)
- **-keep\_unassigned** by default, the program discards those streamlines that are not successfully assigned to a node. Set this option to generate corresponding outputs containing these streamlines (labelled as node index 0)
- **-keep\_self** by default, the program will not output streamlines that connect to the same node at both ends. Set this option to instead keep these self-connections.

### Options for importing / exporting streamline weights

- **-tck\_weights\_in path** specify a text scalar file containing the streamline weights
- **-prefix\_tck\_weights\_out prefix** provide a prefix for outputting a text file corresponding to each output file, each containing only the streamline weights relevant for that track file

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.9 connectomestats

### 43.9.1 Synopsis

Connectome group-wise statistics at the edge level using non-parametric permutation testing

### 43.9.2 Usage

```
connectomestats [ options ] input algorithm design contrast output
```

- *input*: a text file listing the file names of the input connectomes
- *algorithm*: the algorithm to use in network-based clustering/enhancement. Options are: nbs, nbse, none
- *design*: the design matrix. Note that a column of 1's will need to be added for correlations.
- *contrast*: the contrast vector, specified as a single row of weights
- *output*: the filename prefix for all output.

### 43.9.3 Options

#### Options for permutation testing

- **-notest** don't perform permutation testing and only output population statistics (effect size, stdev etc)
- **-nperms num** the number of permutations (Default: 5000)
- **-permutations file** manually define the permutations (relabelling). The input should be a text file defining a  $m \times n$  matrix, where each relabelling is defined as a column vector of size  $m$ , and the number of columns,  $n$ , defines the number of permutations. Can be generated with the `palm_quickperms` function in PALM (<http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk/fsl/fslwiki/PALM>). Overrides the `nperms` option.
- **-nonstationary** perform non-stationarity correction
- **-nperms\_nonstationary num** the number of permutations used when precomputing the empirical statistic image for nonstationary correction (Default: 5000)
- **-permutations\_nonstationary file** manually define the permutations (relabelling) for computing the empirical statistic image for nonstationary correction. The input should be a text file defining a  $m \times n$  matrix, where each relabelling is defined as a column vector of size  $m$ , and the number of columns,  $n$ , defines the number of permutations. Can be generated with the `palm_quickperms` function in PALM (<http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk/fsl/fslwiki/PALM>) Overrides the `nperms_nonstationary` option.

#### Options for controlling TFCE behaviour

- **-tfce\_dh value** the height increment used in the tfce integration (default: 0.1)
- **-tfce\_e value** tfce extent exponent (default: 0.4)
- **-tfce\_h value** tfce height exponent (default: 3)

#### Additional options for connectomestats

- **-threshold value** the t-statistic value to use in threshold-based clustering algorithms

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

- If using the NBS algorithm: Zalesky, A.; Fornito, A. & Bullmore, E. T. Network-based statistic: Identifying differences in brain networks. *NeuroImage*, 2010, 53, 1197-1207
- If using the NBSE algorithm: Vinokur, L.; Zalesky, A.; Raffelt, D.; Smith, R.E. & Connelly, A. A Novel Threshold-Free Network-Based Statistics Method: Demonstration using Simulated Pathology. *OHBM*, 2015, 4144
- If using the -nonstationary option: Salimi-Khorshidi, G.; Smith, S.M. & Nichols, T.E. Adjusting the effect of nonstationarity in cluster-based and TFCE inference. *Neuroimage*, 2011, 54(3), 2006-19

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## 43.10 dcmedit

### 43.10.1 Synopsis

Edit DICOM file in-place

### 43.10.2 Usage

```
dcmedit [ options ] file
```

- *file*: the DICOM file to be edited.

### 43.10.3 Description

Note that this command simply replaces the existing values without modifying the DICOM structure in any way. Replacement text will be truncated if it is too long to fit inside the existing tag.

WARNING: this command will modify existing data! It is recommended to run this command on a copy of the original data set to avoid loss of data.

### 43.10.4 Options

- **-anonymise** remove any identifiable information, by replacing the following tags: - any tag with Value Representation PN will be replaced with 'anonymous' - tag (0010,0030) PatientBirthDate will be replaced with an empty string WARNING: there is no guarantee that this command will remove all identifiable information, since such information may be contained in any number of private vendor-specific tags. You will need to double-check the results independently if you need to ensure anonymity.
- **-id text** replace all ID tags with string supplied. This consists of tags (0010, 0020) PatientID and (0010, 1000) OtherPatientIDs
- **-tag group element newvalue** replace specific tag.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.11 dcminfo

### 43.11.1 Synopsis

Output DICOM fields in human-readable format

### 43.11.2 Usage

```
dcminfo [ options ] file
```

- *file*: the DICOM file to be scanned.

### 43.11.3 Options

- **-all** print all DICOM fields.
- **-csa** print all Siemens CSA fields
- **-tag group element** print field specified by the group & element tags supplied. Tags should be supplied as Hexadecimal (i.e. as they appear in the -all listing).

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.12 dirflip

### 43.12.1 Synopsis

Optimise the polarity of the directions in a scheme with respect to a unipolar electrostatic repulsion model, by inversion of individual directions

### 43.12.2 Usage

```
dirflip [ options ] in out
```

- *in*: the input files for the directions.
- *out*: the output files for the directions.

### 43.12.3 Description

The orientations themselves are not affected, only their polarity; this is necessary to ensure near-optimal distribution of DW directions for eddy-current correction.

### 43.12.4 Options

- **-permutations num** number of permutations to try.
- **-cartesian** Output the directions in Cartesian coordinates [x y z] instead of [az el].

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.13 dirgen

### 43.13.1 Synopsis

Generate a set of uniformly distributed directions using a bipolar electrostatic repulsion model

### 43.13.2 Usage

```
dirgen [ options ] ndir dirs
```

- *ndir*: the number of directions to generate.
- *dirs*: the text file to write the directions to, as [ az el ] pairs.

### 43.13.3 Description

Directions are distributed by analogy to an electrostatic repulsion system, with each direction corresponding to a single electrostatic charge (for -unipolar), or a pair of diametrically opposed charges (for the default bipolar case). The energy of the system is determined based on the Coulomb repulsion, which assumes the form  $1/r^{\text{power}}$ , where  $r$  is the distance between any pair of charges, and  $p$  is the power assumed for the repulsion law (default: 1). The minimum energy state is obtained by gradient descent.

### 43.13.4 Options

- **-power exp** specify exponent to use for repulsion power law (default: 1). This must be a power of 2 (i.e. 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, ...).
- **-niter num** specify the maximum number of iterations to perform (default: 10000).
- **-restarts num** specify the number of restarts to perform (default: 10).
- **-unipolar** optimise assuming a unipolar electrostatic repulsion model rather than the bipolar model normally assumed in DWI
- **-cartesian** Output the directions in Cartesian coordinates [x y z] instead of [az el].

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).

- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Jones, D.; Horsfield, M. & Simmons, A. Optimal strategies for measuring diffusion in anisotropic systems by magnetic resonance imaging. *Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 1999, 42: 515-525

Papadakis, N. G.; Murrills, C. D.; Hall, L. D.; Huang, C. L.-H. & Adrian Carpenter, T. Minimal gradient encoding for robust estimation of diffusion anisotropy. *Magnetic Resonance Imaging*, 2000, 18: 671-679

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## 43.14 dirmerge

### 43.14.1 Synopsis

Splice or merge sets of directions over multiple shells into a single set, in such a way as to maintain near-optimality upon truncation

### 43.14.2 Usage

```
dirmerge [ options ] subsets bvalue files [ bvalue files ... ] out
```

- *subsets*: the number of subsets (phase-encode directions) per b-value
- *bvalue files*: the b-value and sets of corresponding files, in order
- *out*: the output directions file, with each row listing the X Y Z gradient directions, the b-value, and an index representing the phase encode direction

### 43.14.3 Options

- **-unipolar\_weight** set the weight given to the unipolar electrostatic repulsion model compared to the bipolar model (default: 0.2).

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.15 dirorder

### 43.15.1 Synopsis

Reorder a set of directions to ensure near-uniformity upon truncation - i.e. if the scan is terminated early, the acquired directions are still close to optimal

### 43.15.2 Usage

```
dirorder [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input directions file
- *output*: the output directions file

### 43.15.3 Options

- **-cartesian** Output the directions in Cartesian coordinates [x y z] instead of [az el].

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
  - **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
  - **-debug** display debugging messages.
  - **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
  - **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.16 dirsplit

### 43.16.1 Synopsis

Split a set of evenly distributed directions (as generated by dirgen) into approximately uniformly distributed subsets

### 43.16.2 Usage

```
dirsplit [ options ] dirs out [ out ... ]
```

- *dirs*: the text file containing the directions.
- *out*: the output partitioned directions

### 43.16.3 Options

- **-permutations num** number of permutations to try
- **-cartesian** Output the directions in Cartesian coordinates [x y z] instead of [az el].

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.17 dirstat

### 43.17.1 Synopsis

Report statistics on a direction set

### 43.17.2 Usage

```
dirstat [ options ] dirs
```

- *dirs*: the text file or image containing the directions.

### 43.17.3 Description

This command will accept as inputs:

- directions file in spherical coordinates (ASCII text, [ az el ] space-separated values, one per line);
- directions file in Cartesian coordinates (ASCII text, [ x y z ] space-separated values, one per line);
- DW gradient files (MRtrix format: ASCII text, [ x y z b ] space-separated values, one per line);
- image files, using the DW gradient scheme found in the header (or provided using the appropriate command line options below).

By default, this produces all relevant metrics for the direction set provided. If the direction set contains multiple shells, metrics are provided for each shell separately.

Metrics are produced assuming a unipolar or bipolar electrostatic repulsion model, producing the potential energy (total, mean, min & max), and the nearest-neighbour angles (mean, min & max). The condition number is also produced for the spherical harmonic fits up to the highest harmonic order supported by the number of volumes. Finally, the norm of the mean direction vector is provided as a measure of the overall symmetry of the direction set (important with respect to eddy-current resilience).

Specific metrics can also be queried independently via the “-output” option, using these shorthands: U/B for unipolar/bipolar model, E/N for energy and nearest-neighbour respectively, t/-/+ for total/min/max respectively (mean implied otherwise); SHn for condition number of SH fit at order n (with n an even integer); ASYM for asymmetry index (norm of mean direction vector); and N for the number of directions. For example:

-output BN,BN-,BN+ requests the mean, min and max nearest-neighbour angles assuming a bipolar model.

-output UE,SH8,SYM requests the mean unipolar electrostatic energy, condition number of SH fit at order 8, and the asymmetry index.

### 43.17.4 Options

- **-output list** output selected metrics as a space-delimited list, suitable for use in scripts. This will produce one line of values per selected shell. Valid metrics are as specified in the description above.

#### DW shell selection options

- **-shells b-values** specify one or more b-values to use during processing, as a comma-separated list of the desired approximate b-values (b-values are clustered to allow for small deviations). Note that some commands are incompatible with multiple b-values, and will report an error if more than one b-value is provided. **WARNING:** note that, even though the b=0 volumes are never referred to as shells in the literature, they still have to be explicitly included in the list of b-values as provided to the -shell option! Several algorithms which include the b=0 volumes in their computations may otherwise return an undesired result.

#### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.

- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.18 dwi2adc

### 43.18.1 Synopsis

Convert mean dwi (trace-weighted) images to mean ADC maps

### 43.18.2 Usage

```
dwi2adc [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input image.
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.18.3 Options

#### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.19 dwi2fod

### 43.19.1 Synopsis

Estimate fibre orientation distributions from diffusion data using spherical deconvolution

### 43.19.2 Usage

```
dwi2fod [ options ] algorithm dwi response odf [ response odf ... ]
```

- *algorithm*: the algorithm to use for FOD estimation. (options are: csd,msmt\_csd)
- *dwi*: the input diffusion-weighted image
- *response odf*: pairs of input tissue response and output ODF images

### 43.19.3 Description

The spherical harmonic coefficients are stored as follows. First, since the signal attenuation profile is real, it has conjugate symmetry, i.e.  $Y(l,-m) = Y(l,m)^*$  (where  $*$  denotes the complex conjugate). Second, the diffusion profile should be antipodally symmetric (i.e.  $S(x) = S(-x)$ ), implying that all odd  $l$  components should be zero. Therefore, only the even elements are computed. Note that the spherical harmonics equations used here differ slightly from those conventionally used, in that the  $(-1)^m$  factor has been omitted. This should be taken into account in all subsequent calculations. Each volume in the output image corresponds to a different spherical harmonic component. Each volume

will correspond to the following: volume 0:  $l = 0, m = 0$  ; volume 1:  $l = 2, m = -2$  (imaginary part of  $m=2$  SH) ; volume 2:  $l = 2, m = -1$  (imaginary part of  $m=1$  SH) ; volume 3:  $l = 2, m = 0$  ; volume 4:  $l = 2, m = 1$  (real part of  $m=1$  SH) ; volume 5:  $l = 2, m = 2$  (real part of  $m=2$  SH) ; etc...

## 43.19.4 Options

### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of  $s/mm^2$ . If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

### DW shell selection options

- **-shells b-values** specify one or more b-values to use during processing, as a comma-separated list of the desired approximate b-values (b-values are clustered to allow for small deviations). Note that some commands are incompatible with multiple b-values, and will report an error if more than one b-value is provided. WARNING: note that, even though the  $b=0$  volumes are never referred to as shells in the literature, they still have to be explicitly included in the list of b-values as provided to the -shell option! Several algorithms which include the  $b=0$  volumes in their computations may otherwise return an undesired result.

### Options common to more than one algorithm

- **-directions file** specify the directions over which to apply the non-negativity constraint (by default, the built-in 300 direction set is used). These should be supplied as a text file containing [ az el ] pairs for the directions.
- **-lmax order** the maximum spherical harmonic order for the output FOD(s). For algorithms with multiple outputs, this should be provided as a comma-separated list of integers, one for each output image; for single-output algorithms, only a single integer should be provided. If omitted, the command will use the highest possible lmax given the diffusion gradient table, up to a maximum of 8.
- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary brain mask image.

### Options for the Constrained Spherical Deconvolution algorithm

- **-filter spec** the linear frequency filtering parameters used for the initial linear spherical deconvolution step (default = [ 1 1 1 0 0 ]). These should be supplied as a text file containing the filtering coefficients for each even harmonic order.
- **-neg\_lambda value** the regularisation parameter lambda that controls the strength of the non-negativity constraint (default = 1).
- **-norm\_lambda value** the regularisation parameter lambda that controls the strength of the constraint on the norm of the solution (default = 1).

- **-threshold value** the threshold below which the amplitude of the FOD is assumed to be zero, expressed as an absolute amplitude (default = 0).
- **-niter number** the maximum number of iterations to perform for each voxel (default = 50). Use '-niter 0' for a linear unconstrained spherical deconvolution.

### Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

- If using csd algorithm: Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Robust determination of the fibre orientation distribution in diffusion MRI: Non-negativity constrained super-resolved spherical deconvolution. *NeuroImage*, 2007, 35, 1459-1472
- If using msmt\_csd algorithm: Jeurissen, B; Tournier, J-D; Dhollander, T; Connelly, A & Sijbers, J. Multi-tissue constrained spherical deconvolution for improved analysis of multi-shell diffusion MRI data *NeuroImage*, 2014, 103, 411-426

Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F., Gadian, D.G. & Connelly, A. Direct estimation of the fiber orientation density function from diffusion-weighted MRI data using spherical deconvolution. *NeuroImage*, 2004, 23, 1176-1185

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## 43.20 dwi2mask

### 43.20.1 Synopsis

Generates a whole brain mask from a DWI image

### 43.20.2 Usage

```
dwi2mask [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input DWI image containing volumes that are both diffusion weighted and b=0
- *output*: the output whole-brain mask image

### 43.20.3 Description

All diffusion weighted and b=0 volumes are used to obtain a mask that includes both brain tissue and CSF.

In a second step peninsula-like extensions, where the peninsula itself is wider than the bridge connecting it to the mask, are removed. This may help removing artefacts and non-brain parts, e.g. eyes, from the mask.

### 43.20.4 Options

- **-clean\_scale value** the maximum scale used to cut bridges. A certain maximum scale cuts bridges up to a width (in voxels) of 2x the provided scale. Setting this to 0 disables the mask cleaning step. (Default: 2)

#### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.

- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

Dhollander T, Raffelt D, Connelly A. Unsupervised 3-tissue response function estimation from single-shell or multi-shell diffusion MR data without a co-registered T1 image. ISMRM Workshop on Breaking the Barriers of Diffusion MRI, 2016, 5.

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## 43.21 dwi2tensor

### 43.21.1 Synopsis

Diffusion (kurtosis) tensor estimation using iteratively reweighted linear least squares estimator

### 43.21.2 Usage

```
dwi2tensor [ options ] dwi dt
```

- *dwi*: the input dwi image.
- *dt*: the output dt image.

### 43.21.3 Description

The tensor coefficients are stored in the output image as follows: volumes 0-5: D11, D22, D33, D12, D13, D23 ; If diffusion kurtosis is estimated using the `-dkt` option, these are stored as follows: volumes 0-2: W1111, W2222, W3333 ; volumes 3-8: W1112, W1113, W1222, W1333, W2223, W2333 ; volumes 9-11: W1122, W1133, W2233 ; volumes 12-14: W1123, W1223, W1233 ;

### 43.21.4 Options

- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary brain mask image.
- **-b0 image** the output b0 image.
- **-dkt image** the output dkt image.
- **-iter integer** number of iterative reweightings (default: 2); set to 0 for ordinary linear least squares.
- **-predicted\_signal image** the predicted dwi image.

#### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

#### References

Veraart, J.; Sijbers, J.; Sunaert, S.; Leemans, A. & Jeurissen, B. Weighted linear least squares estimation of diffusion MRI parameters: strengths, limitations, and pitfalls. *NeuroImage*, 2013, 81, 335-346

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## 43.22 dwidenoise

### 43.22.1 Synopsis

Denoise DWI data and estimate the noise level based on the optimal threshold for PCA

### 43.22.2 Usage

```
dwidenoise [ options ] dwi out
```

- *dwi*: the input diffusion-weighted image.
- *out*: the output denoised DWI image.

### 43.22.3 Description

DWI data denoising and noise map estimation by exploiting data redundancy in the PCA domain using the prior knowledge that the eigenspectrum of random covariance matrices is described by the universal Marchenko Pastur distribution.

Important note: image denoising must be performed as the first step of the image processing pipeline. The routine will fail if interpolation or smoothing has been applied to the data prior to denoising.

Note that this function does not correct for non-Gaussian noise biases.

### 43.22.4 Options

- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary brain mask image.
- **-extent window** set the window size of the denoising filter. (default = 5,5,5)
- **-noise level** the output noise map.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.

- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Veraart, J.; Novikov, D.S.; Christiaens, D.; Ades-aron, B.; Sijbers, J. & Fieremans, E. Denoising of diffusion MRI using random matrix theory. *NeuroImage*, 2016, 142, 394-406, doi: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2016.08.016

Veraart, J.; Fieremans, E. & Novikov, D.S. Diffusion MRI noise mapping using random matrix theory. *Magn. Res. Med.*, 2016, 76(5), 1582-1593, doi: 10.1002/mrm.26059

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## 43.23 dwiextract

### 43.23.1 Synopsis

Extract diffusion-weighted volumes, b=0 volumes, or certain shells from a DWI dataset

### 43.23.2 Usage

```
dwiextract [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input DW image.
- *output*: the output image (diffusion-weighted volumes by default).

### 43.23.3 Options

- **-bzero** Output b=0 volumes (instead of the diffusion weighted volumes, if **-singleshell** is not specified).
- **-no\_bzero** Output only non b=0 volumes (default, if **-singleshell** is not specified).
- **-singleshell** Force a single-shell (single non b=0 shell) output. This will include b=0 volumes, if present. Use with **-bzero** to enforce presence of b=0 volumes (error if not present) or with **-no\_bzero** to exclude them.

#### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

#### DW shell selection options

- **-shells b-values** specify one or more b-values to use during processing, as a comma-separated list of the desired approximate b-values (b-values are clustered to allow for small deviations). Note that some commands are incompatible with multiple b-values, and will report an error if more than one b-value is provided. WARNING: note that, even though the b=0 volumes are never referred to as shells in the literature, they still have to be explicitly included in the list of b-values as provided to the **-shell** option! Several algorithms which include the b=0 volumes in their computations may otherwise return an undesired result.

#### DW gradient table export options

- **-export\_grad\_mrtrix path** export the diffusion-weighted gradient table to file in MRtrix format
- **-export\_grad\_fsl bvecs\_path bvals\_path** export the diffusion-weighted gradient table to files in FSL (bvecs / bvals) format

#### Options for importing phase-encode tables

- **-import\_pe\_table file** import a phase-encoding table from file
- **-import\_pe\_eddy config indices** import phase-encoding information from an EDDY-style config / index file pair

#### Options for selecting volumes based on phase-encoding

- **-pe desc** select volumes with a particular phase encoding; this can be three comma-separated values (for i,j,k components of vector direction) or four (direction & total readout time)

## Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.24 dwinormalise

### 43.24.1 Synopsis

Intensity normalise the b=0 signal within a supplied white matter mask

### 43.24.2 Usage

```
dwinormalise [ options ] input mask output
```

- *input*: the input DWI image containing volumes that are both diffusion weighted and b=0
- *mask*: the input mask image used to normalise the intensity
- *output*: the output DWI intensity normalised image

### 43.24.3 Options

- **-intensity value** normalise the  $b=0$  signal to the specified value (Default:  $1e+03$ )
- **-percentile value** define the percentile of the mask intensities used for normalisation. If this option is not supplied then the median value (50th percentile) will be normalised to the desired intensity value.

#### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of  $s/mm^2$ . If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.25 fixel2sh

### 43.25.1 Synopsis

Convert a fixel-based sparse-data image into an spherical harmonic image

### 43.25.2 Usage

```
fixel2sh [ options ] fixel_in sh_out
```

- *fixel\_in*: the input fixel data file.
- *sh\_out*: the output sh image.

### 43.25.3 Description

This command generates spherical harmonic data from fixels that can be visualised using the ODF tool in MRview. The output ODF lobes are scaled according to the values in the input fixel image.

### 43.25.4 Options

- **-lmax order** set the maximum harmonic order for the output series (Default: 8)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.26 fixel2tsf

### 43.26.1 Synopsis

Map fixel values to a track scalar file based on an input tractogram

### 43.26.2 Usage

```
fixel2tsf [ options ] fixel_in tracks tsf
```

- *fixel\_in*: the input fixel data file (within the fixel directory)
- *tracks*: the input track file
- *tsf*: the output track scalar file

### 43.26.3 Description

This command is useful for visualising all brain fixels (e.g. the output from `fixelcfestats`) in 3D.

### 43.26.4 Options

- **-angle value** the max angular threshold for computing correspondence between a fixel direction and track tangent (default = 45 degrees)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.27 fixel2voxel

### 43.27.1 Synopsis

Convert a fixel-based sparse-data image into some form of scalar image

### 43.27.2 Usage

```
fixel2voxel [ options ] fixel_in operation image_out
```

- *fixel\_in*: the input fixel data file
- *operation*: the operation to apply, one of: mean, sum, product, min, max, absmax, magmax, count, complexity, sf, dec\_unit, dec\_scaled, split\_data, split\_dir.
- *image\_out*: the output scalar image.

### 43.27.3 Description

Fixel data can be reduced to voxel data in a number of ways:

- Some statistic computed across all fixel values within a voxel: mean, sum, product, min, max, absmax, magmax
- The number of fixels in each voxel: count
- Some measure of crossing-fibre organisation: complexity, sf ('single-fibre')
- A 4D directionally-encoded colour image: dec\_unit, dec\_scaled
- A 4D scalar image of fixel values with one 3D volume per fixel: split\_data
- A 4D image of fixel directions, stored as three 3D volumes per fixel direction: split\_dir

### 43.27.4 Options

- **-number N** use only the largest N fixels in calculation of the voxel-wise statistic; in the case of "split\_data" and "split\_dir", output only the largest N fixels, padding where necessary.
- **-weighted fixel\_in** weight the contribution of each fixel to the per-voxel result according to its volume. E.g. when estimating a voxel-based measure of mean axon diameter, a fixel's mean axon diameter should be weighed by its relative volume within the voxel. Note that AFD can be used as a psuedomeasure of fixel volume.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).

- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

- Reference for ‘complexity’ operation: Riffert, T. W.; Schreiber, J.; Anwender, A. & Knosche, T. R. Beyond Fractional Anisotropy: Extraction of bundle-specific structural metrics from crossing fibre models. *NeuroImage*, 2014, 100, 176-191

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## 43.28 fixelcfestats

### 43.28.1 Synopsis

Fixel-based analysis using connectivity-based fixel enhancement and non-parametric permutation testing

### 43.28.2 Usage

```
fixelcfestats [ options ] in_fixel_directory subjects design contrast tracks out_  
↪fixel_directory
```

- *in\_fixel\_directory*: the fixel directory containing the data files for each subject (after obtaining fixel correspondence)
- *subjects*: a text file listing the subject identifiers (one per line). This should correspond with the filenames in the fixel directory (including the file extension), and be listed in the same order as the rows of the design matrix.
- *design*: the design matrix. Note that a column of 1's will need to be added for correlations.
- *contrast*: the contrast vector, specified as a single row of weights
- *tracks*: the tracks used to determine fixel-fixel connectivity
- *out\_fixel\_directory*: the output directory where results will be saved. Will be created if it does not exist

### 43.28.3 Description

Note that if the **-mask** option is used, the output fixel directory will still contain the same set of fixels as that present in the input fixel template, in order to retain fixel correspondence. However a consequence of this is that all fixels in the template will be initially visible when the output fixel directory is loaded in *mrview*. Those fixels outside the processing mask will immediately disappear from view as soon as any data-file-based fixel colouring or thresholding is applied.

## 43.28.4 Options

### Options for permutation testing

- **-notest** don't perform permutation testing and only output population statistics (effect size, stdev etc)
- **-nperms num** the number of permutations (Default: 5000)
- **-permutations file** manually define the permutations (relabelling). The input should be a text file defining a  $m \times n$  matrix, where each relabelling is defined as a column vector of size  $m$ , and the number of columns,  $n$ , defines the number of permutations. Can be generated with the `palm_quickperms` function in PALM (<http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk/fsl/fslwiki/PALM>). Overrides the `nperms` option.
- **-nonstationary** perform non-stationarity correction
- **-nperms\_nonstationary num** the number of permutations used when precomputing the empirical statistic image for nonstationary correction (Default: 5000)
- **-permutations\_nonstationary file** manually define the permutations (relabelling) for computing the empirical statistic image for nonstationary correction. The input should be a text file defining a  $m \times n$  matrix, where each relabelling is defined as a column vector of size  $m$ , and the number of columns,  $n$ , defines the number of permutations. Can be generated with the `palm_quickperms` function in PALM (<http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk/fsl/fslwiki/PALM>) Overrides the `nperms_nonstationary` option.

### Parameters for the Connectivity-based Fixel Enhancement algorithm

- **-cfe\_dh value** the height increment used in the cfe integration (default: 0.1)
- **-cfe\_e value** cfe extent exponent (default: 2)
- **-cfe\_h value** cfe height exponent (default: 3)
- **-cfe\_c value** cfe connectivity exponent (default: 0.5)

### Additional options for `fixelcfe`

- **-negative** automatically test the negative (opposite) contrast. By computing the opposite contrast simultaneously the computation time is reduced.
- **-smooth FWHM** smooth the fixel value along the fibre tracts using a Gaussian kernel with the supplied FWHM (default: 10mm)
- **-connectivity threshold** a threshold to define the required fraction of shared connections to be included in the neighbourhood (default: 0.01)
- **-angle value** the max angle threshold for assigning streamline tangents to fixels (Default: 45 degrees)
- **-mask file** provide a fixel data file containing a mask of those fixels to be used during processing

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.

- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

Raffelt, D.; Smith, RE.; Ridgway, GR.; Tournier, JD.; Vaughan, DN.; Rose, S.; Henderson, R.; Connelly, A. Connectivity-based fixel enhancement: Whole-brain statistical analysis of diffusion MRI measures in the presence of crossing fibres. *Neuroimage*, 2015, 15(117):40-55

- If using the `-nonstationary` option: Salimi-Khorshidi, G. Smith, S.M. Nichols, T.E. Adjusting the effect of nonstationarity in cluster-based and TFCE inference. *NeuroImage*, 2011, 54(3), 2006-19

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## 43.29 fixelconvert

### 43.29.1 Synopsis

Convert between the old format fixel image (`.msf` / `.msh`) and the new fixel directory format

### 43.29.2 Usage

```
fixelconvert [ options ] fixel_in fixel_out
```

- *fixel\_in*: the input fixel file / directory.
- *fixel\_out*: the output fixel file / directory.

### 43.29.3 Options

#### Options for converting from old to new format

- **-name string** assign a different name to the value field output (Default: value). Do not include the file extension.
- **-nii** output the index, directions and data file in NIfTI format instead of `.mif`
- **-out\_size** also output the 'size' field from the old format

- **-template path** specify an existing fixel directory (in the new format) to which the new output should conform

### Options for converting from new to old format

- **-value path** nominate the data file to import to the 'value' field in the old format
- **-in\_size path** import data for the 'size' field in the old format

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.30 fixelcorrespondence

### 43.30.1 Synopsis

Obtain fixel-fixel correspondence between a subject fixel image and a template fixel mask

### 43.30.2 Usage

```
fixelcorrespondence [ options ] subject_data template_directory output_directory_
↔output_data
```

- *subject\_data*: the input subject fixel data file. This should be a file inside the fixel directory
- *template\_directory*: the input template fixel directory.
- *output\_directory*: the fixel directory where the output file will be written.

- *output\_data*: the name of the output fixel data file. This will be placed in the output fixel directory

### 43.30.3 Description

It is assumed that the subject image has already been spatially normalised and is aligned with the template. The output fixel image will have the same fixels (and directions) of the template.

### 43.30.4 Options

- **-angle value** the max angle threshold for computing inter-subject fixel correspondence (Default: 45 degrees)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.31 fixelcrop

### 43.31.1 Synopsis

Crop/remove fixels from sparse fixel image using a binary fixel mask

### 43.31.2 Usage

```
fixelcrop [ options ] input_fixel_directory input_fixel_mask output_fixel_directory
```

- *input\_fixel\_directory*: input fixel directory, all data files and directions file will be cropped and saved in the output fixel directory
- *input\_fixel\_mask*: the input fixel data file defining which fixels to crop. Fixels with zero values will be removed
- *output\_fixel\_directory*: the output directory to store the cropped directions and data files

### 43.31.3 Description

The mask must be input as a fixel data file the same dimensions as the fixel data file(s) to be cropped.

### 43.31.4 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.32 fixelreorient

### 43.32.1 Synopsis

Reorient fixel directions

### 43.32.2 Usage

```
fixelreorient [ options ] fixel_in warp fixel_out
```

- *fixel\_in*: the input fixel directory
- *warp*: a 4D deformation field used to perform reorientation. Reorientation is performed by applying the Jacobian affine transform in each voxel in the warp, then re-normalising the vector representing the fixel direction
- *fixel\_out*: the output fixel directory. If the the input and output directories are the same, the existing directions file will be replaced (providing the *-force* option is supplied). If a new directory is supplied then the fixel directions and all other fixel data will be copied to the new directory.

### 43.32.3 Description

Reorientation is performed by transforming the vector representing the fixel direction with the Jacobian (local affine transform) computed at each voxel in the warp, then re-normalising the vector.

### 43.32.4 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.33 fod2dec

### 43.33.1 Synopsis

Generate FOD-based DEC maps, with optional panchromatic sharpening and/or luminance/perception correction

### 43.33.2 Usage

```
fod2dec [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: The input FOD image (spherical harmonic coefficients).
- *output*: The output DEC image (weighted RGB triplets).

### 43.33.3 Description

By default, the FOD-based DEC is weighted by the integral of the FOD. To weight by another scalar map, use the `-contrast` option. This option can also be used for panchromatic sharpening, e.g., by supplying a T1 (or other sensible) anatomical volume with a higher spatial resolution.

### 43.33.4 Options

- **-mask image** Only perform DEC computation within the specified mask image.
- **-contrast image** Weight the computed DEC map by the provided image contrast. If the contrast has a different image grid, the DEC map is first resliced and renormalised. To achieve panchromatic sharpening, provide an image with a higher spatial resolution than the input FOD image; e.g., a T1 anatomical volume. Only the DEC is subject to the mask, so as to allow for partial colouring of the contrast image. Default when this option is *not* provided: integral of input FOD, subject to the same mask/threshold as used for DEC computation.
- **-lum** Correct for luminance/perception, using default values Cr,Cg,Cb = 0.3,0.5,0.2 and gamma = 2.2 (*not* correcting is the theoretical equivalent of Cr,Cg,Cb = 1,1,1 and gamma = 2).
- **-lum\_coefs values** The coefficients Cr,Cg,Cb to correct for luminance/perception. Note: this implicitly switches on luminance/perception correction, using a default gamma = 2.2 unless specified otherwise.
- **-lum\_gamma value** The gamma value to correct for luminance/perception. Note: this implicitly switches on luminance/perception correction, using a default Cr,Cg,Cb = 0.3,0.5,0.2 unless specified otherwise.
- **-threshold value** FOD amplitudes below the threshold value are considered zero.
- **-no\_weight** Do not weight the DEC map; just output the unweighted colours. Reslicing and renormalising of colours will still happen when providing the `-contrast` option as a template.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.

- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Dhollander T, Smith RE, Tournier JD, Jeurissen B, Connelly A. Time to move on: an FOD-based DEC map to replace DTI's trademark DEC FA. Proc Intl Soc Mag Reson Med, 2015, 23, 1027.

Dhollander T, Raffelt D, Smith RE, Connelly A. Panchromatic sharpening of FOD-based DEC maps by structural T1 information. Proc Intl Soc Mag Reson Med, 2015, 23, 566.

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## 43.34 fod2fixel

### 43.34.1 Synopsis

Perform segmentation of continuous Fibre Orientation Distributions (FODs) to produce discrete fixels

### 43.34.2 Usage

```
fod2fixel [ options ] fod fixel_directory
```

- *fod*: the input fod image.
- *fixel\_directory*: the output fixel directory

### 43.34.3 Options

#### Metric values for fixel-based sparse output images

- **-afd image** output the total Apparent Fibre Density per fixel (integral of FOD lobe)
- **-peak image** output the peak FOD amplitude per fixel
- **-disp image** output a measure of dispersion per fixel as the ratio between FOD lobe integral and peak amplitude

### FOD FMLS segmenter options

- **-fmls\_integral value** threshold absolute numerical integral of positive FOD lobes. Any lobe for which the integral is smaller than this threshold will be discarded. Default: 0.
- **-fmls\_peak\_value value** threshold the raw peak amplitude of positive FOD lobes. Any lobe for which the peak amplitude is smaller than this threshold will be discarded. Default: 0.1.
- **-fmls\_no\_thresholds** disable all FOD lobe thresholding; every lobe with a positive FOD amplitude will be retained.
- **-fmls\_peak\_ratio\_to\_merge value** specify the amplitude ratio between a sample and the smallest peak amplitude of the adjoining lobes, above which the lobes will be merged. This is the relative amplitude between the smallest of two adjoining lobes, and the ‘bridge’ between the two lobes. A value of 1.0 will never merge two peaks into a single lobe; a value of 0.0 will always merge lobes unless they are bisected by a zero crossing. Default: 1.

### Other options for fod2fixel

- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary brain mask image.
- **-maxnum number** maximum number of fixels to output for any particular voxel (default: no limit)
- **-nii** output the directions and index file in nii format (instead of the default mif)
- **-dirpeak** define the fixel direction as the peak lobe direction as opposed to the lobe mean

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

- Reference for the FOD segmentation method: Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. SIFT: Spherical-deconvolution informed filtering of tractograms. *NeuroImage*, 2013, 67, 298-312 (Appendix 2)
- Reference for Apparent Fibre Density (AFD): Raffelt, D.; Tournier, J.-D.; Rose, S.; Ridgway, G.R.; Henderson, R.; Crozier, S.; Salvador, O.; Connelly, A. Apparent Fibre Density: a novel measure for the analysis of diffusion-weighted magnetic resonance images. *Neuroimage*, 2012, 15;59(4), 3976-94.

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## 43.35 label2colour

### 43.35.1 Synopsis

Convert a parcellated image (where values are node indices) into a colour image

### 43.35.2 Usage

```
label2colour [ options ] nodes_in colour_out
```

- *nodes\_in*: the input node parcellation image
- *colour\_out*: the output colour image

### 43.35.3 Description

Many software packages handle this colouring internally within their viewer program; this binary explicitly converts a parcellation image into a colour image that should be viewable in any software.

### 43.35.4 Options

- **-lut file** Provide the relevant colour lookup table (if not provided, nodes will be coloured randomly)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.36 label2mesh

### 43.36.1 Synopsis

Generate meshes from a label image

### 43.36.2 Usage

```
label2mesh [ options ] nodes_in mesh_out
```

- *nodes\_in*: the input node parcellation image
- *mesh\_out*: the output mesh file

### 43.36.3 Options

- **-blocky** generate ‘blocky’ meshes with precise delineation of voxel edges, rather than the default Marching Cubes approach

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.37 labelconvert

### 43.37.1 Synopsis

Convert a connectome node image from one lookup table to another

### 43.37.2 Usage

```
labelconvert [ options ] path_in lut_in lut_out image_out
```

- *path\_in*: the input image
- *lut\_in*: the connectome lookup table for the input image
- *lut\_out*: the target connectome lookup table for the output image
- *image\_out*: the output image

### 43.37.3 Description

Typical usage is to convert a parcellation image provided by some other software, based on the lookup table provided by that software, to conform to a new lookup table, particularly one where the node indices increment from 1, in preparation for connectome construction; examples of such target lookup table files are provided in `share//mrtrix3//labelconvert//`

### 43.37.4 Options

- **-spine image** provide a manually-defined segmentation of the base of the spine where the streamlines terminate, so that this can become a node in the connection matrix.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.

- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.38 maskdump

### 43.38.1 Synopsis

Print out the locations of all non-zero voxels in a mask image

### 43.38.2 Usage

```
maskdump [ options ] input [ output ]
```

- *input*: the input image.
- *output*: the (optional) output text file.

### 43.38.3 Description

If no destination file is specified, the voxel locations will be printed to stdout.

### 43.38.4 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.

- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.39 maskfilter

### 43.39.1 Synopsis

Perform filtering operations on 3D / 4D mask images

### 43.39.2 Usage

```
maskfilter [ options ] input filter output
```

- *input*: the input image.
- *filter*: the type of filter to be applied (clean, connect, dilate, erode, median)
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.39.3 Description

The available filters are: clean, connect, dilate, erode, median.

Each filter has its own unique set of optional parameters.

### 43.39.4 Options

#### Options for mask cleaning filter

- **-scale value** the maximum scale used to cut bridges. A certain maximum scale cuts bridges up to a width (in voxels) of 2x the provided scale. (Default: 2)

### Options for connected-component filter

- **-axes axes** specify which axes should be included in the connected components. By default only the first 3 axes are included. The axes should be provided as a comma-separated list of values.
- **-largest** only retain the largest connected component
- **-connectivity** use 26-voxel-neighbourhood connectivity (Default: 6)

### Options for dilate / erode filters

- **-npass value** the number of times to repeatedly apply the filter

### Options for median filter

- **-extent voxels** specify the extent (width) of kernel size in voxels. This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all axes, or as a comma-separated list of the extent for each axis. The default is 3x3x3.

### Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.40 mesh2voxel

### 43.40.1 Synopsis

Convert a mesh surface to a partial volume estimation image

### 43.40.2 Usage

```
mesh2voxel [ options ] source template output
```

- *source*: the mesh file; note vertices must be defined in realspace coordinates
- *template*: the template image
- *output*: the output image

### 43.40.3 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

#### References

Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Anatomically-constrained tractography: Improved diffusion MRI streamlines tractography through effective use of anatomical information. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 62, 1924-1938

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## 43.41 meshconvert

### 43.41.1 Synopsis

Convert meshes between different formats, and apply transformations

### 43.41.2 Usage

```
meshconvert [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input mesh file
- *output*: the output mesh file

### 43.41.3 Options

- **-binary** write the output mesh file in binary format (if supported)
- **-transform mode image** transform vertices from one coordinate space to another, based on a template image; options are: first2real, real2first, voxel2real, real2voxel

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.42 meshfilter

### 43.42.1 Synopsis

Apply filter operations to meshes

### 43.42.2 Usage

```
meshfilter [ options ] input filter output
```

- *input*: the input mesh file
- *filter*: the filter to apply. Options are: smooth
- *output*: the output mesh file

### 43.42.3 Options

#### Options for mesh smoothing filter

- **-smooth\_spatial value** spatial extent of smoothing (default: 10mm)
- **-smooth\_influence value** influence factor for smoothing (default: 10)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.43 mraverageheader

### 43.43.1 Synopsis

Calculate the average (unbiased) coordinate space of all input images

### 43.43.2 Usage

```
mraverageheader [ options ] input [ input ... ] output
```

- *input*: the input image(s).
- *output*: the output image

### 43.43.3 Options

- **-padding value** boundary box padding in voxels. Default: 0
- **-resolution type** subsampling of template compared to smallest voxel size in any input image. Valid options are ‘mean’: unbiased but loss of resolution for individual images possible, and ‘max’: smallest voxel size of any input image defines the resolution. Default: mean
- **-fill** set the intensity in the first volume of the average space to 1

#### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.44 mrcalc

### 43.44.1 Synopsis

Apply generic voxel-wise mathematical operations to images

### 43.44.2 Usage

```
mrcalc [ options ] operand [ operand ... ]
```

- *operand*: an input image, intensity value, or the special keywords ‘rand’ (random number between 0 and 1) or ‘randn’ (random number from unit std.dev. normal distribution).

### 43.44.3 Description

This command will only compute per-voxel operations. Use ‘mrmath’ to compute summary statistics across images or along image axes.

This command uses a stack-based syntax, with operators (specified using options) operating on the top-most entries (i.e. images or values) in the stack. Operands (values or images) are pushed onto the stack in the order they appear (as arguments) on the command-line, and operators (specified as options) operate on and consume the top-most entries in the stack, and push their output as a new entry on the stack. For example:

```
$ mrcalc a.mif 2 -mult r.mif
```

performs the operation  $r = 2*a$  for every voxel  $a,r$  in images  $a.mif$  and  $r.mif$  respectively. Similarly:

```
$ mrcalc a.mif -neg b.mif -div -exp 9.3 -mult r.mif
```

performs the operation  $r = 9.3*\exp(-a/b)$ , and:

```
$ mrcalc a.mif b.mif -add c.mif d.mif -mult 4.2 -add -div r.mif
```

performs  $r = (a+b)/(c*d+4.2)$ .

As an additional feature, this command will allow images with different dimensions to be processed, provided they satisfy the following conditions: for each axis, the dimensions match if they are the same size, or one of them has size one. In the latter case, the entire image will be replicated along that axis. This allows for example a 4D image of size [ X Y Z N ] to be added to a 3D image of size [ X Y Z ], as if it consisted of N copies of the 3D image along the 4th axis (the missing dimension is assumed to have size 1). Another example would a single-voxel 4D image of size [ 1 1 1 N ], multiplied by a 3D image of size [ X Y Z ], which would allow the creation of a 4D image where each volume consists of the 3D image scaled by the corresponding value for that volume in the single-voxel image.

## 43.44.4 Options

### Unary operators

- **-abs** absolute value
- **-neg** negative value
- **-sqrt** square root
- **-exp** exponential function
- **-log** natural logarithm
- **-log10** common logarithm
- **-cos** cosine
- **-sin** sine
- **-tan** tangent
- **-cosh** hyperbolic cosine
- **-sinh** hyperbolic sine
- **-tanh** hyperbolic tangent
- **-acos** inverse cosine
- **-asin** inverse sine
- **-atan** inverse tangent
- **-acosh** inverse hyperbolic cosine
- **-asinh** inverse hyperbolic sine
- **-atanh** inverse hyperbolic tangent
- **-round** round to nearest integer
- **-ceil** round up to nearest integer
- **-floor** round down to nearest integer
- **-isnan** true (1) if operand is not-a-number (NaN)
- **-isinf** true (1) if operand is infinite (Inf)
- **-finite** true (1) if operand is finite (i.e. not NaN or Inf)
- **-real** real part of complex number
- **-imag** imaginary part of complex number
- **-phase** phase of complex number
- **-conj** complex conjugate

### Binary operators

- **-add** add values
- **-subtract** subtract nth operand from (n-1)th
- **-multiply** multiply values

- **-divide** divide (n-1)th operand by nth
- **-pow** raise (n-1)th operand to nth power
- **-min** smallest of last two operands
- **-max** greatest of last two operands
- **-lt** less-than operator (true=1, false=0)
- **-gt** greater-than operator (true=1, false=0)
- **-le** less-than-or-equal-to operator (true=1, false=0)
- **-ge** greater-than-or-equal-to operator (true=1, false=0)
- **-eq** equal-to operator (true=1, false=0)
- **-neq** not-equal-to operator (true=1, false=0)
- **-complex** create complex number using the last two operands as real,imaginary components

### Ternary operators

- **-if** if first operand is true (non-zero), return second operand, otherwise return third operand
- **-replace** Wherever first operand is equal to the second operand, replace with third operand

### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.45 mrcat

### 43.45.1 Synopsis

Concatenate several images into one

### 43.45.2 Usage

```
mrcat [ options ] image1 image2 [ image2 ... ] output
```

- *image1*: the first input image.
- *image2*: additional input image(s).
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.45.3 Options

- **-axis axis** specify axis along which concatenation should be performed. By default, the program will use the last non-singleton, non-spatial axis of any of the input images - in other words axis 3 or whichever axis (greater than 3) of the input images has size greater than one.

#### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.46 mrcheckerboardmask

### 43.46.1 Synopsis

Create bitwise checkerboard image

### 43.46.2 Usage

```
mrcheckerboardmask [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input image to be used as a template.
- *output*: the output binary image mask.

### 43.46.3 Options

- **-tiles value** specify the number of tiles in any direction
- **-invert** invert output binary mask.
- **-nan** use NaN as the output zero value.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.47 mrclusterstats

### 43.47.1 Synopsis

Voxel-based analysis using permutation testing and threshold-free cluster enhancement

### 43.47.2 Usage

```
mrclusterstats [ options ] input design contrast mask output
```

- *input*: a text file containing the file names of the input images, one file per line
- *design*: the design matrix, rows should correspond with images in the input image text file
- *contrast*: the contrast matrix, only specify one contrast as it will automatically compute the opposite contrast.
- *mask*: a mask used to define voxels included in the analysis.
- *output*: the filename prefix for all output.

### 43.47.3 Options

#### Options for permutation testing

- **-notest** don't perform permutation testing and only output population statistics (effect size, stdev etc)
- **-nperms num** the number of permutations (Default: 5000)
- **-permutations file** manually define the permutations (relabelling). The input should be a text file defining a  $m \times n$  matrix, where each relabelling is defined as a column vector of size  $m$ , and the number of columns,  $n$ , defines the number of permutations. Can be generated with the `palm_quickperms` function in PALM (<http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk/fsl/fslwiki/PALM>). Overrides the `nperms` option.
- **-nonstationary** perform non-stationarity correction
- **-nperms\_nonstationary num** the number of permutations used when precomputing the empirical statistic image for nonstationary correction (Default: 5000)
- **-permutations\_nonstationary file** manually define the permutations (relabelling) for computing the empirical statistic image for nonstationary correction. The input should be a text file defining a  $m \times n$  matrix, where each relabelling is defined as a column vector of size  $m$ , and the number of columns,  $n$ , defines the number of permutations. Can be generated with the `palm_quickperms` function in PALM (<http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk/fsl/fslwiki/PALM>) Overrides the `nperms_nonstationary` option.

### Options for controlling TFCE behaviour

- **-tfce\_dh value** the height increment used in the tfce integration (default: 0.1)
- **-tfce\_e value** tfce extent exponent (default: 0.5)
- **-tfce\_h value** tfce height exponent (default: 2)

### Additional options for mrclusterstats

- **-negative** automatically test the negative (opposite) contrast. By computing the opposite contrast simultaneously the computation time is reduced.
- **-threshold value** the cluster-forming threshold to use for a standard cluster-based analysis. This disables TFCE, which is the default otherwise.
- **-connectivity** use 26-voxel-neighbourhood connectivity (Default: 6)

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

- If not using the **-threshold** command-line option: Smith, S. M. & Nichols, T. E. Threshold-free cluster enhancement: Addressing problems of smoothing, threshold dependence and localisation in cluster inference. *NeuroImage*, 2009, 44, 83-98
- If using the **-nonstationary** option: Salimi-Khorshidi, G. Smith, S.M. Nichols, T.E. Adjusting the effect of non-stationarity in cluster-based and TFCE inference. *Neuroimage*, 2011, 54(3), 2006-19

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## 43.48 mrconvert

### 43.48.1 Synopsis

Perform conversion between different file types and optionally extract a subset of the input image

### 43.48.2 Usage

```
mrconvert [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input image.
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.48.3 Description

If used correctly, this program can be a very useful workhorse. In addition to converting images between different formats, it can be used to extract specific studies from a data set, extract a specific region of interest, or flip the images. Some of the possible operations are described in more detail below.

The `-coord` option is used to select the coordinates within the input image that are to be retained in the output image. This can therefore be used to include or exclude subsets of slices along a particular spatial axis, or volumes / series within higher dimensions. For instance: `-coord 3 0` extracts the first volume from a 4D image; `-coord 1 24` extracts slice number 24 along the y-axis.

The colon operator can be particularly useful in conjunction with the `-coord` option, in order to select multiple coordinates. For instance: `-coord 3 1:59` would select all but the first volume from an image containing 60 volumes.

The `-vox` option is used to change the size of the voxels in the output image. Note that this does not re-sample the image based on a new voxel size (that is done using the `mrresize` command); this only changes the voxel size as reported in the image header. Voxel sizes for individual axes can be set independently, using a comma-separated list of values; e.g. `-vox 1,,3.5` will change the voxel size along the x & z axes to 1.0mm and 3.5mm respectively, and leave the y-axis voxel size unchanged.

The `-axes` option specifies which axes from the input image will be used to form the output image. This allows the permutation, omission, or addition of axes into the output image. The axes should be supplied as a comma-separated list of axis indices, e.g. `-axes 0,1,2` would select only the three spatial axes to form the output image. If an axis from the input image is to be omitted from the output image, it must have dimension 1; either in the input image itself, or a single coordinate along that axis must be selected by the user by using the `-coord` option. An axis of unity dimension can be inserted by supplying `-1` at the corresponding position in the list.

The `-scaling` option specifies the data scaling parameters stored within the image header that are used to rescale the image intensity values. Where the raw data stored in a particular voxel is  $I$ , the value within that voxel is interpreted as:  $\text{value} = \text{offset} + (\text{scale} \times I)$ . To adjust this scaling, the relevant parameters must be provided as a comma-separated 2-vector of floating-point values, in the format “offset,scale” (no quotation marks).

By default, the intensity scaling parameters in the input image header are passed through to the output image header when writing to an integer image, and reset to 0,1 (i.e. no scaling) for floating-point and binary images. Note that the `-scaling` option will therefore have no effect for floating-point or binary output images.

Note that for both the `-coord` and `-axes` options, indexing starts from 0 rather than 1. E.g. `-coord 3 <#>` selects volumes (the fourth dimension) from the series; `-axes 0,1,2` includes only the three spatial axes in the output image.

## 43.48.4 Options

### Options for manipulating fundamental image properties

- **-coord axis coord** retain data from the input image only at the coordinates specified
- **-vox sizes** change the voxel dimensions of the output image
- **-axes axes** specify the axes from the input image that will be used to form the output image
- **-scaling values** specify the data scaling parameters used to rescale the intensity values

### Options for handling JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) files

- **-json\_import file** import data from a JSON file into header key-value pairs
- **-json\_export file** export data from an image header key-value pairs into a JSON file

### Options to modify generic header entries

- **-clear\_property key** remove the specified key from the image header altogether.
- **-set\_property key value** set the value of the specified key in the image header.
- **-append\_property key value** append the given value to the specified key in the image header (this adds the value specified as a new line in the header value).

### Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.

## DW gradient table export options

- **-export\_grad\_mrtrix path** export the diffusion-weighted gradient table to file in MRtrix format
- **-export\_grad\_fsl bvecs\_path bvals\_path** export the diffusion-weighted gradient table to files in FSL (bvecs / bvals) format

## Options for importing phase-encode tables

- **-import\_pe\_table file** import a phase-encoding table from file
- **-import\_pe\_eddy config indices** import phase-encoding information from an EDDY-style config / index file pair

## Options for exporting phase-encode tables

- **-export\_pe\_table file** export phase-encoding table to file
- **-export\_pe\_eddy config indices** export phase-encoding information to an EDDY-style config / index file pair

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.49 mrcrop

### 43.49.1 Synopsis

Crop an image to a reduced field of view

## 43.49.2 Usage

```
mrcrop [ options ] image_in image_out
```

- *image\_in*: the image to be cropped
- *image\_out*: the output path for the resulting cropped image

## 43.49.3 Description

Extent of cropping can be determined using either manual setting of axis dimensions, or a computed mask image corresponding to the brain.

If using a mask, a gap of 1 voxel will be left at all 6 edges of the image such that trilinear interpolation upon the resulting images is still valid.

This is useful for axially-acquired brain images, where the image size can be reduced by a factor of 2 by removing the empty space on either side of the brain.

## 43.49.4 Options

- **-mask image** crop the input image according to the spatial extent of a mask image
- **-axis index start end** crop the input image in the provided axis

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.50 mrdegibbs

### 43.50.1 Synopsis

Remove Gibbs Ringing Artifacts

### 43.50.2 Usage

```
mrdegibbs [ options ] in out
```

- *in*: the input image.
- *out*: the output image.

### 43.50.3 Description

This application attempts to remove Gibbs ringing artefacts from MRI images using the method of local subvoxel-shifts proposed by Kellner et al. (see reference below for details).

This command is designed to run on data directly after it has been reconstructed by the scanner, before any interpolation of any kind has taken place. You should not run this command after any form of motion correction (e.g. not after dwipreproc). Similarly, if you intend running dwidenoise, you should run this command afterwards, since it has the potential to alter the noise structure, which would impact on dwidenoise's performance.

Note that this method is designed to work on images acquired with full k-space coverage. Running this method on partial Fourier ('half-scan') data may lead to suboptimal and/or biased results, as noted in the original reference below. There is currently no means of dealing with this; users should exercise caution when using this method on partial Fourier data, and inspect its output for any obvious artefacts.

### 43.50.4 Options

- **-axes list** select the slice axes (default: 0,1 - i.e. x-y).
- **-nshifts value** discretization of subpixel spacing (default: 20).
- **-minW value** left border of window used for TV computation (default: 1).
- **-maxW value** right border of window used for TV computation (default: 3).

#### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.

- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Kellner, E; Dhital, B; Kiselev, V.G & Reisert, M. Gibbs-ringing artifact removal based on local subvoxel-shifts. *Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 2016, 76, 1574–1581.

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## 43.51 mrdump

### 43.51.1 Synopsis

Print out the values within an image

### 43.51.2 Usage

```
mrdump [ options ] input[ output ]
```

- *input*: the input image.
- *output*: the (optional) output text file.

### 43.51.3 Description

If no destination file is specified, the voxel locations will be printed to stdout.

### 43.51.4 Options

- **-mask image** only write the image values within voxels specified by a mask image

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.52 mredit

### 43.52.1 Synopsis

Directly edit the intensities within an image from the command-line

### 43.52.2 Usage

```
mredit [ options ] input[ output ]
```

- *input*: the input image
- *output*: the (optional) output image

### 43.52.3 Description

A range of options are provided to enable direct editing of voxel intensities based on voxel / real-space coordinates. If only one image path is provided, the image will be edited in-place (use at own risk); if input and output image paths are provided, the output will contain the edited image, and the original image will not be modified in any way.

## 43.52.4 Options

- **-plane axis coord value** fill one or more planes on a particular image axis
- **-sphere position radius value** draw a sphere with radius in mm
- **-voxel position value** change the image value within a single voxel
- **-scanner** indicate that coordinates are specified in scanner space, rather than as voxel coordinates

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.53 mrfilter

### 43.53.1 Synopsis

Perform filtering operations on 3D / 4D MR images

### 43.53.2 Usage

```
mrfilter [ options ] input filter output
```

- *input*: the input image.
- *filter*: the type of filter to be applied
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.53.3 Description

The available filters are: fft, gradient, median, smooth, normalise.

Each filter has its own unique set of optional parameters.

For 4D images, each 3D volume is processed independently.

### 43.53.4 Options

#### Options for FFT filter

- **-axes list** the axes along which to apply the Fourier Transform. By default, the transform is applied along the three spatial axes. Provide as a comma-separated list of axis indices.
- **-inverse** apply the inverse FFT
- **-magnitude** output a magnitude image rather than a complex-valued image
- **-centre\_zero** re-arrange the FFT results so that the zero-frequency component appears in the centre of the image, rather than at the edges

#### Options for gradient filter

- **-stdev sigma** the standard deviation of the Gaussian kernel used to smooth the input image (in mm). The image is smoothed to reduced large spurious gradients caused by noise. Use this option to override the default stdev of 1 voxel. This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all 3 axes, or as a comma-separated list of 3 values, one for each axis.
- **-magnitude** output the gradient magnitude, rather than the default x,y,z components
- **-scanner** define the gradient with respect to the scanner coordinate frame of reference.

#### Options for median filter

- **-extent size** specify extent of median filtering neighbourhood in voxels. This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all 3 axes, or as a comma-separated list of 3 values, one for each axis (default: 3x3x3).

#### Options for normalisation filter

- **-extent size** specify extent of normalisation filtering neighbourhood in voxels. This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all 3 axes, or as a comma-separated list of 3 values, one for each axis (default: 3x3x3).

#### Options for smooth filter

- **-stdev mm** apply Gaussian smoothing with the specified standard deviation. The standard deviation is defined in mm (Default 1 voxel). This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all axes, or as a comma-separated list of the stdev for each axis.
- **-fwhm mm** apply Gaussian smoothing with the specified full-width half maximum. The FWHM is defined in mm (Default 1 voxel \* 2.3548). This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all axes, or as a comma-separated list of the FWHM for each axis.

- **-extent voxels** specify the extent (width) of kernel size in voxels. This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all axes, or as a comma-separated list of the extent for each axis. The default extent is  $2 * \text{ceil}(2.5 * \text{stdev} / \text{voxel\_size}) - 1$ .

### Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.54 mrhistmatch

### 43.54.1 Synopsis

Modify the intensities of one image to match the histogram of another

### 43.54.2 Usage

```
mrhistmatch [ options ] type input target output
```

- *type*: type of histogram matching to perform; options are: scale,linear,nonlinear

- *input*: the input image to be modified
- *target*: the input image from which to derive the target histogram
- *output*: the output image

### 43.54.3 Options

#### Image masking options

- **-mask\_input image** only generate input histogram based on a specified binary mask image
- **-mask\_target image** only generate target histogram based on a specified binary mask image

#### Non-linear histogram matching options

- **-bins num** the number of bins to use to generate the histograms

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

#### References

- If using inverse contrast normalization for inter-modal (DWI - T1) registration: Bhushan, C.; Haldar, J. P.; Choi, S.; Joshi, A. A.; Shattuck, D. W. & Leahy, R. M. Co-registration and distortion correction of diffusion and anatomical images based on inverse contrast normalization. NeuroImage, 2015, 115, 269-280

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## 43.55 mrhistogram

### 43.55.1 Synopsis

Generate a histogram of image intensities

### 43.55.2 Usage

```
mrhistogram [ options ] image hist
```

- *image*: the input image from which the histogram will be computed
- *hist*: the output histogram file

### 43.55.3 Options

#### Histogram generation options

- **-bins num** Manually set the number of bins to use to generate the histogram.
- **-template file** Use an existing histogram file as the template for histogram formation
- **-mask image** Calculate the histogram only within a mask image.
- **-ignorezero** ignore zero-valued data during histogram construction.

#### Additional options for mrhistogram

- **-allvolumes** generate one histogram across all image volumes, rather than one per image volume

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.56 mrinfo

### 43.56.1 Synopsis

Display image header information, or extract specific information from the header

### 43.56.2 Usage

```
mrinfo [ options ] image [ image ... ]
```

- *image*: the input image(s).

### 43.56.3 Description

By default, all information contained in each image header will be printed to the console in a reader-friendly format.

Alternatively, command-line options may be used to extract specific details from the header(s); these are printed to the console in a format more appropriate for scripting purposes or piping to file. If multiple options and/or images are provided, the requested header fields will be printed in the order in which they appear in the help page, with all requested details from each input image in sequence printed before the next image is processed.

The command can also write the diffusion gradient table from a single input image to file; either in the MRtrix or FSL format (bvecs/bvals file pair; includes appropriate diffusion gradient vector reorientation)

### 43.56.4 Options

- **-all** print all properties, rather than the first and last 2 of each.
- **-format** image file format
- **-ndim** number of image dimensions
- **-size** image size along each axis
- **-spacing** voxel spacing along each image dimension
- **-datatype** data type used for image data storage
- **-strides** data strides i.e. order and direction of axes data layout
- **-offset** image intensity offset
- **-multiplier** image intensity multiplier
- **-transform** the voxel to image transformation

- **-norealign** do not realign transform to near-default RAS coordinate system (the default behaviour on image load). This is useful to inspect the image and/or header contents as they are actually stored in the header, rather than as MRtrix interprets them.

### Options for exporting image header fields

- **-property key** any text properties embedded in the image header under the specified key (use 'all' to list all keys found)
- **-json\_keyval file** export header key/value entries to a JSON file
- **-json\_all file** export all header contents to a JSON file

### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).
- **-raw\_dwgrad** do not modify the gradient table from what was found in the image headers. This skips the validation steps normally performed within MRtrix applications (i.e. do not verify that the number of entries in the gradient table matches the number of volumes in the image, do not scale b-values by gradient norms, do not normalise gradient vectors)

### DW gradient table export options

- **-export\_grad\_mrtrix path** export the diffusion-weighted gradient table to file in MRtrix format
- **-export\_grad\_fsl bvecs\_path bvals\_path** export the diffusion-weighted gradient table to files in FSL (bvecs / bvals) format
- **-dwgrad** the diffusion-weighting gradient table, as stored in the header (i.e. without any interpretation, scaling of b-values, or normalisation of gradient vectors)
- **-shell\_bvalues** list the average b-value of each shell
- **-shell\_sizes** list the number of volumes in each shell

### Options for exporting phase-encode tables

- **-export\_pe\_table file** export phase-encoding table to file
- **-export\_pe\_eddy config indices** export phase-encoding information to an EDDY-style config / index file pair
- **-petable** print the phase encoding table

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.57 mrmath

### 43.57.1 Synopsis

Compute summary statistic on image intensities either across images, or along a specified axis of a single image

### 43.57.2 Usage

```
mrmath [ options ] input [ input ... ] operation output
```

- *input*: the input image(s).
- *operation*: the operation to apply, one of: mean, median, sum, product, rms, norm, var, std, min, max, absmax, magmax.
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.57.3 Description

Supported operations are:

mean, median, sum, product, rms (root-mean-square value), norm (vector 2-norm), var (unbiased variance), std (unbiased standard deviation), min, max, absmax (maximum absolute value), magmax (value with maximum absolute value, preserving its sign).

See also ‘mrcalc’ to compute per-voxel operations.

## 43.57.4 Options

- **-axis index** perform operation along a specified axis of a single input image

### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.58 mrmetric

### 43.58.1 Synopsis

Computes a dissimilarity metric between two images

### 43.58.2 Usage

```
mrmetric [ options ] image1 image2
```

- *image1*: the first input image.

- *image2*: the second input image.

### 43.58.3 Description

Currently only the mean squared difference is implemented.

### 43.58.4 Options

- **-space iteration method** voxel (default): per voxel image1: scanner space of image 1 image2: scanner space of image 2 average: scanner space of the average affine transformation of image 1 and 2
- **-interp method** set the interpolation method to use when reslicing (choices: nearest, linear, cubic, sinc. Default: linear).
- **-metric method** define the dissimilarity metric used to calculate the cost. Choices: diff (squared differences), cc (negative cross correlation). Default: diff). cc is only implemented for -space average and -interp linear.
- **-mask1 image** mask for image 1
- **-mask2 image** mask for image 2
- **-nonormalisation** do not normalise the dissimilarity metric to the number of voxels.
- **-overlap** output number of voxels that were used.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.59 mrpad

### 43.59.1 Synopsis

Pad an image to increase the FOV

### 43.59.2 Usage

```
mrpad [ options ] image_in image_out
```

- *image\_in*: the image to be padded
- *image\_out*: the output path for the resulting padded image

### 43.59.3 Options

- **-uniform number** pad the input image by a uniform number of voxels on all sides (in 3D)
- **-axis index lower upper** pad the input image along the provided axis (defined by index). Lower and upper define the number of voxels to add to the lower and upper bounds of the axis

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.60 mrregister

### 43.60.1 Synopsis

Register two images together using a symmetric rigid, affine or non-linear transformation model

### 43.60.2 Usage

```
mrregister [ options ] image1 image2
```

- *image1*: input image 1 ('moving')
- *image2*: input image 2 ('template')

### 43.60.3 Description

By default this application will perform an affine, followed by non-linear registration.

FOD registration (with apodised point spread reorientation) will be performed by default if the number of volumes in the 4th dimension equals the number of coefficients in an antipodally symmetric spherical harmonic series (e.g. 6, 15, 28 etc). The `-no_reorientation` option can be used to force reorientation off if required.

Non-linear registration computes warps to map from both `image1->image2` and `image2->image1`. Similar to Avants (2008) Med Image Anal. 12(1): 26–41, registration is performed by matching both the `image1` and `image2` in a 'midway space'. Warps can be saved as two deformation fields that map directly between `image1->image2` and `image2->image1`, or if using `-nl_warp_full` as a single 5D file that stores all 4 warps `image1->mid->image2`, and `image2->mid->image1`. The 5D warp format stores `x,y,z` deformations in the 4th dimension, and uses the 5th dimension to index the 4 warps. The affine transforms estimated (to midway space) are also stored as comments in the image header. The 5D warp file can be used to reinitialise subsequent registrations, in addition to transforming images to midway space (e.g. for intra-subject alignment in a 2-time-point longitudinal analysis).

### 43.60.4 Options

- **-type choice** the registration type. Valid choices are: `rigid`, `affine`, `nonlinear`, `rigid_affine`, `rigid_nonlinear`, `affine_nonlinear`, `rigid_affine_nonlinear` (Default: `affine_nonlinear`)
- **-transformed image** `image1` after registration transformed to the space of `image2`
- **-transformed\_midway image1\_transformed image2\_transformed** `image1` and `image2` after registration transformed to the midway space
- **-mask1 filename** a mask to define the region of `image1` to use for optimisation.
- **-mask2 filename** a mask to define the region of `image2` to use for optimisation.

#### Rigid registration options

- **-rigid file** the output text file containing the rigid transformation as a 4x4 matrix
- **-rigid\_1tomidway file** the output text file containing the rigid transformation that aligns `image1` to `image2` in their common midway space as a 4x4 matrix
- **-rigid\_2tomidway file** the output text file containing the rigid transformation that aligns `image2` to `image1` in their common midway space as a 4x4 matrix

- **-rigid\_init\_translation type** initialise the translation and centre of rotation Valid choices are: mass (aligns the centers of mass of both images, default), geometric (aligns geometric image centres) and none.
- **-rigid\_init\_rotation type** initialise the rotation Valid choices are: search (search for the best rotation using mean squared residuals), moments (rotation based on directions of intensity variance with respect to centre of mass), none (default).
- **-rigid\_init\_matrix file** initialise either the rigid, affine, or syn registration with the supplied rigid transformation (as a 4x4 matrix in scanner coordinates). Note that this overrides rigid\_init\_translation and rigid\_init\_rotation initialisation
- **-rigid\_scale factor** use a multi-resolution scheme by defining a scale factor for each level using comma separated values (Default: 0.25,0.5,1.0)
- **-rigid\_niter num** the maximum number of gradient descent iterations per stage. This can be specified either as a single number for all multi-resolution levels, or a single value for each level. (Default: 1000)
- **-rigid\_metric type** valid choices are: diff (intensity differences), Default: diff
- **-rigid\_metric.diff.estimator type** Valid choices are: l1 (least absolute: |x|), l2 (ordinary least squares), lp (least powers: |x|^1.2), Default: l2
- **-rigid\_lmax num** explicitly set the lmax to be used per scale factor in rigid FOD registration. By default FOD registration will use lmax 0,2,4 with default scale factors 0.25,0.5,1.0 respectively. Note that no reorientation will be performed with lmax = 0.
- **-rigid\_log file** write gradient descent parameter evolution to log file

### Affine registration options

- **-affine file** the output text file containing the affine transformation as a 4x4 matrix
- **-affine\_1tomidway file** the output text file containing the affine transformation that aligns image1 to image2 in their common midway space as a 4x4 matrix
- **-affine\_2tomidway file** the output text file containing the affine transformation that aligns image2 to image1 in their common midway space as a 4x4 matrix
- **-affine\_init\_translation type** initialise the translation and centre of rotation Valid choices are: mass (aligns the centers of mass of both images), geometric (aligns geometric image centres) and none. (Default: mass)
- **-affine\_init\_rotation type** initialise the rotation Valid choices are: search (search for the best rotation using mean squared residuals), moments (rotation based on directions of intensity variance with respect to centre of mass), none (Default: none).
- **-affine\_init\_matrix file** initialise either the affine, or syn registration with the supplied affine transformation (as a 4x4 matrix in scanner coordinates). Note that this overrides affine\_init\_translation and affine\_init\_rotation initialisation
- **-affine\_scale factor** use a multi-resolution scheme by defining a scale factor for each level using comma separated values (Default: 0.25,0.5,1.0)
- **-affine\_niter num** the maximum number of gradient descent iterations per stage. This can be specified either as a single number for all multi-resolution levels, or a single value for each level. (Default: 1000)
- **-affine\_metric type** valid choices are: diff (intensity differences), Default: diff
- **-affine\_metric.diff.estimator type** Valid choices are: l1 (least absolute: |x|), l2 (ordinary least squares), lp (least powers: |x|^1.2), Default: l2

- **-affine\_lmax num** explicitly set the lmax to be used per scale factor in affine FOD registration. By default FOD registration will use lmax 0,2,4 with default scale factors 0.25,0.5,1.0 respectively. Note that no reorientation will be performed with lmax = 0.
- **-affine\_log file** write gradient descent parameter evolution to log file

### Advanced linear transformation initialisation options

- **-init\_translation.unmasked1** disregard mask1 for the translation initialisation (affects ‘mass’)
- **-init\_translation.unmasked2** disregard mask2 for the translation initialisation (affects ‘mass’)
- **-init\_rotation.unmasked1** disregard mask1 for the rotation initialisation (affects ‘search’ and ‘moments’)
- **-init\_rotation.unmasked2** disregard mask2 for the rotation initialisation (affects ‘search’ and ‘moments’)
- **-init\_rotation.search.angles angles** rotation angles for the local search in degrees between 0 and 180. (Default: 2,5,10,15,20)
- **-init\_rotation.search.scale scale** relative size of the images used for the rotation search. (Default: 0.15)
- **-init\_rotation.search.directions num** number of rotation axis for local search. (Default: 250)
- **-init\_rotation.search.run\_global** perform a global search. (Default: local)
- **-init\_rotation.search.global.iterations num** number of rotations to investigate (Default: 10000)

### Advanced linear registration stage options

- **-linstage.iterations num or comma separated list** number of iterations for each registration stage, not to be confused with -rigid\_niter or -affine\_niter. This can be used to generate intermediate diagnostics images (-linstage.diagnostics.prefix) or to change the cost function optimiser during registration (without the need to repeatedly resize the images). (Default: 1 == no repetition)
- **-linstage.optimiser.first algorithm** Cost function optimisation algorithm to use at first iteration of all stages. Valid choices: bbgd (Barzilai-Borwein gradient descent) or gd (simple gradient descent). (Default: bbgd)
- **-linstage.optimiser.last algorithm** Cost function optimisation algorithm to use at last iteration of all stages (if there are more than one). Valid choices: bbgd (Barzilai-Borwein gradient descent) or gd (simple gradient descent). (Default: bbgd)
- **-linstage.optimiser.default algorithm** Cost function optimisation algorithm to use at any stage iteration other than first or last iteration. Valid choices: bbgd (Barzilai-Borwein gradient descent) or gd (simple gradient descent). (Default: bbgd)
- **-linstage.diagnostics.prefix file prefix** generate diagnostics images after every registration stage

### Non-linear registration options

- **-nl\_warp warp1 warp2** the non-linear warp output defined as two deformation fields, where warp1 can be used to transform image1->image2 and warp2 to transform image2->image1. The deformation fields also encapsulate any linear transformation estimated prior to non-linear registration.
- **-nl\_warp\_full image** output all warps used during registration. This saves four different warps that map each image to a midway space and their inverses in a single 5D image file. The 4th image dimension indexes the x,y,z component of the deformation vector and the 5th dimension indexes the field in this order: image1->midway, midway->image1, image2->midway, midway->image2. Where image1->midway defines the field that maps image1 onto the midway space using the reverse convention When linear registration is performed first, the

estimated linear transform will be included in the comments of the image header, and therefore the entire linear and non-linear transform can be applied (in either direction) using this output warp file with `mrtransform`

- **-nl\_init image** initialise the non-linear registration with the supplied warp image. The supplied warp must be in the same format as output using the `-nl_warp_full` option (i.e. have 4 deformation fields with the linear transforms in the image header)
- **-nl\_scale factor** use a multi-resolution scheme by defining a scale factor for each level using comma separated values (Default: 0.25,0.5,1.0)
- **-nl\_niter num** the maximum number of iterations. This can be specified either as a single number for all multi-resolution levels, or a single value for each level. (Default: 50)
- **-nl\_update\_smooth stdev** regularise the gradient update field with Gaussian smoothing (standard deviation in voxel units, Default 2.0)
- **-nl\_disp\_smooth stdev** regularise the displacement field with Gaussian smoothing (standard deviation in voxel units, Default 1.0)
- **-nl\_grad\_step num** the gradient step size for non-linear registration (Default: 0.5)
- **-nl\_lmax num** explicitly set the `lmax` to be used per scale factor in non-linear FOD registration. By default FOD registration will use `lmax` 0,2,4 with default scale factors 0.25,0.5,1.0 respectively. Note that no reorientation will be performed with `lmax` = 0.

### FOD registration options

- **-directions file** the directions used for FOD reorientation using apodised point spread functions (Default: 60 directions)
- **-noreorientation** turn off FOD reorientation. Reorientation is on by default if the number of volumes in the 4th dimension corresponds to the number of coefficients in an antipodally symmetric spherical harmonic series (i.e. 6, 15, 28, 45, 66 etc)

### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: `float32`, `float32le`, `float32be`, `float64`, `float64le`, `float64be`, `int64`, `uint64`, `int64le`, `uint64le`, `int64be`, `uint64be`, `int32`, `uint32`, `int32le`, `uint32le`, `int32be`, `uint32be`, `int16`, `uint16`, `int16le`, `uint16le`, `int16be`, `uint16be`, `cfloat32`, `cfloat32le`, `cfloat32be`, `cfloat64`, `cfloat64le`, `cfloat64be`, `int8`, `uint8`, `bit`.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

- If FOD registration is being performed: Raffelt, D.; Tournier, J.-D.; Fripp, J; Crozier, S.; Connelly, A. & Salvado, O. Symmetric diffeomorphic registration of fibre orientation distributions. *NeuroImage*, 2011, 56(3), 1171-1180
- Raffelt, D.; Tournier, J.-D.; Crozier, S.; Connelly, A. & Salvado, O. Reorientation of fiber orientation distributions using apodized point spread functions. *Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 2012, 67, 844-855

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## 43.61 mrresize

### 43.61.1 Synopsis

Resize an image by defining the new image resolution, voxel size or a scale factor

### 43.61.2 Usage

```
mrresize [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: input image to be resized.
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.61.3 Description

Note that if the image is 4D, then only the first 3 dimensions can be resized.

Also note that if the image is down-sampled, the appropriate smoothing is automatically applied using Gaussian smoothing.

### 43.61.4 Options

- **-size dims** define the new image size for the output image. This should be specified as a comma-separated list.
- **-voxel size** define the new voxel size for the output image. This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all dimensions, or as a comma-separated list of the size for each voxel dimension.
- **-scale factor** scale the image resolution by the supplied factor. This can be specified either as a single value to be used for all dimensions, or as a comma-separated list of scale factors for each dimension.
- **-interp method** set the interpolation method to use when resizing (choices: nearest, linear, cubic, sinc. Default: cubic).

## Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.62 mrstats

### 43.62.1 Synopsis

Compute images statistics

### 43.62.2 Usage

```
mrstats [ options ] image
```

- *image*: the input image from which statistics will be computed.

## 43.62.3 Options

### Statistics options

- **-output field** output only the field specified. Multiple such options can be supplied if required. Choices are: mean, median, std, min, max, count. Useful for use in scripts.
- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary mask image.
- **-ignorezero** ignore zero values during statistics calculation

### Additional options for mrstats

- **-allvolumes** generate statistics across all image volumes, rather than one set of statistics per image volume

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.63 mrthreshold

### 43.63.1 Synopsis

Create bitwise image by thresholding image intensity

### 43.63.2 Usage

```
mrthreshold [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input image to be thresholded.
- *output*: the output binary image mask.

### 43.63.3 Description

By default, an optimal threshold is determined using a parameter-free method. Alternatively the threshold can be defined manually by the user.

### 43.63.4 Options

- **-abs value** specify threshold value as absolute intensity.
- **-percentile value** threshold the image at the *ith* percentile.
- **-top N** provide a mask of the *N* top-valued voxels
- **-bottom N** provide a mask of the *N* bottom-valued voxels
- **-invert** invert output binary mask.
- **-toppercent N** provide a mask of the *N%%* top-valued voxels
- **-bottompercent N** provide a mask of the *N%%* bottom-valued voxels
- **-nan** use NaN as the output zero value.
- **-ignorezero** ignore zero-valued input voxels.
- **-mask image** compute the optimal threshold based on voxels within a mask.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

- If not using any manual thresholding option: Ridgway, G. R.; Omar, R.; Ourselin, S.; Hill, D. L.; Warren, J. D. & Fox, N. C. Issues with threshold masking in voxel-based morphometry of atrophied brains. *NeuroImage*, 2009, 44, 99-111

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## 43.64 mrtransform

### 43.64.1 Synopsis

Apply spatial transformations to an image

### 43.64.2 Usage

```
mrtransform [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: input image to be transformed.
- *output*: the output image.

### 43.64.3 Description

If a linear transform is applied without a template image the command will modify the image header transform matrix

FOD reorientation (with apodised point spread functions) will be performed by default if the number of volumes in the 4th dimension equals the number of coefficients in an antipodally symmetric spherical harmonic series (e.g. 6, 15, 28 etc). The `-no_reorientation` option can be used to force reorientation off if required.

If a DW scheme is contained in the header (or specified separately), and the number of directions matches the number of volumes in the images, any transformation applied using the `-linear` option will be also be applied to the directions.

When the `-template` option is used to specify the target image grid, the image provided via this option will not influence the axis data strides of the output image; these are determined based on the input image, or the input to the `-strides` option.

## 43.64.4 Options

### Affine transformation options

- **-linear transform** specify a linear transform to apply, in the form of a 3x4 or 4x4 ascii file. Note the standard 'reverse' convention is used, where the transform maps points in the template image to the moving image. Note that the reverse convention is still assumed even if no -template image is supplied
- **-flip axes** flip the specified axes, provided as a comma-separated list of indices (0:x, 1:y, 2:z).
- **-inverse** apply the inverse transformation
- **-half** apply the matrix square root of the transformation. This can be combined with the inverse option.
- **-replace file** replace the linear transform of the original image by that specified, rather than applying it to the original image. The specified transform can be either a template image, or a 3x4 or 4x4 ascii file.
- **-identity** set the header transform of the image to the identity matrix

### Regridding options

- **-template image** reslice the input image to match the specified template image grid.
- **-midway\_space** reslice the input image to the midway space. Requires either the -template or -warp option. If used with -template and -linear option the input image will be resliced onto the grid halfway between the input and template. If used with the -warp option the input will be warped to the midway space defined by the grid of the input warp (i.e. half way between image1 and image2)
- **-interp method** set the interpolation method to use when reslicing (choices: nearest, linear, cubic, sinc. Default: cubic).
- **-oversample factor** set the amount of over-sampling (in the target space) to perform when regridding. This is particularly relevant when downsampling a high-resolution image to a low-resolution image, to avoid aliasing artefacts. This can consist of a single integer, or a comma-separated list of 3 integers if different oversampling factors are desired along the different axes. Default is determined from ratio of voxel dimensions (disabled for nearest-neighbour interpolation).

### Non-linear transformation options

- **-warp image** apply a non-linear 4D deformation field to warp the input image. Each voxel in the deformation field must define the scanner space position that will be used to interpolate the input image during warping (i.e. pull-back/reverse warp convention). If the -template image is also supplied the deformation field will be resliced first to the template image grid. If no -template option is supplied then the output image will have the same image grid as the deformation field. This option can be used in combination with the -affine option, in which case the affine will be applied first)
- **-warp\_full image** warp the input image using a 5D warp file output from mrregister. Any linear transforms in the warp image header will also be applied. The -warp\_full option must be used in combination with either the -template option or the -midway\_space option. If a -template image is supplied then the full warp will be used. By default the image1->image2 transform will be applied, however the -from 2 option can be used to apply the image2->image1 transform. Use the -midway\_space option to warp the input image to the midway space. The -from option can also be used to define which warp to use when transforming to midway space
- **-from image** used to define which space the input image is when using the -warp\_mid option. Use -from 1 to warp from image1 or -from 2 to warp from image2

### Fibre orientation distribution handling options

- **-modulate** modulate FODs during reorientation to preserve the apparent fibre density across fibre bundle widths before and after the transformation
- **-directions file** directions defining the number and orientation of the apodised point spread functions used in FOD reorientation (Default: 300 directions)
- **-noreorientation** turn off FOD reorientation. Reorientation is on by default if the number of volumes in the 4th dimension corresponds to the number of coefficients in an antipodally symmetric spherical harmonic series (i.e. 6, 15, 28, 45, 66 etc)

### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

### Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

### Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

### Additional generic options for mrtransform

- **-nan** Use NaN as the out of bounds value (Default: 0.0)

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.

- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

- If FOD reorientation is being performed: Raffelt, D.; Tournier, J.-D.; Crozier, S.; Connelly, A. & Salvado, O. Reorientation of fiber orientation distributions using apodized point spread functions. *Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 2012, 67, 844-855
- If FOD modulation is being performed: Raffelt, D.; Tournier, J.-D.; Rose, S.; Ridgway, G.R.; Henderson, R.; Crozier, S.; Salvado, O.; Connelly, A.; Apparent Fibre Density: a novel measure for the analysis of diffusion-weighted magnetic resonance images. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 15;59(4), 3976-94.

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## 43.65 mrview

### 43.65.1 Synopsis

The MRtrix image viewer.

### 43.65.2 Usage

```
mrview [ options ] [ image ... ]
```

- *image*: An image to be loaded.

### 43.65.3 Description

Any images listed as arguments will be loaded and available through the image menu, with the first listed displayed initially. Any subsequent command-line options will be processed as if the corresponding action had been performed through the GUI.

Note that because images loaded as arguments (i.e. simply listed on the command-line) are opened before the GUI is shown, subsequent actions to be performed via the various command-line options must appear after the last argument.

This is to avoid confusion about which option will apply to which image. If you need fine control over this, please use the `-load` or `-select_image` options. For example:

```
$ mrview -load image1.mif -interpolation 0 -load image2.mif -interpolation 0
```

or

```
$ mrview image1.mif image2.mif -interpolation 0 -select_image 2 -interpolation 0
```

## 43.65.4 Options

### View options

- **-mode index** Switch to view mode specified by the integer index, as per the view menu.
- **-load image** Load image specified and make it current.
- **-reset** Reset the view according to current image. This resets the FOV, projection and focus.
- **-fov value** Set the field of view, in mm.
- **-focus x,y,z or boolean** Either set the position of the crosshairs in scanner coordinates, with the new position supplied as a comma-separated list of floating-point values or show or hide the focus cross hair using a boolean value as argument.
- **-target x,y,z** Set the target location for the viewing window (the scanner coordinate that will appear at the centre of the viewing window)
- **-voxel x,y,z** Set the position of the crosshairs in voxel coordinates, relative the image currently displayed. The new position should be supplied as a comma-separated list of floating-point values.
- **-volume idx** Set the volume index for the image displayed, as a comma-separated list of integers.
- **-plane index** Set the viewing plane, according to the mapping 0: sagittal; 1: coronal; 2: axial.
- **-lock yesno** Set whether view is locked to image axes (0: no, 1: yes).
- **-select\_image index** Switch to image number specified, with reference to the list of currently loaded images.
- **-autoscale** Reset the image scaling to automatically determined range.
- **-interpolation boolean** Enable or disable image interpolation in main image.
- **-colourmap index** Switch the image colourmap to that specified, as per the colourmap menu.
- **-noannotations** Hide all image annotation overlays
- **-comments boolean** Show or hide image comments overlay.
- **-voxelinfo boolean** Show or hide voxel information overlay.
- **-orientationlabel boolean** Show or hide orientation label overlay.
- **-colourbar boolean** Show or hide colourbar overlay.
- **-imagevisible boolean** Show or hide the main image.
- **-intensity\_range min,max** Set the image intensity range to that specified.

### Window management options

- **-size width,height** Set the size of the view area, in pixel units.
- **-position x,y** Set the position of the main window, in pixel units.

- **-fullscreen** Start fullscreen.
- **-exit** Quit MRView.

### Debugging options

- **-fps** Display frames per second, averaged over the last 10 frames. The maximum over the last 3 seconds is also displayed.

### Other options

- **-norealign** do not realign transform to near-default RAS coordinate system (the default behaviour on image load). This is useful to inspect the image and/or header contents as they are actually stored in the header, rather than as MRtrix interprets them.

### Overlay tool options

- **-overlay.load image** Loads the specified image on the overlay tool.
- **-overlay.opacity value** Sets the overlay opacity to floating value [0-1].
- **-overlay.colourmap index** Sets the colourmap of the overlay as indexed in the colourmap dropdown menu.
- **-overlay.colour R,G,B** Specify a manual colour for the overlay, as three comma-separated values
- **-overlay.intensity Min,Max** Set the intensity windowing of the overlay
- **-overlay.threshold\_min value** Set the lower threshold value of the overlay
- **-overlay.threshold\_max value** Set the upper threshold value of the overlay
- **-overlay.no\_threshold\_min** Disable the lower threshold for the overlay
- **-overlay.no\_threshold\_max** Disable the upper threshold for the overlay
- **-overlay.interpolation value** Enable or disable overlay image interpolation.

### ROI editor tool options

- **-roi.load image** Loads the specified image on the ROI editor tool.
- **-roi.opacity value** Sets the overlay opacity to floating value [0-1].
- **-roi.colour R,G,B** Sets the colour of the ROI overlay

### Tractography tool options

- **-tractography.load tracks** Load the specified tracks file into the tractography tool.
- **-tractography.thickness value** Line thickness of tractography display, [-1.0, 1.0], default is 0.0.
- **-tractography.geometry value** The geometry type to use when rendering tractograms (options are: pseudo-tubes, lines, points)
- **-tractography.opacity value** Opacity of tractography display, [0.0, 1.0], default is 1.0.
- **-tractography.slab value** Slab thickness of tractography display, in mm. -1 to turn off crop to slab.
- **-tractography.lighting value** Toggle the use of lighting of tractogram geometry

- **-tractography.tsf\_load tsf** Load the specified tractography scalar file.
- **-tractography.tsf\_range RangeMin,RangeMax** Set range for the tractography scalar file. Requires **-tractography.tsf\_load** already provided.
- **-tractography.tsf\_thresh ThresholdMin,ThesholdMax** Set thresholds for the tractography scalar file. Requires **-tractography.tsf\_load** already provided.

### ODF tool options

- **-odf.load\_sh image** Loads the specified SH-based ODF image on the ODF tool.
- **-odf.load\_tensor image** Loads the specified tensor image on the ODF tool.
- **-odf.load\_dixel image** Loads the specified dixel-based image on the ODF tool.

### Fixel plot tool options

- **-fixel.load image** Load a fixel file (any file inside a fixel directory, or an old .msf / .msh legacy format file) into the fixel tool.

### Connectome tool options

- **-connectome.init image** Initialise the connectome tool using a parcellation image.
- **-connectome.load path** Load a matrix file into the connectome tool.

### Screen Capture tool options

- **-capture.folder path** Set the output folder for the screen capture tool.
- **-capture.prefix string** Set the output file prefix for the screen capture tool.
- **-capture.grab** Start the screen capture process.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. MRtrix: Diffusion tractography in crossing fiber regions. *Int. J. Imaging Syst. Technol.*, 2012, 22, 53-66

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## 43.66 mtnormalise

### 43.66.1 Synopsis

Multi-tissue informed log-domain intensity normalisation

### 43.66.2 Usage

```
mtnormalise [ options ] input output [ input output ... ]
```

- *input output*: list of all input and output tissue compartment files. See example usage in the description.

### 43.66.3 Description

This command inputs any number of tissue components (e.g. from multi-tissue CSD) and outputs corresponding normalised tissue components. Intensity normalisation is performed in the log-domain, and can smoothly vary spatially to accomodate the effects of (residual) intensity inhomogeneities.

The `-mask` option is mandatory and is optimally provided with a brain mask (such as the one obtained from `dwi2mask` earlier in the processing pipeline). Outlier areas with exceptionally low or high combined tissue contributions are accounted for and reoptimised as the intensity inhomogeneity estimation becomes more accurate.

Example usage: `mtnormalise wmfod.mif wmfod_norm.mif gm.mif gm_norm.mif csf.mif csf_norm.mif -mask mask.mif`.

### 43.66.4 Options

- **-mask image** the mask defines the data used to compute the intensity normalisation. This option is mandatory.
- **-order number** the maximum order of the polynomial basis used to fit the normalisation field in the log-domain. An order of 0 is equivalent to not allowing spatial variance of the intensity normalisation factor. (default: 3)
- **-niter number** set the number of iterations. (default: 15)

- **-check\_norm image** output the final estimated spatially varying intensity level that is used for normalisation.
- **-check\_mask image** output the final mask used to compute the normalisation. This mask excludes regions identified as outliers by the optimisation process.
- **-value number** specify the (positive) reference value to which the summed tissue compartments will be normalised. (default: 0.282095, SH DC term for unit angular integral)

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.67 peaks2amp

### 43.67.1 Synopsis

Convert peak directions image to amplitudes

### 43.67.2 Usage

```
peaks2amp [ options ] directions amplitudes
```

- *directions*: the input directions image. Each volume corresponds to the x, y & z component of each direction vector in turn.
- *amplitudes*: the output amplitudes image.

## 43.67.3 Options

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
  - **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
  - **-debug** display debugging messages.
  - **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
  - **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.68 sh2amp

### 43.68.1 Synopsis

Evaluate the amplitude of an image of spherical harmonic functions along specified directions

### 43.68.2 Usage

```
sh2amp [ options ] input directions output
```

- *input*: the input image consisting of spherical harmonic (SH) coefficients.
- *directions*: the list of directions along which the SH functions will be sampled, generated using the `dirgen` command
- *output*: the output image consisting of the amplitude of the SH functions along the specified directions.

### 43.68.3 Options

- **-gradient** assume input directions are supplied as a gradient encoding file
- **-nonnegative** cap all negative amplitudes to zero

## Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

## Data type options

- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type. Valid choices are: float32, float32le, float32be, float64, float64le, float64be, int64, uint64, int64le, uint64le, int64be, uint64be, int32, uint32, int32le, uint32le, int32be, uint32be, int16, uint16, int16le, uint16le, int16be, uint16be, cfloat32, cfloat32le, cfloat32be, cfloat64, cfloat64le, cfloat64be, int8, uint8, bit.

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.69 sh2peaks

### 43.69.1 Synopsis

Extract the peaks of a spherical harmonic function at each voxel, by commencing a Newton search along a set of specified directions

## 43.69.2 Usage

```
sh2peaks [ options ] SH output
```

- *SH*: the input image of SH coefficients.
- *output*: the output image. Each volume corresponds to the x, y & z component of each peak direction vector in turn.

## 43.69.3 Options

- **-num peaks** the number of peaks to extract (default: 3).
- **-direction phi theta** the direction of a peak to estimate. The algorithm will attempt to find the same number of peaks as have been specified using this option.
- **-peaks image** the program will try to find the peaks that most closely match those in the image provided.
- **-threshold value** only peak amplitudes greater than the threshold will be considered.
- **-seeds file** specify a set of directions from which to start the multiple restarts of the optimisation (by default, the built-in 60 direction set is used)
- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary brain mask image.
- **-fast** use lookup table to compute associated Legendre polynomials (faster, but approximate).

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.70 sh2power

### 43.70.1 Synopsis

Compute the total power of a spherical harmonics image

### 43.70.2 Usage

```
sh2power [ options ] SH power
```

- *SH*: the input spherical harmonics coefficients image.
- *power*: the output power image.

### 43.70.3 Description

This command computes the sum of squared SH coefficients, which equals the mean-squared amplitude of the spherical function it represents.

### 43.70.4 Options

- **-spectrum** output the power spectrum, i.e., the power contained within each harmonic degree ( $l=0, 2, 4, \dots$ ) as a 4-D image.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.71 sh2response

### 43.71.1 Synopsis

Generate an appropriate response function from the image data for spherical deconvolution

### 43.71.2 Usage

```
sh2response [ options ] SH mask directions response
```

- *SH*: the spherical harmonic decomposition of the diffusion-weighted images
- *mask*: the mask containing the voxels from which to estimate the response function
- *directions*: a 4D image containing the direction vectors along which to estimate the response function
- *response*: the output axially-symmetric spherical harmonic coefficients

### 43.71.3 Options

- **-lmax value** specify the maximum harmonic degree of the response function to estimate
- **-dump file** dump the m=0 SH coefficients from all voxels in the mask to the output file, rather than their mean

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.72 shbasis

### 43.72.1 Synopsis

Examine the values in spherical harmonic images to estimate (and optionally change) the SH basis used

### 43.72.2 Usage

```
shbasis [ options ] SH [ SH ... ]
```

- *SH*: the input image(s) of SH coefficients.

### 43.72.3 Description

In previous versions of MRtrix, the convention used for storing spherical harmonic coefficients was a non-orthonormal basis (the  $m \neq 0$  coefficients were a factor of  $\sqrt{2}$  too large). This error has been rectified in newer versions of MRtrix, but will cause issues if processing SH data that was generated using an older version of MRtrix (or vice-versa).

This command provides a mechanism for testing the basis used in storage of image data representing a spherical harmonic series per voxel, and allows the user to forcibly modify the raw image data to conform to the desired basis.

Note that the “force\_\*” conversion choices should only be used in cases where this command has previously been unable to automatically determine the SH basis from the image data, but the user themselves are confident of the SH basis of the data.

### 43.72.4 Options

- **-convert mode** convert the image data in-place to the desired basis; options are: old,new,force\_oldtonew,force\_newtoold.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.73 shconv

### 43.73.1 Synopsis

Perform a spherical convolution

### 43.73.2 Usage

```
shconv [ options ] SH_in response SH_out
```

- *SH\_in*: the input spherical harmonics coefficients image.
- *response*: the convolution kernel (response function)
- *SH\_out*: the output spherical harmonics coefficients image.

### 43.73.3 Options

- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary brain mask image.

#### Stride options

- **-strides spec** specify the strides of the output data in memory; either as a comma-separated list of (signed) integers, or as a template image from which the strides shall be extracted and used. The actual strides produced will depend on whether the output image format can support it.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.74 shview

### 43.74.1 Synopsis

View spherical harmonics surface plots

### 43.74.2 Usage

```
shview [ options ] [ coefs ]
```

- *coefs*: a text file containing the even order spherical harmonics coefficients to display.

### 43.74.3 Options

- **-response** assume SH coefficients file only contains  $m=0$  terms (zonal harmonics). Used to display the response function as produced by `estimate_response`

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.75 tck2connectome

### 43.75.1 Synopsis

Generate a connectome matrix from a streamlines file and a node parcellation image

### 43.75.2 Usage

```
tck2connectome [ options ] tracks_in nodes_in connectome_out
```

- *tracks\_in*: the input track file
- *nodes\_in*: the input node parcellation image
- *connectome\_out*: the output .csv file containing edge weights

### 43.75.3 Options

#### Structural connectome streamline assignment option

- **-assignment\_end\_voxels** use a simple voxel lookup value at each streamline endpoint
- **-assignment\_radial\_search radius** perform a radial search from each streamline endpoint to locate the nearest node. Argument is the maximum radius in mm; if no node is found within this radius, the streamline endpoint is not assigned to any node. Default search distance is 2mm.
- **-assignment\_reverse\_search max\_dist** traverse from each streamline endpoint inwards along the streamline, in search of the last node traversed by the streamline. Argument is the maximum traversal length in mm (set to 0 to allow search to continue to the streamline midpoint).
- **-assignment\_forward\_search max\_dist** project the streamline forwards from the endpoint in search of a parcellation node voxel. Argument is the maximum traversal length in mm.
- **-assignment\_all\_voxels** assign the streamline to all nodes it intersects along its length (note that this means a streamline may be assigned to more than two nodes, or indeed none at all)

#### Structural connectome metric options

- **-scale\_length** scale each contribution to the connectome edge by the length of the streamline
- **-scale\_invlength** scale each contribution to the connectome edge by the inverse of the streamline length
- **-scale\_invnodevol** scale each contribution to the connectome edge by the inverse of the two node volumes
- **-scale\_file path** scale each contribution to the connectome edge according to the values in a vector file

### Options for outputting connectome matrices

- **-symmetric** Make matrices symmetric on output
- **-zero\_diagonal** Set matrix diagonal to zero on output

### Other options for tck2connectome

- **-stat\_edge statistic** statistic for combining the values from all streamlines in an edge into a single scale value for that edge (options are: sum,mean,min,max; default=sum)
- **-tck\_weights\_in\_path** specify a text scalar file containing the streamline weights
- **-keep\_unassigned** By default, the program discards the information regarding those streamlines that are not successfully assigned to a node pair. Set this option to keep these values (will be the first row/column in the output matrix)
- **-out\_assignments path** output the node assignments of each streamline to a file; this can be used subsequently e.g. by the command connectome2tck
- **-vector** output a vector representing connectivities from a given seed point to target nodes, rather than a matrix of node-node connectivities

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

If using the default streamline-parcel assignment mechanism (or `-assignment_radial_search` option): Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. The effects of SIFT on the reproducibility and biological accuracy of the structural connectome. *NeuroImage*, 2015, 104, 253-265

If using `-scale_invlength` or `-scale_invnodevol` options: Hagmann, P.; Cammoun, L.; Gigandet, X.; Meuli, R.; Honey, C.; Wedeen, V. & Sporns, O. Mapping the Structural Core of Human Cerebral Cortex. *PLoS Biology* 6(7), e159

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## 43.76 tck2fixel

### 43.76.1 Synopsis

Compute a fixel TDI map from a tractogram

### 43.76.2 Usage

```
tck2fixel [ options ] tracks fixel_folder_in fixel_folder_out fixel_data_out
```

- *tracks*: the input tracks.
- *fixel\_folder\_in*: the input fixel folder. Used to define the fixels and their directions
- *fixel\_folder\_out*: the fixel folder to which the output will be written. This can be the same as the input folder if desired
- *fixel\_data\_out*: the name of the fixel data image.

### 43.76.3 Options

- **-angle value** the max angle threshold for assigning streamline tangents to fixels (Default: 45 degrees)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.77 tckconvert

### 43.77.1 Synopsis

Convert between different track file formats

### 43.77.2 Usage

```
tckconvert [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input track file.
- *output*: the output track file.

### 43.77.3 Description

The program currently supports MRtrix .tck files (input/output), ascii text files (input/output), VTK polydata files (input/output), and RenderMan RIB (export only).

Note that ascii files will be stored with one streamline per numbered file. To support this, the command will use the multi-file numbering syntax, where square brackets denote the position of the numbering for the files, for example:

```
$ tckconvert input.tck output-[].txt
```

will produce files named output-0000.txt, output-0001.txt, output-0002.txt, ...

### 43.77.4 Options

- **-scanner2voxel reference** if specified, the properties of this image will be used to convert track point positions from real (scanner) coordinates into voxel coordinates.
- **-scanner2image reference** if specified, the properties of this image will be used to convert track point positions from real (scanner) coordinates into image coordinates (in mm).
- **-voxel2scanner reference** if specified, the properties of this image will be used to convert track point positions from voxel coordinates into real (scanner) coordinates.
- **-image2scanner reference** if specified, the properties of this image will be used to convert track point positions from image coordinates (in mm) into real (scanner) coordinates.

#### Options specific to PLY writer

- **-sides sides** number of sides for streamlines
- **-increment increment** generate streamline points at every (increment) points

### Options specific to RIB writer

- **-dec** add DEC as a primvar

### Options for both PLY and RIB writer

- **-radius radius** radius of the streamlines

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.78 tckdfc

### 43.78.1 Synopsis

Perform the Track-Weighted Dynamic Functional Connectivity (TW-dFC) method

### 43.78.2 Usage

```
tckdfc [ options ] tracks fmri output
```

- *tracks*: the input track file.
- *fmri*: the pre-processed fMRI time series
- *output*: the output TW-dFC image

### 43.78.3 Description

This command generates a Track-Weighted Image (TWI), where the contribution from each streamline to the image is the Pearson correlation between the fMRI time series at the streamline endpoints.

The output image can be generated in one of two ways (note that one of these two command-line options **MUST** be provided):

- “Static” functional connectivity (-static option): Each streamline contributes to a static 3D output image based on the correlation between the signals at the streamline endpoints using the entirety of the input time series.
- “Dynamic” functional connectivity (-dynamic option): The output image is a 4D image, with the same number of volumes as the input fMRI time series. For each volume, the contribution from each streamline is calculated based on a finite-width sliding time window, centred at the timepoint corresponding to that volume.

Note that the -backtrack option in this command is similar, but not precisely equivalent, to back-tracking as can be used with Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT) in the tckgen command. However, here the feature does not change the streamlines trajectories in any way; it simply enables detection of the fact that the input fMRI image may not contain a valid timeseries underneath the streamline endpoint, and where this occurs, searches from the streamline endpoint inwards along the streamline trajectory in search of a valid timeseries to sample from the input image.

### 43.78.4 Options

**Options for toggling between static and dynamic TW-dFC methods; note that one of these options **MUST** be provided**

- **-static** generate a “static” (3D) output image.
- **-dynamic shape width** generate a “dynamic” (4D) output image; must additionally provide the shape and width (in volumes) of the sliding window.

**Options for setting the properties of the output image**

- **-template image** an image file to be used as a template for the output (the output image will have the same transform and field of view).
- **-vox size** provide either an isotropic voxel size (in mm), or comma-separated list of 3 voxel dimensions.
- **-stat\_vox type** define the statistic for choosing the final voxel intensities for a given contrast type given the individual values from the tracks passing through each voxel. Options are: sum, min, mean, max (default: mean)

**Other options for affecting the streamline sampling & mapping behaviour**

- **-backtrack** if no valid timeseries is found at the streamline endpoint, back-track along the streamline trajectory until a valid timeseries is found
- **-upsample factor** upsample the tracks by some ratio using Hermite interpolation before mapping (if omitted, an appropriate ratio will be determined automatically)

**Standard options**

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.

- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Calamante, F.; Smith, R.E.; Liang, X.; Zalesky, A.; Connelly, A Track-weighted dynamic functional connectivity (TW-dFC): a new method to study time-resolved functional connectivity. *Brain Struct Funct*, 2017, doi: 10.1007/s00429-017-1431-1

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## 43.79 tckedit

### 43.79.1 Synopsis

Perform various editing operations on track files

### 43.79.2 Usage

```
tckedit [ options ] tracks_in [ tracks_in ... ] tracks_out
```

- *tracks\_in*: the input track file(s)
- *tracks\_out*: the output track file

### 43.79.3 Description

This command can be used to perform various manipulations on track data. This includes: merging data from multiple track files into one; extracting only a finite number of tracks; selecting a subset of tracks based on various criteria, for instance regions of interest.

Note that if multi-threading is used in this command, the ordering of tracks in the output file is unlikely to match the order of the incoming data. If your application explicitly requires that the order of tracks not change, you should run this command with the option `-nthreads 0`.

## 43.79.4 Options

### Region Of Interest processing options

- **-include spec** specify an inclusion region of interest, as either a binary mask image, or as a sphere using 4 comma-separated values (x,y,z,radius). Streamlines must traverse ALL inclusion regions to be accepted.
- **-exclude spec** specify an exclusion region of interest, as either a binary mask image, or as a sphere using 4 comma-separated values (x,y,z,radius). Streamlines that enter ANY exclude region will be discarded.
- **-mask spec** specify a masking region of interest, as either a binary mask image, or as a sphere using 4 comma-separated values (x,y,z,radius). If defined, streamlines exiting the mask will be truncated.

### Streamline length threshold options

- **-maxlength value** set the maximum length of any streamline in mm
- **-minlength value** set the minimum length of any streamline in mm

### Streamline count truncation options

- **-number count** set the desired number of selected streamlines to be propagated to the output file
- **-skip count** omit this number of selected streamlines before commencing writing to the output file

### Thresholds pertaining to per-streamline weighting

- **-maxweight value** set the maximum weight of any streamline
- **-minweight value** set the minimum weight of any streamline

### Other options specific to tckedit

- **-inverse** output the inverse selection of streamlines based on the criteria provided, i.e. only those streamlines that fail at least one criterion will be written to file.
- **-ends\_only** only test the ends of each streamline against the provided include/exclude ROIs

### Options for handling streamline weights

- **-tck\_weights\_in path** specify a text scalar file containing the streamline weights
- **-tck\_weights\_out path** specify the path for an output text scalar file containing streamline weights

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.

- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.80 tckgen

### 43.80.1 Synopsis

Perform streamlines tractography

### 43.80.2 Usage

```
tckgen [ options ] source tracks
```

- *source*: The image containing the source data. The type of image data required depends on the algorithm used (see Description section).
- *tracks*: the output file containing the tracks generated.

### 43.80.3 Description

By default, tckgen produces a fixed number of streamlines, by attempting to seed from new random locations until the target number of streamlines have been selected (in other words, after all inclusion & exclusion criteria have been applied), or the maximum number of seeds has been exceeded (by default, this is 1000× the desired number of selected streamlines). Use the `-select` and/or `-seeds` options to modify as required. See also the Seeding options section for alternative seeding strategies.

Below is a list of available tracking algorithms, the input image data that they require, and a brief description of their behaviour:

- **FACT: Fiber Assigned by Continuous Tracking.** A deterministic algorithm that takes as input a 4D image, with 3×N volumes, where N is the maximum number of fiber orientations in a voxel. Each triplet of volumes represents a 3D vector corresponding to a fiber orientation; the length of the vector additionally indicates some measure of density or anisotropy. As streamlines move from one voxel to another, the fiber orientation most collinear with the streamline orientation is selected (i.e. there is no intra-voxel interpolation).

- **iFOD1**: First-order Integration over Fiber Orientation Distributions. A probabilistic algorithm that takes as input a Fiber Orientation Distribution (FOD) image represented in the Spherical Harmonic (SH) basis. At each streamline step, random samples from the local (trilinear interpolated) FOD are taken. A streamline is more probable to follow orientations where the FOD amplitude is large; but it may also rarely traverse orientations with small FOD amplitude.
- **iFOD2 (default)**: Second-order Integration over Fiber Orientation Distributions. A probabilistic algorithm that takes as input a Fiber Orientation Distribution (FOD) image represented in the Spherical Harmonic (SH) basis. Candidate streamline paths (based on short curved “arcs”) are drawn, and the underlying (trilinear-interpolated) FOD amplitudes along those arcs are sampled. A streamline is more probable to follow a path where the FOD amplitudes along that path are large; but it may also rarely traverse orientations where the FOD amplitudes are small, as long as the amplitude remains above the FOD amplitude threshold along the entire path.
- **NullDist1 / NullDist2**: Null Distribution tracking algorithms. These probabilistic algorithms expect as input the same image that was used when invoking the corresponding algorithm for which the null distribution is sought. These algorithms generate streamlines based on random orientation samples; that is, no image information relating to fiber orientations is used, and streamlines trajectories are determined entirely from random sampling. The NullDist2 algorithm is designed to be used in conjunction with iFOD2; NullDist1 should be used in conjunction with any first-order algorithm.
- **SD\_STREAM**: Streamlines tractography based on Spherical Deconvolution (SD). A deterministic algorithm that takes as input a Fiber Orientation Distribution (FOD) image represented in the Spherical Harmonic (SH) basis. At each streamline step, the local (trilinear-interpolated) FOD is sampled, and from the current streamline tangent orientation, a Newton optimisation on the sphere is performed in order to locate the orientation of the nearest FOD amplitude peak.
- **SeedTest**: A dummy streamlines algorithm used for testing streamline seeding mechanisms. Any image can be used as input; the image will not be used in any way. For each seed point generated by the seeding mechanism(s), a streamline containing a single point corresponding to that seed location will be written to the output track file.
- **Tensor\_Det**: A deterministic algorithm that takes as input a 4D diffusion-weighted image (DWI) series. At each streamline step, the diffusion tensor is fitted to the local (trilinear-interpolated) diffusion data, and the streamline trajectory is determined as the principal eigenvector of that tensor.
- **Tensor\_Prob**: A probabilistic algorithm that takes as input a 4D diffusion-weighted image (DWI) series. Within each image voxel, a residual bootstrap is performed to obtain a unique realisation of the DWI data in that voxel for each streamline. These data are then sampled via trilinear interpolation at each streamline step, the diffusion tensor model is fitted, and the streamline follows the orientation of the principal eigenvector of that tensor.

#### 43.80.4 Options

- **-algorithm name** specify the tractography algorithm to use. Valid choices are: FACT, iFOD1, iFOD2, NullDist1, NullDist2, SD\_Stream, Seedtest, Tensor\_Det, Tensor\_Prob (default: iFOD2).

##### Streamlines tractography options

- **-select number** set the desired number of streamlines to be selected by tckgen, after all selection criteria have been applied (i.e. inclusion/exclusion ROIs, min/max length, etc). tckgen will keep seeding streamlines until this number of streamlines have been selected, or the maximum allowed number of seeds has been exceeded (see -seeds option). By default, 5000 streamlines are to be selected. Set to zero to disable, which will result in streamlines being seeded until the number specified by -seeds has been reached.
- **-step size** set the step size of the algorithm in mm (default is 0.1 x voxelsize; for iFOD2: 0.5 x voxelsize).
- **-angle theta** set the maximum angle between successive steps (default is 90deg x stepsize / voxelsize).

- **-minlength value** set the minimum length of any track in mm (default is 5 x voxelsize without ACT, 2 x voxelsize with ACT).
- **-maxlength value** set the maximum length of any track in mm (default is 100 x voxelsize).
- **-cutoff value** set the FOD amplitude / fixel size / tensor FA cutoff for terminating tracks (defaults are: 0.05 for FOD-based algorithms; 0.05 for fixel-based algorithms; 0.1 for tensor-based algorithms).
- **-trials number** set the maximum number of sampling trials at each point (only used for probabilistic tracking).
- **-noprecomputed** do NOT pre-compute legendre polynomial values. Warning: this will slow down the algorithm by a factor of approximately 4.
- **-rk4** use 4th-order Runge-Kutta integration (slower, but eliminates curvature overshoot in 1st-order deterministic methods)
- **-stop** stop propagating a streamline once it has traversed all include regions
- **-downsample factor** downsample the generated streamlines to reduce output file size (default is (samples-1) for iFOD2, no downsampling for all other algorithms)

### Tractography seeding mechanisms; at least one must be provided

- **-seed\_image image** seed streamlines entirely at random within a mask image
- **-seed\_sphere spec** spherical seed as four comma-separated values (XYZ position and radius)
- **-seed\_random\_per\_voxel image num\_per\_voxel** seed a fixed number of streamlines per voxel in a mask image; random placement of seeds in each voxel
- **-seed\_grid\_per\_voxel image grid\_size** seed a fixed number of streamlines per voxel in a mask image; place seeds on a 3D mesh grid (grid\_size argument is per axis; so a grid\_size of 3 results in 27 seeds per voxel)
- **-seed\_rejection image** seed from an image using rejection sampling (higher values = more probable to seed from)
- **-seed\_gmwmi image** seed from the grey matter - white matter interface (only valid if using ACT framework). Input image should be a 3D seeding volume; seeds drawn within this image will be optimised to the interface using the 5TT image provided using the -act option.
- **-seed\_dynamic fod\_image** determine seed points dynamically using the SIFT model (must not provide any other seeding mechanism). Note that while this seeding mechanism improves the distribution of reconstructed streamlines density, it should NOT be used as a substitute for the SIFT method itself.

### Tractography seeding options and parameters

- **-seeds number** set the number of seeds that tckgen will attempt to track from. If this option is NOT provided, the default number of seeds is set to 1000x the number of selected streamlines. If -select is NOT also specified, tckgen will continue tracking until this number of seeds has been attempted. However, if -select is also specified, tckgen will stop when the number of seeds attempted reaches the number specified here, OR when the number of streamlines selected reaches the number requested with the -select option. This can be used to prevent the program from running indefinitely when no or very few streamlines can be found that match the selection criteria. Setting this to zero will cause tckgen to keep attempting seeds until the number specified by -select has been reached.
- **-max\_attempts\_per\_seed number** set the maximum number of times that the tracking algorithm should attempt to find an appropriate tracking direction from a given seed point. This should be set high enough to ensure that an actual plausible seed point is not discarded prematurely as being unable to initiate tracking from. Higher settings may affect performance if many seeds are genuinely impossible to track from, as many attempts will still be made in vain for such seeds. (default: 1000)

- **-seed\_cutoff value** set the minimum FA or FOD amplitude for seeding tracks (default is the same as the normal -cutoff).
- **-seed\_unidirectional** track from the seed point in one direction only (default is to track in both directions).
- **-seed\_direction dir** specify a seeding direction for the tracking (this should be supplied as a vector of 3 comma-separated values).
- **-output\_seeds path** output the seed location of all successful streamlines to a file

### Region Of Interest processing options

- **-include spec** specify an inclusion region of interest, as either a binary mask image, or as a sphere using 4 comma-separated values (x,y,z,radius). Streamlines must traverse ALL inclusion regions to be accepted.
- **-exclude spec** specify an exclusion region of interest, as either a binary mask image, or as a sphere using 4 comma-separated values (x,y,z,radius). Streamlines that enter ANY exclude region will be discarded.
- **-mask spec** specify a masking region of interest, as either a binary mask image, or as a sphere using 4 comma-separated values (x,y,z,radius). If defined, streamlines exiting the mask will be truncated.

### Anatomically-Constrained Tractography options

- **-act image** use the Anatomically-Constrained Tractography framework during tracking; provided image must be in the 5TT (five-tissue-type) format
- **-backtrack** allow tracks to be truncated and re-tracked if a poor structural termination is encountered
- **-crop\_at\_gmwm** crop streamline endpoints more precisely as they cross the GM-WM interface

### Options specific to the iFOD2 tracking algorithm

- **-samples number** set the number of FOD samples to take per step (Default: 4).
- **-power value** raise the FOD to the power specified (default is 1/nsamples).

### DW gradient table import options

- **-grad file** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in a text file. This should be supplied as a 4xN text file with each line is in the format [ X Y Z b ], where [ X Y Z ] describe the direction of the applied gradient, and b gives the b-value in units of s/mm<sup>2</sup>. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide the diffusion-weighted gradient scheme used in the acquisition in FSL bvecs/bvals format files. If a diffusion gradient scheme is present in the input image header, the data provided with this option will be instead used.
- **-bvalue\_scaling mode** specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the square of the corresponding DW gradient norm, as often required for multi-shell or DSI DW acquisition schemes. The default action can also be set in the MRtrix config file, under the BValueScaling entry. Valid choices are yes/no, true/false, 0/1 (default: true).

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

References based on streamlines algorithm used:

- FACT:Mori, S.; Crain, B. J.; Chacko, V. P. & van Zijl, P. C. M. Three-dimensional tracking of axonal projections in the brain by magnetic resonance imaging. *Annals of Neurology*, 1999, 45, 265-269
- iFOD1 or SD\_STREAM:Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. MRtrix: Diffusion tractography in crossing fiber regions. *Int. J. Imaging Syst. Technol.*, 2012, 22, 53-66
- iFOD2:Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Improved probabilistic streamlines tractography by 2nd order integration over fibre orientation distributions. *Proceedings of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 2010, 1670
- Nulldist1 / Nulldist2:Morris, D. M.; Embleton, K. V. & Parker, G. J. Probabilistic fibre tracking: Differentiation of connections from chance events. *NeuroImage*, 2008, 42, 1329-1339
- Tensor\_Det:Basser, P. J.; Pajevic, S.; Pierpaoli, C.; Duda, J. & Aldroubi, A. In vivo fiber tractography using DT-MRI data. *Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 2000, 44, 625-632
- Tensor\_Prob:Jones, D. Tractography Gone Wild: Probabilistic Fibre Tracking Using the Wild Bootstrap With Diffusion Tensor MRI. *IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging*, 2008, 27, 1268-1274

References based on command-line options:

- -rk4:Basser, P. J.; Pajevic, S.; Pierpaoli, C.; Duda, J. & Aldroubi, A. In vivo fiber tractography using DT-MRI data. *Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 2000, 44, 625-632
- -act, -backtrack, -seed\_gmwmi:Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Anatomically-constrained tractography: Improved diffusion MRI streamlines tractography through effective use of anatomical information. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 62, 1924-1938
- -seed\_dynamic:Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. SIFT2: Enabling dense quantitative assessment of brain white matter connectivity using streamlines tractography. *NeuroImage*, 2015, 119, 338-351

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## 43.81 tckglobal

### 43.81.1 Synopsis

Multi-Shell Multi-Tissue Global Tractography

### 43.81.2 Usage

```
tckglobal [ options ] source response tracks
```

- *source*: the image containing the raw DWI data.
- *response*: the response of a track segment on the DWI signal.
- *tracks*: the output file containing the tracks generated.

### 43.81.3 Description

This command will reconstruct the global white matter fibre tractogram that best explains the input DWI data, using a multi-tissue spherical convolution model.

Example use:

```
$ tckglobal dwi.mif wmr.txt -riso csfr.txt -riso gmr.txt -mask mask.mif -niter 1e9 -fod fod.mif -fiso fiso.mif tracks.tck
```

in which *dwi.mif* is the input image, *wmr.txt* is an anisotropic, multi-shell response function for WM, and *csfr.txt* and *gmr.txt* are isotropic response functions for CSF and GM. The output tractogram is saved to *tracks.tck*. Optional output images *fod.mif* and *fiso.mif* contain the predicted WM fODF and isotropic tissue fractions of CSF and GM respectively, estimated as part of the global optimization and thus affected by spatial regularization.

### 43.81.4 Options

#### Input options

- **-grad scheme** specify the diffusion encoding scheme (required if not supplied in the header).
- **-mask image** only reconstruct the tractogram within the specified brain mask image.
- **-riso response** set one or more isotropic response functions. (multiple allowed)

#### Parameters

- **-lmax order** set the maximum harmonic order for the output series. (default = 8)
- **-length size** set the length of the particles (fibre segments). (default = 1mm)
- **-weight w** set the weight by which particles contribute to the model. (default = 0.1)

- **-ppot u** set the particle potential, i.e., the cost of adding one segment, relative to the particle weight. (default = 0.05)
- **-cpot v** set the connection potential, i.e., the energy term that drives two segments together. (default = 0.5)
- **-t0 start** set the initial temperature of the metropolis hastings optimizer. (default = 0.1)
- **-t1 end** set the final temperature of the metropolis hastings optimizer. (default = 0.001)
- **-niter n** set the number of iterations of the metropolis hastings optimizer. (default = 10M)

### Output options

- **-fod odf** Predicted fibre orientation distribution function (fODF). This fODF is estimated as part of the global track optimization, and therefore incorporates the spatial regularization that it imposes. Internally, the fODF is represented as a discrete sum of apodized point spread functions (aPSF) oriented along the directions of all particles in the voxel, used to predict the DWI signal from the particle configuration.
- **-noapo** disable spherical convolution of fODF with apodized PSF, to output a sum of delta functions rather than a sum of aPSFs.
- **-fiso iso** Predicted isotropic fractions of the tissues for which response functions were provided with **-riso**. Typically, these are CSF and GM.
- **-eext eext** Residual external energy in every voxel.
- **-etrend stats** internal and external energy trend and cooling statistics.

### Advanced parameters, if you really know what you're doing

- **-balance b** balance internal and external energy. (default = 0) Negative values give more weight to the internal energy, positive to the external energy.
- **-density lambda** set the desired density of the free Poisson process. (default = 1)
- **-prob prob** set the probabilities of generating birth, death, randshift, optshift and connect proposals respectively. (default = 0.25,0.05,0.25,0.1,0.35)
- **-beta b** set the width of the Hanning interpolation window. (in [0, 1], default = 0) If used, a mask is required, and this mask must keep at least one voxel distance to the image bounding box.
- **-lambda lam** set the weight of the internal energy directly. (default = 1) If provided, any value of **-balance** will be ignored.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.

- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Christiaens, D.; Reisert, M.; Dhollander, T.; Sunaert, S.; Suetens, P. & Maes, F. Global tractography of multi-shell diffusion-weighted imaging data using a multi-tissue model. *NeuroImage*, 2015, 123, 89-101

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## 43.82 tckinfo

### 43.82.1 Synopsis

Print out information about a track file

### 43.82.2 Usage

```
tckinfo [ options ] tracks [ tracks ... ]
```

- *tracks*: the input track file.

### 43.82.3 Options

- **-count** count number of tracks in file explicitly, ignoring the header

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.83 tckmap

### 43.83.1 Synopsis

Use track data as a form of contrast for producing a high-resolution image

### 43.83.2 Usage

```
tckmap [ options ] tracks output
```

- *tracks*: the input track file.
- *output*: the output track-weighted image

### 43.83.3 Description

Note: if you run into limitations with RAM usage, make sure you output the results to a .mif file or .mih / .dat file pair - this will avoid the allocation of an additional buffer to store the output for write-out.

### 43.83.4 Options

#### Options for the header of the output image

- **-template image** an image file to be used as a template for the output (the output image will have the same transform and field of view).
- **-vox size** provide either an isotropic voxel size (in mm), or comma-separated list of 3 voxel dimensions.
- **-datatype spec** specify output image data type.

#### Options for the dimensionality of the output image

- **-dec** perform track mapping in directionally-encoded colour (DEC) space
- **-dixel path** map streamlines to dixels within each voxel; requires either a number of dixels (references an internal direction set), or a path to a text file containing a set of directions stored as azimuth/elevation pairs
- **-tod lmax** generate a Track Orientation Distribution (TOD) in each voxel; need to specify the maximum spherical harmonic degree lmax to use when generating Apodised Point Spread Functions

### Options for the TWI image contrast properties

- **-contrast type** define the desired form of contrast for the output imageOptions are: tdi, length, invlength, scalar\_map, scalar\_map\_count, fod\_amp, curvature, vector\_file (default: tdi)
- **-image image** provide the scalar image map for generating images with ‘scalar\_map’ / ‘scalar\_map\_count’ contrast, or the spherical harmonics image for ‘fod\_amp’ contrast
- **-vector\_file path** provide the vector data file for generating images with ‘vector\_file’ contrast
- **-stat\_vox type** define the statistic for choosing the final voxel intensities for a given contrast type given the individual values from the tracks passing through each voxel. Options are: sum, min, mean, max (default: sum)
- **-stat\_tck type** define the statistic for choosing the contribution to be made by each streamline as a function of the samples taken along their lengths. Only has an effect for ‘scalar\_map’, ‘fod\_amp’ and ‘curvature’ contrast types. Options are: sum, min, mean, max, median, mean\_nonzero, gaussian, ends\_min, ends\_mean, ends\_max, ends\_prod (default: mean)
- **-fwhm\_tck value** when using gaussian-smoothed per-track statistic, specify the desired full-width half-maximum of the Gaussian smoothing kernel (in mm)
- **-map\_zero** if a streamline has zero contribution based on the contrast & statistic, typically it is not mapped; use this option to still contribute to the map even if this is the case (these non-contributing voxels can then influence the mean value in each voxel of the map)
- **-backtrack** when using -stat\_tck ends\_\*, if the streamline endpoint is outside the FoV, backtrack along the streamline trajectory until an appropriate point is found

### Options for the streamline-to-voxel mapping mechanism

- **-upsample factor** upsample the tracks by some ratio using Hermite interpolation before mapping(If omitted, an appropriate ratio will be determined automatically)
- **-precise** use a more precise streamline mapping strategy, that accurately quantifies the length through each voxel (these lengths are then taken into account during TWI calculation)
- **-ends\_only** only map the streamline endpoints to the image
- **-tck\_weights\_in path** specify a text scalar file containing the streamline weights

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

- For TDI or DEC TDI: Calamante, F.; Tournier, J.-D.; Jackson, G. D. & Connelly, A. Track-density imaging (TDI): Super-resolution white matter imaging using whole-brain track-density mapping. *NeuroImage*, 2010, 53, 1233-1243
- If using `-contrast length` and `-stat_vox mean`: Pannek, K.; Mathias, J. L.; Bigler, E. D.; Brown, G.; Taylor, J. D. & Rose, S. E. The average pathlength map: A diffusion MRI tractography-derived index for studying brain pathology. *NeuroImage*, 2011, 55, 133-141
- If using `-dixel` option with TDI contrast only: Smith, R.E., Tournier, J.-D., Calamante, F., Connelly, A. A novel paradigm for automated segmentation of very large whole-brain probabilistic tractography data sets. In *proc. ISMRM*, 2011, 19, 673
- If using `-dixel` option with any other contrast: Pannek, K., Raffelt, D., Salvado, O., Rose, S. Incorporating directional information in diffusion tractography derived maps: angular track imaging (ATI). In *Proc. ISMRM*, 2012, 20, 1912
- If using `-tod` option: Dhollander, T., Emsell, L., Van Hecke, W., Maes, F., Sunaert, S., Suetens, P. Track Orientation Density Imaging (TODI) and Track Orientation Distribution (TOD) based tractography. *NeuroImage*, 2014, 94, 312-336
- If using other contrasts / statistics: Calamante, F.; Tournier, J.-D.; Smith, R. E. & Connelly, A. A generalised framework for super-resolution track-weighted imaging. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 59, 2494-2503
- If using `-precise mapping` option: Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. SIFT: Spherical-deconvolution informed filtering of tractograms. *NeuroImage*, 2013, 67, 298-312 (Appendix 3)

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## 43.84 tckresample

### 43.84.1 Synopsis

Resample each streamline in a track file to a new set of vertices

### 43.84.2 Usage

```
tckresample [ options ] in_tracks out_tracks
```

- *in\_tracks*: the input track file
- *out\_tracks*: the output resampled tracks

### 43.84.3 Description

This may be either increasing or decreasing the number of samples along each streamline, or changing the positions of the samples according to some specified trajectory.

Note that if multi-threading is used in this command, the ordering of tracks in the output file is unlikely to match the order of the incoming data. If your application explicitly requires that the order of tracks not change, you should run this command with the option `-nthreads 0`.

### 43.84.4 Options

#### Streamline resampling options

- **-upsample ratio** increase the density of points along the length of each streamline by some factor (may improve mapping streamlines to ROIs, and/or visualisation)
- **-downsample ratio** increase the density of points along the length of each streamline by some factor (decreases required storage space)
- **-step\_size value** re-sample the streamlines to a desired step size (in mm)
- **-num\_points count** re-sample each streamline to a fixed number of points
- **-endpoints** only output the two endpoints of each streamline
- **-line num start end** resample tracks at 'num' equidistant locations along a line between 'start' and 'end' (specified as comma-separated 3-vectors in scanner coordinates)
- **-arc num start mid end** resample tracks at 'num' equidistant locations along a circular arc specified by points 'start', 'mid' and 'end' (specified as comma-separated 3-vectors in scanner coordinates)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.85 tcksample

### 43.85.1 Synopsis

Sample values of an associated image along tracks

### 43.85.2 Usage

```
tcksample [ options ] tracks image values
```

- *tracks*: the input track file
- *image*: the image to be sampled
- *values*: the output sampled values

### 43.85.3 Description

By default, the value of the underlying image at each point along the track is written to either an ASCII file (with all values for each track on the same line), or a track scalar file (.tsf). Alternatively, some statistic can be taken from the values along each streamline and written to a vector file.

### 43.85.4 Options

- **-stat\_tck statistic** compute some statistic from the values along each streamline (options are: mean,median,min,max)
- **-nointerp** do not use trilinear interpolation when sampling image values
- **-precise** use the precise mechanism for mapping streamlines to voxels (obviates the need for trilinear interpolation) (only applicable if some per-streamline statistic is requested)
- **-use\_tdi\_fraction** each streamline is assigned a fraction of the image intensity in each voxel based on the fraction of the track density contributed by that streamline (this is only appropriate for processing a whole-brain tractogram, and images for which the quantitative parameter is additive)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).

- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

- If using **-precise** option: Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. SIFT: Spherical-deconvolution informed filtering of tractograms. *NeuroImage*, 2013, 67, 298-312

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## 43.86 tcksift2

### 43.86.1 Synopsis

Successor to the SIFT method; instead of removing streamlines, use an EM framework to find an appropriate cross-section multiplier for each streamline

### 43.86.2 Usage

```
tcksift2 [ options ] in_tracks in_fod out_weights
```

- *in\_tracks*: the input track file
- *in\_fod*: input image containing the spherical harmonics of the fibre orientation distributions
- *out\_weights*: output text file containing the weighting factor for each streamline

### 43.86.3 Options

#### Options for setting the processing mask for the SIFT fixel-streamlines comparison model

- **-proc\_mask image** provide an image containing the processing mask weights for the model; image spatial dimensions must match the fixel image
- **-act image** use an ACT five-tissue-type segmented anatomical image to derive the processing mask

### Options affecting the SIFT model

- **-fd\_scale\_gm** provide this option (in conjunction with -act) to heuristically downsize the fibre density estimates based on the presence of GM in the voxel. This can assist in reducing tissue interface effects when using a single-tissue deconvolution algorithm
- **-no\_dilate\_lut** do NOT dilate FOD lobe lookup tables; only map streamlines to FOD lobes if the precise tangent lies within the angular spread of that lobe
- **-make\_null\_lobes** add an additional FOD lobe to each voxel, with zero integral, that covers all directions with zero / negative FOD amplitudes
- **-remove\_untracked** remove FOD lobes that do not have any streamline density attributed to them; this improves filtering slightly, at the expense of longer computation time (and you can no longer do quantitative comparisons between reconstructions if this is enabled)
- **-fd\_thresh value** fibre density threshold; exclude an FOD lobe from filtering processing if its integral is less than this amount (streamlines will still be mapped to it, but it will not contribute to the cost function or the filtering)

### Options to make SIFT provide additional output files

- **-csv file** output statistics of execution per iteration to a .csv file
- **-out\_mu file** output the final value of SIFT proportionality coefficient mu to a text file
- **-output\_debug** provide various output images for assessing & debugging performance etc.
- **-out\_coeffs path** output text file containing the weighting coefficient for each streamline

### Regularisation options for SIFT2

- **-reg\_tikhonov value** provide coefficient for regularising streamline weighting coefficients (Tikhonov regularisation) (default: 0)
- **-reg\_tv value** provide coefficient for regularising variance of streamline weighting coefficient to fixels along its length (Total Variation regularisation) (default: 0.1)

### Options for controlling the SIFT2 optimisation algorithm

- **-min\_td\_frac fraction** minimum fraction of the FOD integral reconstructed by streamlines; if the reconstructed streamline density is below this fraction, the fixel is excluded from optimisation (default: 0.1)
- **-min\_iters count** minimum number of iterations to run before testing for convergence; this can prevent premature termination at early iterations if the cost function increases slightly (default: 10)
- **-max\_iters count** maximum number of iterations to run before terminating program
- **-min\_factor factor** minimum weighting factor for an individual streamline; if the factor falls below this number the streamline will be rejected entirely (factor set to zero) (default: 0)
- **-min\_coeff coeff** minimum weighting coefficient for an individual streamline; similar to the '-min\_factor' option, but using the exponential coefficient basis of the SIFT2 model; these parameters are related as:  $\text{factor} = e^{(\text{coeff})}$ . Note that the -min\_factor and -min\_coeff options are mutually exclusive - you can only provide one. (default: -inf)
- **-max\_factor factor** maximum weighting factor that can be assigned to any one streamline (default: inf)

- **-max\_coeff coeff** maximum weighting coefficient for an individual streamline; similar to the ‘-max\_factor’ option, but using the exponential coefficient basis of the SIFT2 model; these parameters are related as:  $\text{factor} = e^{(\text{coeff})}$ . Note that the -max\_factor and -max\_coeff options are mutually exclusive - you can only provide one. (default: inf)
- **-max\_coeff\_step step** maximum change to a streamline’s weighting coefficient in a single iteration (default: 1)
- **-min\_cf\_decrease frac** minimum decrease in the cost function (as a fraction of the initial value) that must occur each iteration for the algorithm to continue (default: 2.5e-05)

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. SIFT2: Enabling dense quantitative assessment of brain white matter connectivity using streamlines tractography. *NeuroImage*, 2015, 119, 338-351

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## 43.87 tcksift

### 43.87.1 Synopsis

Filter a whole-brain fibre-tracking data set such that the streamline densities match the FOD lobe integrals

## 43.87.2 Usage

```
tcksift [ options ] in_tracks in_fod out_tracks
```

- *in\_tracks*: the input track file
- *in\_fod*: input image containing the spherical harmonics of the fibre orientation distributions
- *out\_tracks*: the output filtered tracks file

## 43.87.3 Options

- **-nofilter** do NOT perform track filtering - just construct the model in order to provide output debugging images
- **-output\_at\_counts counts** output filtered track files (and optionally debugging images if **-output\_debug** is specified) at specific numbers of remaining streamlines; provide as comma-separated list of integers

### Options for setting the processing mask for the SIFT fixel-streamlines comparison model

- **-proc\_mask image** provide an image containing the processing mask weights for the model; image spatial dimensions must match the fixel image
- **-act image** use an ACT five-tissue-type segmented anatomical image to derive the processing mask

### Options affecting the SIFT model

- **-fd\_scale\_gm** provide this option (in conjunction with **-act**) to heuristically downsize the fibre density estimates based on the presence of GM in the voxel. This can assist in reducing tissue interface effects when using a single-tissue deconvolution algorithm
- **-no\_dilate\_lut** do NOT dilate FOD lobe lookup tables; only map streamlines to FOD lobes if the precise tangent lies within the angular spread of that lobe
- **-make\_null\_lobes** add an additional FOD lobe to each voxel, with zero integral, that covers all directions with zero / negative FOD amplitudes
- **-remove\_untracked** remove FOD lobes that do not have any streamline density attributed to them; this improves filtering slightly, at the expense of longer computation time (and you can no longer do quantitative comparisons between reconstructions if this is enabled)
- **-fd\_thresh value** fibre density threshold; exclude an FOD lobe from filtering processing if its integral is less than this amount (streamlines will still be mapped to it, but it will not contribute to the cost function or the filtering)

### Options to make SIFT provide additional output files

- **-csv file** output statistics of execution per iteration to a .csv file
- **-out\_mu file** output the final value of SIFT proportionality coefficient mu to a text file
- **-output\_debug** provide various output images for assessing & debugging performance etc.
- **-out\_selection path** output a text file containing the binary selection of streamlines

## Options to control when SIFT terminates filtering

- **-term\_number value** number of streamlines - continue filtering until this number of streamlines remain
- **-term\_ratio value** termination ratio - defined as the ratio between reduction in cost function, and reduction in density of streamlines. Smaller values result in more streamlines being filtered out.
- **-term\_mu value** terminate filtering once the SIFT proportionality coefficient reaches a given value

## Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

## References

Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. SIFT: Spherical-deconvolution informed filtering of tractograms. *NeuroImage*, 2013, 67, 298-312

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## 43.88 tckstats

### 43.88.1 Synopsis

Calculate statistics on streamlines length

### 43.88.2 Usage

```
tckstats [ options ] tracks_in
```

- *tracks\_in*: the input track file

### 43.88.3 Options

- **-output field** output only the field specified. Multiple such options can be supplied if required. Choices are: mean, median, std, min, max, count. Useful for use in scripts.
- **-histogram path** output a histogram of streamline lengths
- **-dump path** dump the streamlines lengths to a text file
- **-explicit** explicitly calculate the length of each streamline, ignoring any step size information present in the header
- **-ignorezero** do not generate a warning if the track file contains streamlines with zero length
- **-tck\_weights\_in path** specify a text scalar file containing the streamline weights

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.89 tcktransform

### 43.89.1 Synopsis

Apply a spatial transformation to a tracks file

## 43.89.2 Usage

```
tcktransform [ options ] tracks transform output
```

- *tracks*: the input track file.
- *transform*: the image containing the transform.
- *output*: the output track file

## 43.89.3 Options

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.90 tensor2metric

### 43.90.1 Synopsis

Generate maps of tensor-derived parameters

### 43.90.2 Usage

```
tensor2metric [ options ] tensor
```

- *tensor*: the input tensor image.

### 43.90.3 Options

- **-adc image** compute the mean apparent diffusion coefficient (ADC) of the diffusion tensor. (sometimes also referred to as the mean diffusivity (MD))
- **-fa image** compute the fractional anisotropy (FA) of the diffusion tensor.
- **-ad image** compute the axial diffusivity (AD) of the diffusion tensor. (equivalent to the principal eigenvalue)
- **-rd image** compute the radial diffusivity (RD) of the diffusion tensor. (equivalent to the mean of the two non-principal eigenvalues)
- **-cl image** compute the linearity metric of the diffusion tensor. (one of the three Westin shape metrics)
- **-cp image** compute the planarity metric of the diffusion tensor. (one of the three Westin shape metrics)
- **-cs image** compute the sphericity metric of the diffusion tensor. (one of the three Westin shape metrics)
- **-value image** compute the selected eigenvalue(s) of the diffusion tensor.
- **-vector image** compute the selected eigenvector(s) of the diffusion tensor.
- **-num sequence** specify the desired eigenvalue/eigenvector(s). Note that several eigenvalues can be specified as a number sequence. For example, '1,3' specifies the principal (1) and minor (3) eigenvalues/eigenvectors (default = 1).
- **-modulate choice** specify how to modulate the magnitude of the eigenvectors. Valid choices are: none, FA, eigval (default = FA).
- **-mask image** only perform computation within the specified binary brain mask image.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

#### References

- Basser, P. J.; Mattiello, J. & LeBihan, D. MR diffusion tensor spectroscopy and imaging. *Biophysical Journal*, 1994, 66, 259-267
- Westin, C. F.; Peled, S.; Gudbjartsson, H.; Kikinis, R. & Jolesz, F. A. Geometrical diffusion measures for MRI from tensor basis analysis. *Proc Intl Soc Mag Reson Med*, 1997, 5, 1742

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## 43.91 transformcalc

### 43.91.1 Synopsis

Perform calculations on linear transformation matrices

### 43.91.2 Usage

```
transformcalc [ options ] inputs [ inputs ... ] operation output
```

- *inputs*: the inputs for the specified operation
- *operation*: the operation to perform, one of: invert, half, rigid, header, average, interpolate, decompose, align\_vertices\_rigid (see description section for details).
- *output*: the output transformation matrix.

### 43.91.3 Description

invert: invert the input transformation:

matrix\_in invert output

half: calculate the matrix square root of the input transformation:

matrix\_in half output

rigid: calculate the rigid transformation of the affine input transformation:

matrix\_in rigid output

header: calculate the transformation matrix from an original image and an image with modified header:

mov mapmovhdr header output

average: calculate the average affine matrix of all input matrices:

input ... average output

interpolate: create interpolated transformation matrix between input (t=0) and input2 (t=1). Based on matrix decomposition with linear interpolation of translation, rotation and stretch described in Shoemake, K., Hill, M., & Duff, T. (1992). Matrix Animation and Polar Decomposition. *Matrix*, 92, 258-264. doi:10.1.1.56.1336:

input input2 interpolate output

decompose: decompose transformation matrix  $M$  into translation, rotation and stretch and shear ( $M = T * R * S$ ). The output is a key-value text file containing: scaling: vector of 3 scaling factors in x, y, z direction; shear: list of shear

factors for xy, xz, yz axes; angles: list of Euler angles about static x, y, z axes in radians in the range  $[0:\pi] \times [-\pi:\pi] \times [-\pi:\pi]$ ; angle\_axis: angle in radians and rotation axis; translation : translation vector along x, y, z axes in mm; R: composed rotation matrix ( $R = \text{rot}_x * \text{rot}_y * \text{rot}_z$ ); S: composed scaling and shear matrix:

matrix\_in decompose output

align\_vertices\_rigid: align two sets of landmarks using a rigid transformation. Vertex coordinates are in scanner space, corresponding vertices must be stored in the same row of moving.txt and fixed.txt. Requires 3 or more vertices in each file. Algorithm: Kabsch 'A solution for the best rotation to relate two sets of vectors' DOI:10.1107/S0567739476001873:

input moving.txt fixed.txt align\_vertices\_rigid output

## 43.91.4 Options

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

---

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## 43.92 transformcompose

### 43.92.1 Synopsis

Compose any number of linear transformations and/or warps into a single transformation

## 43.92.2 Usage

```
transformcompose [ options ] input [ input ... ] output
```

- *input*: the input transforms (either linear or non-linear warps). List transforms in the order you like them to be applied to an image (as if you were applying them separately with `mrtransform`).
- *output*: the output file. If all input transformations are linear, then the output will also be a linear transformation saved as a 4x4 matrix in a text file. If a template image is supplied, then the output will always be a deformation field (see below). If all inputs are warps, or a mix of linear and warps, then the output will be a deformation field defined on the grid of the last input warp supplied.

## 43.92.3 Description

The input linear transforms must be supplied in as a 4x4 matrix in a text file (as per the output of `mrregister`). The input warp fields must be supplied as a 4D image representing a deformation field (as output from `mrregister -nl_warp`).

## 43.92.4 Options

- **-template image** define the output grid defined by a template image

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
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## 43.93 transformconvert

### 43.93.1 Synopsis

Convert linear transformation matrices

### 43.93.2 Usage

```
transformconvert [ options ] input [ input ... ] operation output
```

- *input*: the input for the specified operation
- *operation*: the operation to perform, one of: `flirt_import`, `itk_import`.  
`flirt_import`: Convert a transformation matrix produced by FSL's `flirt` command into a format usable by MRtrix. You'll need to provide as additional arguments the NIfTI images that were passed to `flirt` with the `-in` and `-ref` options: `matrix_in` in `ref flirt_import`  
`itk_import`: Convert a plain text transformation matrix file produced by ITK's (ANTs, Slicer) affine registration into a format usable by MRtrix.
- *output*: the output transformation matrix.

### 43.93.3 Description

This command allows to convert the transformation matrix provided by FSL's `flirt` command and ITK's linear transformation format to a format usable in MRtrix.

### 43.93.4 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.94 tsfdivide

### 43.94.1 Synopsis

Divide corresponding values in track scalar files

### 43.94.2 Usage

```
tsfdivide [ options ] input input output
```

- *input*: the input track scalar file.
- *input*: the input track scalar file.
- *output*: the output track scalar file

### 43.94.3 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.95 tsfinfo

### 43.95.1 Synopsis

Print out information about a track scalar file

### 43.95.2 Usage

```
tsfinfo [ options ] tracks [ tracks ... ]
```

- *tracks*: the input track scalar file.

### 43.95.3 Options

- **-count** count number of tracks in file explicitly, ignoring the header
- **-ascii prefix** save values of each track scalar file in individual ascii files, with the specified prefix.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.96 tsfmult

### 43.96.1 Synopsis

Multiply corresponding values in track scalar files

## 43.96.2 Usage

```
tsfmult [ options ] input input output
```

- *input*: the input track scalar file.
- *input*: the input track scalar file.
- *output*: the output track scalar file

## 43.96.3 Options

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.97 tsfsmooth

### 43.97.1 Synopsis

Gaussian filter a track scalar file

### 43.97.2 Usage

```
tsfsmooth [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input track scalar file.
- *output*: the output track scalar file

### 43.97.3 Options

- **-stdev sigma** apply Gaussian smoothing with the specified standard deviation. The standard deviation is defined in units of track points (default: 4)

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.98 tsfthreshold

### 43.98.1 Synopsis

Threshold and invert track scalar files

### 43.98.2 Usage

```
tsfthreshold [ options ] input N output
```

- *input*: the input track scalar file.
- *N*: the desired threshold
- *output*: the binary output track scalar file

### 43.98.3 Options

- **-invert** invert the output mask

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.99 tsfvalidate

### 43.99.1 Synopsis

Validate a track scalar file against the corresponding track data

### 43.99.2 Usage

```
tsfvalidate [ options ] tsf tracks
```

- *tsf*: the input track scalar file
- *tracks*: the track file on which the TSF is based

## 43.99.3 Options

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
  - **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
  - **-debug** display debugging messages.
  - **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
  - **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.100 vectorstats

### 43.100.1 Synopsis

Statistical testing of vector data using non-parametric permutation testing

### 43.100.2 Usage

```
vectorstats [ options ] input design contrast output
```

- *input*: a text file listing the file names of the input subject data
- *design*: the design matrix. Note that a column of 1's will need to be added for correlations.
- *contrast*: the contrast vector, specified as a single row of weights
- *output*: the filename prefix for all output.

## 43.100.3 Options

### Options for permutation testing

- **-notest** don't perform permutation testing and only output population statistics (effect size, stdev etc)
- **-nperms num** the number of permutations (Default: 5000)
- **-permutations file** manually define the permutations (relabelling). The input should be a text file defining a  $m \times n$  matrix, where each relabelling is defined as a column vector of size  $m$ , and the number of columns,  $n$ , defines the number of permutations. Can be generated with the `palm_quickperms` function in PALM (<http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk/fsl/fslwiki/PALM>). Overrides the `nperms` option.

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.101 voxel2fixel

### 43.101.1 Synopsis

Map the scalar value in each voxel to all fixels within that voxel

### 43.101.2 Usage

```
voxel2fixel [ options ] image_in fixel_directory_in fixel_directory_out fixel_data_
↳out
```

- *image\_in*: the input image.
- *fixel\_directory\_in*: the input fixel directory. Used to define the fixels and their directions
- *fixel\_directory\_out*: the fixel directory where the output will be written. This can be the same as the input directory if desired
- *fixel\_data\_out*: the name of the fixel data image.

### 43.101.3 Description

This command is designed to enable CFE-based statistical analysis to be performed on voxel-wise measures.

### 43.101.4 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
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## 43.102 voxel2mesh

### 43.102.1 Synopsis

Generate a surface mesh representation from a voxel image

## 43.102.2 Usage

```
voxel2mesh [ options ] input output
```

- *input*: the input image.
- *output*: the output mesh file.

## 43.102.3 Description

This command utilises the Marching Cubes algorithm to generate a polygonal surface that represents the isocontour(s) of the input image at a particular intensity. By default, an appropriate threshold will be determined automatically from the input image, however the intensity value of the isocontour(s) can instead be set manually using the `-threshold` option.

If the `-blocky` option is used, then the Marching Cubes algorithm will not be used. Instead, the input image will be interpreted as a binary mask image, and polygonal surfaces will be generated at the outer faces of the voxel clusters within the mask.

## 43.102.4 Options

- **-blocky** generate a ‘blocky’ mesh that precisely represents the voxel edges
- **-threshold value** manually set the intensity threshold for the Marching Cubes algorithm

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.103 warp2metric

### 43.103.1 Synopsis

Compute fixel-wise or voxel-wise metrics from a 4D deformation field

### 43.103.2 Usage

```
warp2metric [ options ] in
```

- *in*: the input deformation field

### 43.103.3 Options

- **-fc template\_fixel\_directory output\_fixel\_directory output\_fixel\_data** use an input template fixel image to define fibre orientations and output a fixel image describing the change in fibre cross-section (FC) in the perpendicular plane to the fixel orientation. e.g. `warp2metric warp.mif -fc fixel_template_directory output_fixel_directory fc.mif`
- **-jmat output** output a Jacobian matrix image stored in column-major order along the 4th dimension. Note the output jacobian describes the warp gradient w.r.t the scanner space coordinate system
- **-jdet output** output the Jacobian determinant instead of the full matrix

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the `MRTRIX_QUIET` environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

### References

Raffelt, D.; Tournier, JD.; Smith, RE.; Vaughan, DN.; Jackson, G.; Ridgway, GR. Connelly, A. Investigating White Matter Fibre Density and Morphology using Fixel-Based Analysis. Neuroimage, 2016, 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2016.09.029

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## 43.104 warpconvert

### 43.104.1 Synopsis

Convert between different representations of a non-linear warp

### 43.104.2 Usage

```
warpconvert [ options ] in type out
```

- *in*: the input warp image.
- *type*: the conversion type required. Valid choices are: deformation2displacement, displacement2deformation, warpfull2deformation, warpfull2displacement
- *out*: the output warp image.

### 43.104.3 Description

A deformation field is defined as an image where each voxel defines the corresponding position in the other image (in scanner space coordinates). A displacement field stores the displacements (in mm) to the other image from the each voxel's position (in scanner space). The warpfull file is the 5D format output from `mrregister -nl_warp_full`, which contains linear transforms, warps and their inverses that map each image to a midway space.

### 43.104.4 Options

- **-template image** define a template image when converting a warpfull file (which is defined on a grid in the midway space between image 1 & 2). For example to generate the deformation field that maps image1 to image2, then supply image2 as the template image
- **-midway\_space** to be used only with warpfull2deformation and warpfull2displacement conversion types. The output will only contain the non-linear warp to map an input image to the midway space (defined by the warpfull grid). If a linear transform exists in the warpfull file header then it will be composed and included in the output.
- **-from image** to be used only with warpfull2deformation and warpfull2displacement conversion types. Used to define the direction of the desired output field. Use `-from 1` to obtain the image1->image2 field and from 2 for image2->image1. Can be used in combination with the `-midway_space` option to produce a field that only maps to midway space.

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.

- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
  - **-debug** display debugging messages.
  - **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
  - **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.105 warpcorrect

### 43.105.1 Synopsis

Replaces voxels in a deformation field that point to 0,0,0 with nan,nan,nan

### 43.105.2 Usage

```
warpcorrect [ options ] in out
```

- *in*: the input warp image.
- *out*: the output warp image.

### 43.105.3 Description

This can be used in conjunction with the warpinit command to compute a MRtrix compatible deformation field from non-linear transformations generated by any other registration package.

### 43.105.4 Options

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.

- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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## 43.106 warpinit

### 43.106.1 Synopsis

Create an initial warp image, representing an identity transformation

### 43.106.2 Usage

```
warpinit [ options ] template warp
```

- *template*: the input template image.
- *warp*: the output warp image.

### 43.106.3 Description

This is useful to obtain the warp fields from other normalisation applications, by applying the transformation of interest to the warp field generated by this program.

The image generated is a 4D image with the same spatial characteristics as the input template image. It contains 3 volumes, with each voxel containing its own x,y,z coordinates.

Note that this command can be used to create 3 separate X,Y,Z images directly (which may be useful to create images suitable for use in the registration program) using the following syntax:

```
$ warpinit template.mif warp-[],nii
```

## 43.106.4 Options

### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
  - **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
  - **-debug** display debugging messages.
  - **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
  - **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
  - **-help** display this information page and exit.
  - **-version** display version information and exit.
- 

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## 43.107 warpinvert

### 43.107.1 Synopsis

Invert a non-linear warp field

### 43.107.2 Usage

```
warpinvert [ options ] in out
```

- *in*: the input warp image.
- *out*: the output warp image.

### 43.107.3 Description

By default, this command assumes that the input warp field is a deformation field, i.e. each voxel stores the corresponding position in the other image (in scanner space), and the calculated output warp image will also be a deformation field. If the input warp field is instead a displacement field, i.e. where each voxel stores an offset from which to sample the other image (but still in scanner space), then the `-displacement` option should be used; the output warp field will additionally be calculated as a displacement field in this case.

### 43.107.4 Options

- **-template image** define a template image grid for the output warp
- **-displacement** indicates that the input warp field is a displacement field; the output will also be a displacement field

#### Standard options

- **-info** display information messages.
- **-quiet** do not display information messages or progress status. Alternatively, this can be achieved by setting the MRTRIX\_QUIET environment variable to a non-empty string.
- **-debug** display debugging messages.
- **-force** force overwrite of output files. Caution: Using the same file as input and output might cause unexpected behaviour.
- **-nthreads number** use this number of threads in multi-threaded applications (set to 0 to disable multi-threading).
- **-help** display this information page and exit.
- **-version** display version information and exit.

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Command	Synopsis
<i>5tt2gmwmi</i>	Generate a mask image appropriate for seeding streamlines on the grey matter-white matter interface
<i>5tt2vis</i>	Generate an image for visualisation purposes from an ACT 5TT segmented anatomical image
<i>5ttcheck</i>	Thoroughly check that one or more images conform to the expected ACT five-tissue-type (5TT) format
<i>5ttedit</i>	Manually set the partial volume fractions in an ACT five-tissue-type (5TT) image using mask images
<i>afdconnectivity</i>	Obtain an estimate of fibre connectivity between two regions using AFD and streamlines tractography
<i>amp2response</i>	Estimate response function coefficients based on the DWI signal in single-fibre voxels
<i>amp2sh</i>	Convert a set of amplitudes (defined along a set of corresponding directions) to their spherical harmonic representation
<i>connectome2tck</i>	Extract streamlines from a tractogram based on their assignment to parcellated nodes
<i>connectomestats</i>	Connectome group-wise statistics at the edge level using non-parametric permutation testing
<i>dcmedit</i>	Edit DICOM file in-place
<i>dcminfo</i>	Output DICOM fields in human-readable format
<i>dirflip</i>	Optimise the polarity of the directions in a scheme with respect to a unipolar electrostatic repulsion model, by flipping the directions
<i>dirgen</i>	Generate a set of uniformly distributed directions using a bipolar electrostatic repulsion model
<i>dirmerge</i>	Splice or merge sets of directions over multiple shells into a single set, in such a way as to maintain near-optimal uniformity
<i>dirorder</i>	Reorder a set of directions to ensure near-uniformity upon truncation - i.e. if the scan is terminated early, the directions are ordered by their distance from the origin
<i>dirsplit</i>	Split a set of evenly distributed directions (as generated by dirgen) into approximately uniformly distributed sets
<i>dirstat</i>	Report statistics on a direction set

Table 1 – continued from previous page

Command	Synopsis
<i>dwi2adc</i>	Convert mean dwi (trace-weighted) images to mean ADC maps
<i>dwi2fod</i>	Estimate fibre orientation distributions from diffusion data using spherical deconvolution
<i>dwi2mask</i>	Generates a whole brain mask from a DWI image
<i>dwi2tensor</i>	Diffusion (kurtosis) tensor estimation using iteratively reweighted linear least squares estimator
<i>dwidenoise</i>	Denoise DWI data and estimate the noise level based on the optimal threshold for PCA
<i>dwiextract</i>	Extract diffusion-weighted volumes, b=0 volumes, or certain shells from a DWI dataset
<i>dwinormalise</i>	Intensity normalise the b=0 signal within a supplied white matter mask
<i>fixel2sh</i>	Convert a fixel-based sparse-data image into an spherical harmonic image
<i>fixel2tsf</i>	Map fixel values to a track scalar file based on an input tractogram
<i>fixel2voxel</i>	Convert a fixel-based sparse-data image into some form of scalar image
<i>fixelcfestats</i>	Fixel-based analysis using connectivity-based fixel enhancement and non-parametric permutation testing
<i>fixelconvert</i>	Convert between the old format fixel image (.msf / .msh) and the new fixel directory format
<i>fixelcorrespondence</i>	Obtain fixel-fixel correspondence between a subject fixel image and a template fixel mask
<i>fixelcrop</i>	Crop/remove fixels from sparse fixel image using a binary fixel mask
<i>fixelreorient</i>	Reorient fixel directions
<i>fod2dec</i>	Generate FOD-based DEC maps, with optional panchromatic sharpening and/or luminance/perception correction
<i>fod2fixel</i>	Perform segmentation of continuous Fibre Orientation Distributions (FODs) to produce discrete fixels
<i>label2colour</i>	Convert a parcellated image (where values are node indices) into a colour image
<i>label2mesh</i>	Generate meshes from a label image
<i>labelconvert</i>	Convert a connectome node image from one lookup table to another
<i>maskdump</i>	Print out the locations of all non-zero voxels in a mask image
<i>maskfilter</i>	Perform filtering operations on 3D / 4D mask images
<i>mesh2voxel</i>	Convert a mesh surface to a partial volume estimation image
<i>meshconvert</i>	Convert meshes between different formats, and apply transformations
<i>meshfilter</i>	Apply filter operations to meshes
<i>mraverageheader</i>	Calculate the average (unbiased) coordinate space of all input images
<i>mrcalc</i>	Apply generic voxel-wise mathematical operations to images
<i>mrcat</i>	Concatenate several images into one
<i>mrcheckerboardmask</i>	Create bitwise checkerboard image
<i>mrclusterstats</i>	Voxel-based analysis using permutation testing and threshold-free cluster enhancement
<i>mrconvert</i>	Perform conversion between different file types and optionally extract a subset of the input image
<i>mrcrop</i>	Crop an image to a reduced field of view
<i>mrdegibbs</i>	Remove Gibbs Ringing Artifacts
<i>mrdump</i>	Print out the values within an image
<i>mredit</i>	Directly edit the intensities within an image from the command-line
<i>mrfilter</i>	Perform filtering operations on 3D / 4D MR images
<i>mrhistmatch</i>	Modify the intensities of one image to match the histogram of another
<i>mrhistogram</i>	Generate a histogram of image intensities
<i>mrinfo</i>	Display image header information, or extract specific information from the header
<i>mrmath</i>	Compute summary statistic on image intensities either across images, or along a specified axis of a single image
<i>mrmetric</i>	Computes a dissimilarity metric between two images
<i>mrpad</i>	Pad an image to increase the FOV
<i>mrregister</i>	Register two images together using a symmetric rigid, affine or non-linear transformation model
<i>mrresize</i>	Resize an image by defining the new image resolution, voxel size or a scale factor
<i>mrstats</i>	Compute images statistics
<i>mrthreshold</i>	Create bitwise image by thresholding image intensity
<i>mrtransform</i>	Apply spatial transformations to an image
<i>mrview</i>	The MRtrix image viewer.
<i>mtnormalise</i>	Multi-tissue informed log-domain intensity normalisation

Table 1 – continued from previous page

Command	Synopsis
<i>peaks2amp</i>	Convert peak directions image to amplitudes
<i>sh2amp</i>	Evaluate the amplitude of an image of spherical harmonic functions along specified directions
<i>sh2peaks</i>	Extract the peaks of a spherical harmonic function at each voxel, by commencing a Newton search along a set of directions
<i>sh2power</i>	Compute the total power of a spherical harmonics image
<i>sh2response</i>	Generate an appropriate response function from the image data for spherical deconvolution
<i>shbasis</i>	Examine the values in spherical harmonic images to estimate (and optionally change) the SH basis used
<i>shconv</i>	Perform a spherical convolution
<i>shview</i>	View spherical harmonics surface plots
<i>tck2connectome</i>	Generate a connectome matrix from a streamlines file and a node parcellation image
<i>tck2fixel</i>	Compute a fixel TDI map from a tractogram
<i>tckconvert</i>	Convert between different track file formats
<i>tckdfc</i>	Perform the Track-Weighted Dynamic Functional Connectivity (TW-dFC) method
<i>tckedit</i>	Perform various editing operations on track files
<i>tckgen</i>	Perform streamlines tractography
<i>tckglobal</i>	Multi-Shell Multi-Tissue Global Tractography
<i>tckinfo</i>	Print out information about a track file
<i>tckmap</i>	Use track data as a form of contrast for producing a high-resolution image
<i>tckresample</i>	Resample each streamline in a track file to a new set of vertices
<i>tcksample</i>	Sample values of an associated image along tracks
<i>tcksift2</i>	Successor to the SIFT method; instead of removing streamlines, use an EM framework to find an appropriate subset of streamlines
<i>tcksift</i>	Filter a whole-brain fibre-tracking data set such that the streamline densities match the FOD lobe integrals
<i>tckstats</i>	Calculate statistics on streamlines length
<i>tcktransform</i>	Apply a spatial transformation to a tracks file
<i>tensor2metric</i>	Generate maps of tensor-derived parameters
<i>transformcalc</i>	Perform calculations on linear transformation matrices
<i>transformcompose</i>	Compose any number of linear transformations and/or warps into a single transformation
<i>transformconvert</i>	Convert linear transformation matrices
<i>tsfdivide</i>	Divide corresponding values in track scalar files
<i>tsfinfo</i>	Print out information about a track scalar file
<i>tsfmult</i>	Multiply corresponding values in track scalar files
<i>tsfsmooth</i>	Gaussian filter a track scalar file
<i>tsfthreshold</i>	Threshold and invert track scalar files
<i>tsfvalidate</i>	Validate a track scalar file against the corresponding track data
<i>vectorstats</i>	Statistical testing of vector data using non-parametric permutation testing
<i>voxel2fixel</i>	Map the scalar value in each voxel to all fixels within that voxel
<i>voxel2mesh</i>	Generate a surface mesh representation from a voxel image
<i>warp2metric</i>	Compute fixel-wise or voxel-wise metrics from a 4D deformation field
<i>warpconvert</i>	Convert between different representations of a non-linear warp
<i>warpcorrect</i>	Replaces voxels in a deformation field that point to 0,0,0 with nan,nan,nan
<i>warpinit</i>	Create an initial warp image, representing an identity transformation
<i>warpinvert</i>	Invert a non-linear warp field



## 44.1 5ttgen

### 44.1.1 Synopsis

Generate a 5TT image suitable for ACT

### 44.1.2 Usage

```
5ttgen algorithm [ options ] ...
```

- *algorithm*: Select the algorithm to be used to complete the script operation; additional details and options become available once an algorithm is nominated. Options are: freesurfer, fsl, gif

### 44.1.3 Description

5ttgen acts as a ‘master’ script for generating a five-tissue-type (5TT) segmented tissue image suitable for use in Anatomically-Constrained Tractography (ACT). A range of different algorithms are available for completing this task. When using this script, the name of the algorithm to be used must appear as the first argument on the command-line after ‘5ttgen’. The subsequent compulsory arguments and options available depend on the particular algorithm being invoked.

Each algorithm available also has its own help page, including necessary references; e.g. to see the help page of the ‘fsl’ algorithm, type ‘5ttgen fsl’.

### 44.1.4 Options

#### Options common to all 5ttgen algorithms

- **-nocrop** Do NOT crop the resulting 5TT image to reduce its size (keep the same dimensions as the input image)

- **-sgm\_amyg\_hipp** Represent the amygdalae and hippocampi as sub-cortical grey matter in the 5TT image

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

### References

- Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Anatomically-constrained tractography: Improved diffusion MRI streamlines tractography through effective use of anatomical information. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 62, 1924-1938

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## 44.2 5ttgen freesurfer

### 44.2.1 Synopsis

Generate the 5TT image based on a FreeSurfer parcellation image

### 44.2.2 Usage

```
5ttgen freesurfer input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input FreeSurfer parcellation image (any image containing 'aseg' in its name)
- *output*: The output 5TT image

## 44.2.3 Options

### Options specific to the ‘freesurfer’ algorithm

- **-lut** Manually provide path to the lookup table on which the input parcellation image is based (e.g. FreeSurfer-ColorLUT.txt)

### Options common to all 5Ttgen algorithms

- **-nocrop** Do NOT crop the resulting 5TT image to reduce its size (keep the same dimensions as the input image)
- **-sgm\_amyg\_hipp** Represent the amygdalae and hippocampi as sub-cortical grey matter in the 5TT image

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

### References

- Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Anatomically-constrained tractography: Improved diffusion MRI streamlines tractography through effective use of anatomical information. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 62, 1924-1938

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## 44.3 5ttgen fsl

### 44.3.1 Synopsis

Use FSL commands to generate the 5TT image based on a T1-weighted image

### 44.3.2 Usage

```
5ttgen fsl input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input T1-weighted image
- *output*: The output 5TT image

### 44.3.3 Options

#### Options specific to the 'fsl' algorithm

- **-t2 <T2 image>** Provide a T2-weighted image in addition to the default T1-weighted image; this will be used as a second input to FSL FAST
- **-mask** Manually provide a brain mask, rather than deriving one in the script
- **-premasked** Indicate that brain masking has already been applied to the input image

#### Options common to all 5ttgen algorithms

- **-nocrop** Do NOT crop the resulting 5TT image to reduce its size (keep the same dimensions as the input image)
- **-sgm\_amyg\_hipp** Represent the amygdalae and hippocampi as sub-cortical grey matter in the 5TT image

#### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

## References

- Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Anatomically-constrained tractography: Improved diffusion MRI streamlines tractography through effective use of anatomical information. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 62, 1924-1938
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## 44.4 5ttgen gif

### 44.4.1 Synopsis

Generate the 5TT image based on a Geodesic Information Flow (GIF) segmentation image

### 44.4.2 Usage

```
5ttgen gif input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input Geodesic Information Flow (GIF) segmentation image
- *output*: The output 5TT image

### 44.4.3 Options

#### Options common to all 5ttgen algorithms

- **-nocrop** Do NOT crop the resulting 5TT image to reduce its size (keep the same dimensions as the input image)
- **-sgm\_amyg\_hipp** Represent the amygdalae and hippocampi as sub-cortical grey matter in the 5TT image

## Standard options

- **-continue** <TempDir> <LastFile> Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads** **number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir** /path/to/tmp/ Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

## References

- Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Anatomically-constrained tractography: Improved diffusion MRI streamlines tractography through effective use of anatomical information. *NeuroImage*, 2012, 62, 1924-1938

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## 44.5 dwi2response

### 44.5.1 Synopsis

Estimate response function(s) for spherical deconvolution

### 44.5.2 Usage

```
dwi2response algorithm [ options ] ...
```

- *algorithm*: Select the algorithm to be used to complete the script operation; additional details and options become available once an algorithm is nominated. Options are: dhollander, fa, manual, msmt\_5tt, tax, tournier

### 44.5.3 Description

dwi2response acts as a ‘master’ script for performing various types of response function estimation; a range of different algorithms are available for completing this task. When using this script, the name of the algorithm to be used must appear as the first argument on the command-line after ‘dwi2response’. The subsequent compulsory arguments and options available depend on the particular algorithm being invoked.

Each algorithm available also has its own help page, including necessary references; e.g. to see the help page of the ‘fa’ algorithm, type ‘dwi2response fa’.

### 44.5.4 Options

#### Options common to all dwi2response algorithms

- **-shells** The b-value shell(s) to use in response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-lmax** The maximum harmonic degree(s) of response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-mask** Provide an initial mask for response voxel selection
- **-voxels** Output an image showing the final voxel selection(s)
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

#### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

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## 44.6 dwi2response dhollander

### 44.6.1 Synopsis

Use the Dhollander et al. (2016) algorithm for unsupervised estimation of WM, GM and CSF response functions; does not require a T1 image (or segmentation thereof)

### 44.6.2 Usage

```
dwi2response dhollander input out_sfwm out_gm out_csf [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI
- *out\_sfwm*: Output single-fibre WM response text file
- *out\_gm*: Output GM response text file
- *out\_csf*: Output CSF response text file

### 44.6.3 Options

#### Options specific to the 'dhollander' algorithm

- **-erode** Number of erosion passes to apply to initial (whole brain) mask. (default: 3)
- **-fa** FA threshold for crude WM versus GM-CSF separation. (default: 0.2)
- **-sfwm** Number of single-fibre WM voxels to select, as a percentage of refined WM. (default: 0.5 per cent)
- **-gm** Number of GM voxels to select, as a percentage of refined GM. (default: 2 per cent)
- **-csf** Number of CSF voxels to select, as a percentage of refined CSF. (default: 10 per cent)

#### Options common to all dwi2response algorithms

- **-shells** The b-value shell(s) to use in response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-lmax** The maximum harmonic degree(s) of response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-mask** Provide an initial mask for response voxel selection
- **-voxels** Output an image showing the final voxel selection(s)
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

#### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing

- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

## References

- Dhollander, T.; Raffelt, D. & Connelly, A. Unsupervised 3-tissue response function estimation from single-shell or multi-shell diffusion MR data without a co-registered T1 image. ISMRM Workshop on Breaking the Barriers of Diffusion MRI, 2016, 5
- Dhollander, T.; Raffelt, D. & Connelly, A. Accuracy of response function estimation algorithms for 3-tissue spherical deconvolution of diverse quality diffusion MRI data. Proc Intl Soc Mag Reson Med, 2018, 26, 1569

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## 44.7 dwi2response fa

### 44.7.1 Synopsis

Use the old FA-threshold heuristic for single-fibre voxel selection and response function estimation

### 44.7.2 Usage

```
dwi2response fa input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI
- *output*: The output response function text file

## 44.7.3 Options

### Options specific to the 'fa' algorithm

- **-erode** Number of brain mask erosion steps to apply prior to threshold (not used if mask is provided manually)
- **-number** The number of highest-FA voxels to use
- **-threshold** Apply a hard FA threshold, rather than selecting the top voxels

### Options common to all dwi2response algorithms

- **-shells** The b-value shell(s) to use in response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-lmax** The maximum harmonic degree(s) of response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-mask** Provide an initial mask for response voxel selection
- **-voxels** Output an image showing the final voxel selection(s)
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

### References

- Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F.; Gadian, D. G. & Connelly, A. Direct estimation of the fiber orientation density function from diffusion-weighted MRI data using spherical deconvolution. *NeuroImage*, 2004, 23, 1176-1185

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## 44.8 dwi2response manual

### 44.8.1 Synopsis

Derive a response function using an input mask image alone (i.e. pre-selected voxels)

### 44.8.2 Usage

```
dwi2response manual input in_voxels output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI
- *in\_voxels*: Input voxel selection mask
- *output*: Output response function text file

### 44.8.3 Options

#### Options specific to the 'manual' algorithm

- **-dirs** Manually provide the fibre direction in each voxel (a tensor fit will be used otherwise)

#### Options common to all dwi2response algorithms

- **-shells** The b-value shell(s) to use in response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-lmax** The maximum harmonic degree(s) of response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-mask** Provide an initial mask for response voxel selection
- **-voxels** Output an image showing the final voxel selection(s)
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

#### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion

- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
  - **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
  - **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
  - **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
  - **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info
- 

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## 44.9 dwi2response msmt\_5tt

### 44.9.1 Synopsis

Derive MSMT-CSD tissue response functions based on a co-registered five-tissue-type (5TT) image

### 44.9.2 Usage

```
dwi2response msmt_5tt input in_5tt out_wm out_gm out_csf [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI
- *in\_5tt*: Input co-registered 5TT image
- *out\_wm*: Output WM response text file
- *out\_gm*: Output GM response text file
- *out\_csf*: Output CSF response text file

### 44.9.3 Options

#### Options specific to the 'msmt\_5tt' algorithm

- **-dirs** Manually provide the fibre direction in each voxel (a tensor fit will be used otherwise)
- **-fa** Upper fractional anisotropy threshold for GM and CSF voxel selection (default: 0.2)
- **-pvf** Partial volume fraction threshold for tissue voxel selection (default: 0.95)
- **-wm\_algo algorithm** dwi2response algorithm to use for WM single-fibre voxel selection (default: tournier)
- **-sfwm\_fa\_threshold** Sets -wm\_algo to fa and allows to specify a hard FA threshold for single-fibre WM voxels, which is passed to the -threshold option of the fa algorithm (warning: overrides -wm\_algo option)

### Options common to all dwi2response algorithms

- **-shells** The b-value shell(s) to use in response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-lmax** The maximum harmonic degree(s) of response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-mask** Provide an initial mask for response voxel selection
- **-voxels** Output an image showing the final voxel selection(s)
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

### References

- Jeurissen, B.; Tournier, J.-D.; Dhollander, T.; Connelly, A. & Sijbers, J. Multi-tissue constrained spherical deconvolution for improved analysis of multi-shell diffusion MRI data. *NeuroImage*, 2014, 103, 411-426

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## 44.10 dwi2response tax

### 44.10.1 Synopsis

Use the Tax et al. (2014) recursive calibration algorithm for single-fibre voxel selection and response function estimation

### 44.10.2 Usage

```
dwi2response tax input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI
- *output*: The output response function text file

### 44.10.3 Options

#### Options specific to the ‘tax’ algorithm

- **-peak\_ratio** Second-to-first-peak amplitude ratio threshold
- **-max\_iters** Maximum number of iterations
- **-convergence** Percentile change in any RF coefficient required to continue iterating

#### Options common to all dwi2response algorithms

- **-shells** The b-value shell(s) to use in response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-lmax** The maximum harmonic degree(s) of response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-mask** Provide an initial mask for response voxel selection
- **-voxels** Output an image showing the final voxel selection(s)
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

#### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory

- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

## References

- Tax, C. M.; Jeurissen, B.; Vos, S. B.; Viergever, M. A. & Leemans, A. Recursive calibration of the fiber response function for spherical deconvolution of diffusion MRI data. *NeuroImage*, 2014, 86, 67-80

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## 44.11 dwi2response tournier

### 44.11.1 Synopsis

Use the Tournier et al. (2013) iterative algorithm for single-fibre voxel selection and response function estimation

### 44.11.2 Usage

```
dwi2response tournier input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI
- *output*: The output response function text file

### 44.11.3 Options

#### Options specific to the ‘tournier’ algorithm

- **-iter\_voxels** Number of single-fibre voxels to select when preparing for the next iteration
- **-sf\_voxels** Number of single-fibre voxels to use when calculating response function
- **-dilate** Number of mask dilation steps to apply when deriving voxel mask to test in the next iteration
- **-max\_iters** Maximum number of iterations

### Options common to all dwi2response algorithms

- **-shells** The b-value shell(s) to use in response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-lmax** The maximum harmonic degree(s) of response function estimation (single value for single-shell response, comma-separated list for multi-shell response)
- **-mask** Provide an initial mask for response voxel selection
- **-voxels** Output an image showing the final voxel selection(s)
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

### References

- Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. Determination of the appropriate b-value and number of gradient directions for high-angular-resolution diffusion-weighted imaging. *NMR Biomedicine*, 2013, 26, 1775-1786

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## 44.12 dwibiascorrect

### 44.12.1 Synopsis

Perform B1 field inhomogeneity correction for a DWI volume series

### 44.12.2 Usage

```
dwibiascorrect input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input image series to be corrected
- *output*: The output corrected image series

### 44.12.3 Options

#### Options for the dwibiascorrect script

- **-mask** Manually provide a mask image for bias field estimation
- **-bias** Output the estimated bias field
- **-ants** Use ANTS N4 to estimate the inhomogeneity field
- **-fsl** Use FSL FAST to estimate the inhomogeneity field
- **-grad** Pass the diffusion gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Pass the diffusion gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

#### Options for ANTS N4BiasFieldCorrection

- **-ants.b [100,3]** N4BiasFieldCorrection option -b. [initial mesh resolution in mm, spline order] This value is optimised for human adult data and needs to be adjusted for rodent data.
- **-ants.c [1000,0.0]** N4BiasFieldCorrection option -c. [numberOfIterations,convergenceThreshold]
- **-ants.s 4** N4BiasFieldCorrection option -s. shrink-factor applied to spatial dimensions

#### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution

- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of **-info**

## References

- If using **-fast** option: Zhang, Y.; Brady, M. & Smith, S. Segmentation of brain MR images through a hidden Markov random field model and the expectation-maximization algorithm. *IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging*, 2001, 20, 45-57
- If using **-fast** option: Smith, S. M.; Jenkinson, M.; Woolrich, M. W.; Beckmann, C. F.; Behrens, T. E.; Johansen-Berg, H.; Bannister, P. R.; De Luca, M.; Drobnjak, I.; Flitney, D. E.; Niazy, R. K.; Saunders, J.; Vickers, J.; Zhang, Y.; De Stefano, N.; Brady, J. M. & Matthews, P. M. Advances in functional and structural MR image analysis and implementation as FSL. *NeuroImage*, 2004, 23, S208-S219
- If using **-ants** option: Tustison, N.; Avants, B.; Cook, P.; Zheng, Y.; Egan, A.; Yushkevich, P. & Gee, J. N4ITK: Improved N3 Bias Correction. *IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging*, 2010, 29, 1310-1320

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## 44.13 dwigradcheck

### 44.13.1 Synopsis

Check the orientation of the diffusion gradient table

### 44.13.2 Usage

```
dwigradcheck input [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI series to be checked

### 44.13.3 Options

#### Options for the dwigradcheck script

- **-mask** Provide a brain mask image
- **-number** Set the number of tracks to generate for each test

### Options for importing the gradient table

- **-grad** Provide a gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide a gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

### Options for exporting the estimated best gradient table

- **-export\_grad\_mrtrix grad** Export the final gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-export\_grad\_fsl bvecs bvals** Export the final gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

### References

- Jeurissen, B.; Leemans, A.; Sijbers, J. Automated correction of improperly rotated diffusion gradient orientations in diffusion weighted MRI. *Medical Image Analysis*, 2014, 18(7), 953-962

---

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## 44.14 dwiintensitynorm

### 44.14.1 Synopsis

Performs a global DWI intensity normalisation on a group of subjects using the median  $b=0$  white matter value as the reference

### 44.14.2 Usage

```
dwiintensitynorm input_dir mask_dir output_dir fa_template wm_mask [ options ]
```

- *input\_dir*: The input directory containing all DWI images
- *mask\_dir*: Input directory containing brain masks, corresponding to one per input image (with the same file name prefix)
- *output\_dir*: The output directory containing all of the intensity normalised DWI images
- *fa\_template*: The output population specific FA template, which is threshold to estimate a white matter mask
- *wm\_mask*: The output white matter mask (in template space), used to estimate the median  $b=0$  white matter value for normalisation

### 44.14.3 Description

The white matter mask is estimated from a population average FA template then warped back to each subject to perform the intensity normalisation. Note that bias field correction should be performed prior to this step.

### 44.14.4 Options

#### Options for the dwiintensitynorm script

- **-fa\_threshold** The threshold applied to the Fractional Anisotropy group template used to derive an approximate white matter mask (default: 0.4)

#### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked

- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of **-info**

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## 44.15 dwipreproc

### 44.15.1 Synopsis

Perform diffusion image pre-processing using FSL's eddy tool; including inhomogeneity distortion correction using FSL's topup tool if possible

### 44.15.2 Usage

```
dwipreproc input output [ options ]
```

- *input*: The input DWI series to be corrected
- *output*: The output corrected image series

### 44.15.3 Description

Note that this script does not perform any explicit registration between images provided to topup via the **-se\_epi** option, and the DWI volumes provided to eddy. In some instances (motion between acquisitions) this can result in erroneous application of the inhomogeneity field during distortion correction. If this could potentially be a problem for your data, a possible solution is to insert the first **b=0** DWI volume to be the first volume of the image file provided via the **-se\_epi** option. This will hopefully be addressed within the script itself in a future update.

### 44.15.4 Options

**Options for specifying the acquisition phase-encoding design; note that one of the **-rpe\_\*** options MUST be provided**

- **-rpe\_none** Specify that no reversed phase-encoding image data is being provided; eddy will perform eddy current and motion correction only
- **-rpe\_pair** Specify that a set of images (typically **b=0** volumes) will be provided for use in inhomogeneity field estimation only (using the **-se\_epi** option). It is assumed that the **FIRST** volume(s) of this image has the **SAME** phase-encoding direction as the input DWIs, and the **LAST** volume(s) has precisely the **OPPOSITE** phase encoding

- **-rpe\_all** Specify that ALL DWIs have been acquired with opposing phase-encoding; this information will be used to perform a recombination of image volumes (each pair of volumes with the same b-vector but different phase encoding directions will be combined together into a single volume). It is assumed that the SECOND HALF of the volumes in the input DWIs have corresponding diffusion sensitisation directions to the FIRST HALF, but were acquired using precisely the opposite phase-encoding direction
- **-rpe\_header** Specify that the phase-encoding information can be found in the image header(s), and that this is the information that the script should use

### Other options for the dwipreproc script

- **-pe\_dir PE** Manually specify the phase encoding direction of the input series; can be a signed axis number (e.g. -0, 1, +2), an axis designator (e.g. RL, PA, IS), or NIfTI axis codes (e.g. i-, j, k)
- **-readout\_time time** Manually specify the total readout time of the input series (in seconds)
- **-se\_epi image** Provide an additional image series consisting of spin-echo EPI images, which is to be used exclusively by topup for estimating the inhomogeneity field (i.e. it will not form part of the output image series)
- **-align\_seepi** Achieve alignment between the SE-EPI images used for inhomogeneity field estimation, and the DWIs, by inserting the first DWI b=0 volume to the SE-EPI series. Only use this option if the input SE-EPI images have identical image contrast to the b=0 images present in the DWI series.
- **-json\_import file** Import image header information from an associated JSON file (may be necessary to determine phase encoding information)
- **-topup\_options TopupOptions** Manually provide additional command-line options to the topup command (provide a string within quotation marks that contains at least one space, even if only passing a single command-line option to topup)
- **-eddy\_options EddyOptions** Manually provide additional command-line options to the eddy command (provide a string within quotation marks that contains at least one space, even if only passing a single command-line option to eddy)
- **-eddyqc\_text directory** Copy the various text-based statistical outputs generated by eddy into an output directory
- **-eddyqc\_all directory** Copy ALL outputs generated by eddy (including images) into an output directory

### Options for importing the diffusion gradient table

- **-grad** Provide a gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-fslgrad bvecs bvals** Provide a gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

### Options for exporting the diffusion gradient table

- **-export\_grad\_mrtrix grad** Export the final gradient table in MRtrix format
- **-export\_grad\_fsl bvecs bvals** Export the final gradient table in FSL bvecs/bvals format

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing

- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

## References

- Andersson, J. L. & Sotiropoulos, S. N. An integrated approach to correction for off-resonance effects and subject movement in diffusion MR imaging. *NeuroImage*, 2015, 125, 1063-1078
- Smith, S. M.; Jenkinson, M.; Woolrich, M. W.; Beckmann, C. F.; Behrens, T. E.; Johansen-Berg, H.; Bannister, P. R.; De Luca, M.; Drobnjak, I.; Flitney, D. E.; Niazy, R. K.; Saunders, J.; Vickers, J.; Zhang, Y.; De Stefano, N.; Brady, J. M. & Matthews, P. M. Advances in functional and structural MR image analysis and implementation as FSL. *NeuroImage*, 2004, 23, S208-S219
- If performing recombination of diffusion-weighted volume pairs with opposing phase encoding directions: Skare, S. & Bammer, R. Jacobian weighting of distortion corrected EPI data. *Proceedings of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 2010, 5063
- If performing EPI susceptibility distortion correction: Andersson, J. L.; Skare, S. & Ashburner, J. How to correct susceptibility distortions in spin-echo echo-planar images: application to diffusion tensor imaging. *NeuroImage*, 2003, 20, 870-888
- If including “-repol” in -eddy\_options input: Andersson, J. L. R.; Graham, M. S.; Zsoldos, E. & Sotiropoulos, S. N. Incorporating outlier detection and replacement into a non-parametric framework for movement and distortion correction of diffusion MR images. *NeuroImage*, 2016, 141, 556-572
- If including “-mporder” in -eddy\_options input: Andersson, J. L. R.; Graham, M. S.; Drobnjak, I.; Zhang, H.; Filippini, N. & Bastiani, M. Towards a comprehensive framework for movement and distortion correction of diffusion MR images: Within volume movement. *NeuroImage*, 2017, 152, 450-466

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## 44.16 labelsgmfix

### 44.16.1 Synopsis

In a FreeSurfer parcellation image, replace the sub-cortical grey matter structure delineations using FSL FIRST

## 44.16.2 Usage

```
labelsgmfix parc t1 lut output [ options ]
```

- *parc*: The input FreeSurfer parcellation image
- *t1*: The T1 image to be provided to FIRST
- *lut*: The lookup table file that the parcellated image is based on
- *output*: The output parcellation image

## 44.16.3 Options

### Options for the labelsgmfix script

- **-premasked** Indicate that brain masking has been applied to the T1 input image
- **-sgm\_amyg\_hipp** Consider the amygdalae and hippocampi as sub-cortical grey matter structures, and also replace their estimates with those from FIRST

### Standard options

- **-continue <TempDir> <LastFile>** Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

### References

- Patenaude, B.; Smith, S. M.; Kennedy, D. N. & Jenkinson, M. A Bayesian model of shape and appearance for subcortical brain segmentation. *NeuroImage*, 2011, 56, 907-922
- Smith, S. M.; Jenkinson, M.; Woolrich, M. W.; Beckmann, C. F.; Behrens, T. E.; Johansen-Berg, H.; Bannister, P. R.; De Luca, M.; Drobnjak, I.; Flitney, D. E.; Niazy, R. K.; Saunders, J.; Vickers, J.; Zhang, Y.; De Stefano, N.; Brady, J. M. & Matthews, P. M. Advances in functional and structural MR image analysis and implementation as FSL. *NeuroImage*, 2004, 23, S208-S219
- Smith, R. E.; Tournier, J.-D.; Calamante, F. & Connelly, A. The effects of SIFT on the reproducibility and biological accuracy of the structural connectome. *NeuroImage*, 2015, 104, 253-265

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## 44.17 population\_template

### 44.17.1 Synopsis

Generates an unbiased group-average template from a series of images

### 44.17.2 Usage

```
population_template input_dir template [ options ]
```

- *input\_dir*: The input directory containing all images used to build the template
- *template*: The output template image

### 44.17.3 Description

First a template is optimised with linear registration (rigid or affine, affine is default), then non-linear registration is used to optimise the template further.

### 44.17.4 Options

#### Input, output and general options

- **-type** Specify the types of registration stages to perform. Options are “rigid” (perform rigid registration only which might be useful for intra-subject registration in longitudinal analysis), “affine” (perform affine registration) and “nonlinear” as well as combinations of registration types: “rigid\_affine”, “rigid\_nonlinear”, “affine\_nonlinear”, “rigid\_affine\_nonlinear”. Default: rigid\_affine\_nonlinear
- **-voxel\_size** Define the template voxel size in mm. Use either a single value for isotropic voxels or 3 comma separated values.
- **-initial\_alignment** Method of alignment to form the initial template. Options are “mass” (default), “geometric” and “none”.
- **-mask\_dir** Optionally input a set of masks inside a single directory, one per input image (with the same file name prefix). Using masks will speed up registration significantly
- **-warp\_dir** Output a directory containing warps from each input to the template. If the folder does not exist it will be created

- **-transformed\_dir** Output a directory containing the input images transformed to the template. If the folder does not exist it will be created
- **-linear\_transformations\_dir** Output a directory containing the linear transformations used to generate the template. If the folder does not exist it will be created
- **-template\_mask** Output a template mask. Only works if `-mask_dir` has been input. The template mask is computed as the intersection of all subject masks in template space.
- **-noreorientation** Turn off FOD reorientation in `mrregister`. Reorientation is on by default if the number of volumes in the 4th dimension corresponds to the number of coefficients in an antipodally symmetric spherical harmonic series (i.e. 6, 15, 28, 45, 66 etc)

### Options for the non-linear registration

- **-nl\_scale** Specify the multi-resolution pyramid used to build the non-linear template, in the form of a list of scale factors (default: 0.3,0.4,0.5,0.6,0.7,0.8,0.9,1.0,1.0,1.0,1.0,1.0,1.0,1.0,1.0). This implicitly defines the number of template levels
- **-nl\_lmax** Specify the `lmax` used for non-linear registration for each scale factor, in the form of a list of integers (default: 2,2,2,2,2,2,2,4,4,4,4,4,4,4). The list must be the same length as the `nl_scale` factor list
- **-nl\_niter** Specify the number of registration iterations used within each level before updating the template, in the form of a list of integers (default: 5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5). The list must be the same length as the `nl_scale` factor list
- **-nl\_update\_smooth** Regularise the gradient update field with Gaussian smoothing (standard deviation in voxel units, Default 2.0 x `voxel_size`)
- **-nl\_disp\_smooth** Regularise the displacement field with Gaussian smoothing (standard deviation in voxel units, Default 1.0 x `voxel_size`)
- **-nl\_grad\_step** The gradient step size for non-linear registration (Default: 0.5)

### Options for the linear registration

- **-linear\_no\_pause** Do not pause the script if a linear registration seems implausible
- **-linear\_estimator** Choose estimator for intensity difference metric. Valid choices are: 11 (least absolute:  $|x|$ ), 12 (ordinary least squares), 1p (least powers:  $|x|^{1.2}$ ), Default: 12
- **-rigid\_scale** Specify the multi-resolution pyramid used to build the rigid template, in the form of a list of scale factors (default: 0.3,0.4,0.6,0.8,1.0,1.0). This and `affine_scale` implicitly define the number of template levels
- **-rigid\_lmax** Specify the `lmax` used for rigid registration for each scale factor, in the form of a list of integers (default: 2,2,2,4,4,4). The list must be the same length as the `linear_scale` factor list
- **-rigid\_niter** Specify the number of registration iterations used within each level before updating the template, in the form of a list of integers (default:50 for each scale). This must be a single number or a list of same length as the `linear_scale` factor list
- **-affine\_scale** Specify the multi-resolution pyramid used to build the affine template, in the form of a list of scale factors (default: 0.3,0.4,0.6,0.8,1.0,1.0). This and `rigid_scale` implicitly define the number of template levels
- **-affine\_lmax** Specify the `lmax` used for affine registration for each scale factor, in the form of a list of integers (default: 2,2,2,4,4,4). The list must be the same length as the `linear_scale` factor list
- **-affine\_niter** Specify the number of registration iterations used within each level before updating the template, in the form of a list of integers (default:500 for each scale). This must be a single number or a list of same length as the `linear_scale` factor list

## Standard options

- **-continue** <TempDir> <LastFile> Continue the script from a previous execution; must provide the temporary directory path, and the name of the last successfully-generated file
- **-force** Force overwrite of output files if pre-existing
- **-help** Display help information for the script
- **-nocleanup** Do not delete temporary files during script, or temporary directory at script completion
- **-nthreads number** Use this number of threads in MRtrix multi-threaded applications (0 disables multi-threading)
- **-tempdir /path/to/tmp/** Manually specify the path in which to generate the temporary directory
- **-quiet** Suppress all console output during script execution
- **-info** Display additional information and progress for every command invoked
- **-debug** Display additional debugging information over and above the output of -info

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Command	Synopsis
<i>5tngen</i>	Generate a 5TT image suitable for ACT
<i>dwi2response</i>	Estimate response function(s) for spherical deconvolution
<i>dwibiascorrect</i>	Perform B1 field inhomogeneity correction for a DWI volume series
<i>dwigradcheck</i>	Check the orientation of the diffusion gradient table
<i>dwiintensitynorm</i>	Performs a global DWI intensity normalisation on a group of subjects using the median b=0 white matter value as the reference
<i>dwipreproc</i>	Perform diffusion image pre-processing using FSL's eddy tool; including inhomogeneity distortion correction using FSL's topup tool if possible
<i>labelsghmfix</i>	In a FreeSurfer parcellation image, replace the sub-cortical grey matter structure delineations using FSL FIRST
<i>population_template</i>	Generates an unbiased group-average template from a series of images



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## List of MRtrix3 configuration file options

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- **AmbientIntensity** *default: 0.5*

The default intensity for the ambient light in OpenGL renders.
- **AnalyseLeftToRight** *default: 0 (false)*

A boolean value to indicate whether images in Analyse format should be assumed to be in LAS orientation (default) or RAS (when this is option is turned on).
- **BValueScaling** *default: 1 (true)*

Specifies whether the b-values should be scaled by the squared norm of the gradient vectors when loading a DW gradient scheme. This is commonly required to correctly interpret images acquired on scanners that nominally only allow a single b-value, as the common workaround is to scale the gradient vectors to modulate the actual b-value.
- **BZeroThreshold** *default: 10.0*

Specifies the b-value threshold for determining those image volumes that correspond to b=0.
- **BackgroundColor** *default: 1.0,1.0,1.0*

The default colour to use for the background in OpenGL panels, notably the SH viewer.
- **ConnectomeEdgeAssociatedAlphaMultiplier** *default: 1.0*

The multiplicative factor to apply to the transparency of edges connected to one selected node.
- **ConnectomeEdgeAssociatedColour** *default: 0.0,0.0,0.0*

The colour mixed in to edges connected to one currently selected node.
- **ConnectomeEdgeAssociatedColourFade** *default: 0.5*

The fraction of the colour of an edge connected to one selected node determined by the fixed colour.
- **ConnectomeEdgeAssociatedSizeMultiplier** *default: 1.0*

The multiplicative factor to apply to the size of edges connected to one selected node.

- **ConnectomeEdgeOtherAlphaMultiplier** *default: 1.0*  
The multiplicative factor to apply to the transparency of edges not connected to any selected node.
- **ConnectomeEdgeOtherColour** *default: 0.0,0.0,0.0*  
The colour mixed in to edges not connected to any currently selected node.
- **ConnectomeEdgeOtherColourFade** *default: 0.75*  
The fraction of the colour of an edge not connected to any selected node determined by the fixed colour.
- **ConnectomeEdgeOtherSizeMultiplier** *default: 1.0*  
The multiplicative factor to apply to the size of edges not connected to any selected node.
- **ConnectomeEdgeOtherVisibilityOverride** *default: true*  
Whether or not to force invisibility of edges not connected to any selected node.
- **ConnectomeEdgeSelectedAlphaMultiplier** *default: 1.0*  
The multiplicative factor to apply to the transparency of edges connected to two selected nodes.
- **ConnectomeEdgeSelectedColour** *default: 0.9,0.9,1.0*  
The colour used to highlight the edges connected to two currently selected nodes.
- **ConnectomeEdgeSelectedColourFade** *default: 0.5*  
The fraction of the colour of an edge connected to two selected nodes determined by the fixed selection highlight colour.
- **ConnectomeEdgeSelectedSizeMultiplier** *default: 1.0*  
The multiplicative factor to apply to the size of edges connected to two selected nodes.
- **ConnectomeEdgeSelectedVisibilityOverride** *default: false*  
Whether or not to force visibility of edges connected to two selected nodes.
- **ConnectomeNodeAssociatedAlphaMultiplier** *default: 1.0*  
The multiplicative factor to apply to the transparency of nodes associated with a selected node.
- **ConnectomeNodeAssociatedColour** *default: 0.0,0.0,0.0*  
The colour mixed in to those nodes associated with any selected node.
- **ConnectomeNodeAssociatedColourFade** *default: 0.5*  
The fraction of the colour of an associated node determined by the fixed associated highlight colour.
- **ConnectomeNodeAssociatedSizeMultiplier** *default: 1.0*  
The multiplicative factor to apply to the size of nodes associated with a selected node.
- **ConnectomeNodeOtherAlphaMultiplier** *default: 1.0*  
The multiplicative factor to apply to the transparency of nodes not currently selected nor associated with a selected node.
- **ConnectomeNodeOtherColour** *default: 0.0,0.0,0.0*  
The colour mixed in to those nodes currently not selected nor associated with any selected node.
- **ConnectomeNodeOtherColourFade** *default: 0.75*

The fraction of the colour of an unselected, non-associated node determined by the fixed not-selected highlight colour.

- **ConnectomeNodeOtherSizeMultiplier** *default: 1.0*

The multiplicative factor to apply to the size of nodes not currently selected nor associated with a selected node.
- **ConnectomeNodeOtherVisibilityOverride** *default: false*

Whether or not nodes are forced to be invisible when not selected or associated with any selected node.
- **ConnectomeNodeSelectedAlphaMultiplier** *default: 1.0*

The multiplicative factor to apply to the transparency of selected nodes.
- **ConnectomeNodeSelectedColour** *default: 1.0,1.0,1.0*

The colour used to highlight those nodes currently selected.
- **ConnectomeNodeSelectedColourFade** *default: 0.75*

The fraction of the colour of a selected node determined by the fixed selection highlight colour.
- **ConnectomeNodeSelectedSizeMultiplier** *default: 1.0*

The multiplicative factor to apply to the size of selected nodes.
- **ConnectomeNodeSelectedVisibilityOverride** *default: true*

Whether or not nodes are forced to be visible when selected.
- **DiffuseIntensity** *default: 0.5*

The default intensity for the diffuse light in OpenGL renders.
- **FailOnWarn** *default: 0 (false)*

A boolean value specifying whether MRtrix applications should abort as soon as any (otherwise non-fatal) warning is issued.
- **FontSize** *default: 10*

The size (in points) of the font to be used in OpenGL viewports (mrview and shview).
- **HelpCommand** *default: less*

The command to use to display each command's help page (leave empty to send directly to the terminal).
- **IconSize** *default: 30*

The size of the icons in the main MRView toolbar.
- **ImageInterpolation** *default: true*

Define default interpolation setting for image and image overlay.
- **ImageInterpolation** *default: true*

Interpolation switched on in the main image.
- **InitialToolBarPosition** *default: top*

The starting position of the MRView toolbar. Valid values are: top, bottom, left, right.
- **LightPosition** *default: 1.0,1.0,3.0*

The default position vector to use for the light in OpenGL renders.

- **MRViewColourBarHeight** *default: 100*  
The height of the colourbar in MRView, in pixels.
- **MRViewColourBarInset** *default: 20*  
How far away from the edge of the main window to place the colourbar in MRView, in pixels.
- **MRViewColourBarPosition** *default: bottomright*  
The position of the colourbar within the main window in MRView. Valid values are: bottomleft, bottomright, topleft, topright.
- **MRViewColourBarTextOffset** *default: 10*  
How far away from the colourbar to place the associated text, in pixels.
- **MRViewColourBarWidth** *default: 20*  
The width of the colourbar in MRView, in pixels.
- **MRViewColourHorizontalPadding** *default: 100*  
The width in pixels between horizontally adjacent colour bars.
- **MRViewDefaultTractGeomType** *default: Pseudotubes*  
The default geometry type used to render tractograms. Options are Pseudotubes, Lines or Points
- **MRViewDockFloating** *default: 0 (false)*  
Whether MRView tools should start docked in the main window, or floating (detached from the main window).
- **MRViewFocusModifierKey** *default: meta (cmd on MacOSX)*  
Modifier key to select focus mode in MRView. Valid choices include shift, alt, ctrl, meta (on MacOSX: shift, alt, ctrl, cmd).
- **MRViewImageBackgroundColour** *default: 0,0,0 (black)*  
The default image background colour in the main MRView window.
- **MRViewInitWindowSize** *default: 512,512*  
Initial window size of MRView in pixels.
- **MRViewMaxNumColourmapRows** *default: 3*  
The maximal number of rows used to layout a collection of rendered colourbars Note, that all tool-specific colourbars will form a single collection.
- **MRViewMoveModifierKey** *default: shift*  
Modifier key to select move mode in MRView. Valid choices include shift, alt, ctrl, meta (on MacOSX: shift, alt, ctrl, cmd).
- **MRViewOdfScale** *default: 1.0*  
The factor by which the ODF overlay is scaled.
- **MRViewRotateModifierKey** *default: ctrl*  
Modifier key to select rotate mode in MRView. Valid choices include shift, alt, ctrl, meta (on MacOSX: shift, alt, ctrl, cmd).
- **MRViewShowColourbar** *default: true*  
Colourbar shown in main image overlay.

- **MRViewShowComments** *default: true*  
Comments shown in main image overlay.
- **MRViewShowFocus** *default: true*  
Focus cross hair shown in main image.
- **MRViewShowOrientationLabel** *default: true*  
Anatomical orientation information shown in main image overlay.
- **MRViewShowVoxelInformation** *default: true*  
Voxel information shown in main image overlay.
- **MRViewToolFontSize** *default: 2 points less than the standard system font*  
The point size for the font to use in MRView tools.
- **MRViewToolsColourBarPosition** *default: topright*  
The position of all visible tool colourbars within the main window in MRView. Valid values are: bottomleft, bottomright, topleft, topright.
- **MSAA** *default: 0 (false)*  
How many samples to use for multi-sample anti-aliasing (to improve display quality).
- **NifTIAllowBitwise** *default: 0 (false)*  
A boolean value to indicate whether bitwise storage of binary data is permitted (most 3rd party software packages don't support bitwise data). If false (the default), data will be stored using more widely supported unsigned 8-bit integers.
- **NifTIAlwaysUseVer2** *default: 0 (false)*  
A boolean value to indicate whether NifTI images should always be written in the new NifTI-2 format. If false, images will be written in the older NifTI-1 format by default, with the exception being files where the number of voxels along any axis exceeds the maximum permissible in that format (32767), in which case the output file will automatically switch to the NifTI-2 format.
- **NifTIAutoLoadJSON** *default: 0 (false)*  
A boolean value to indicate whether, when opening NifTI images, any corresponding JSON file should be automatically loaded.
- **NifTIAutoSaveJSON** *default: 0 (false)*  
A boolean value to indicate whether, when writing NifTI images, a corresponding JSON file should be automatically created in order to save any header entries that cannot be stored in the NifTI header.
- **NifTIUseSform** *default: 0 (false)*  
A boolean value to control whether, in cases where both the sform and qform transformations are defined in an input NifTI image, but those transformations differ, the sform transformation should be used in preference to the qform matrix (the default behaviour).
- **NeedOpenGLCoreProfile** *default: 1 (true)*  
Whether the creation of an OpenGL 3.3 context requires it to be a core profile (needed on newer versions of the ATI drivers on Linux, for instance).
- **NumberOfThreads** *default: number of threads provided by hardware*  
Set the default number of CPU threads to use for multi-threading.

- **NumberOfUndos** *default: 16*

The number of undo operations permitted in the MRView ROI editor tool.
- **ObjectColor** *default: 1,1,0 (yellow)*

The default colour to use for objects (i.e. SH glyphs) when not colouring by direction.
- **RegAnalyseDescent** *default: 0 (false)*

Linear registration: write comma separated gradient descent parameters and gradients to stdout and verbose gradient descent output to stderr.
- **RegCoherenceLen** *default: 3.0*

Linear registration: estimated spatial coherence length in voxels.
- **RegGdConvergenceDataSmooth** *default: 0.8*

Linear registration: control point trajectory smoothing value used in convergence check parameter range: [0...1].
- **RegGdConvergenceMinIter** *default: 10*

Linear registration: minimum number of iterations until convergence check is activated.
- **RegGdConvergenceSlopeSmooth** *default: 0.1*

Linear registration: control point trajectory slope smoothing value used in convergence check parameter range: [0...1].
- **RegGdConvergenceThresh** *default: 5e-3*

Linear registration: threshold for convergence check using the smoothed control point trajectories measured in fraction of a voxel.
- **RegGdWeightMatrix** *default: 0.0003*

Linear registration: weight for optimisation of linear (3x3) matrix parameters.
- **RegGdWeightTranslation** *default: 1*

Linear registration: weight for optimisation of translation parameters.
- **RegStopLen** *default: 0.0001*

Linear registration: smallest gradient descent step measured in fraction of a voxel at which to stop registration.
- **ScriptTmpDir** *default: '.'*

The location in which to generate the temporary directories to be used by MRtrix Python scripts. By default they will be generated in the working directory.
- **ScriptTmpPrefix** *default: '<script>-tmp-'*

The prefix to use when generating a unique name for a Python script temporary directory. By default the name of the invoked script itself will be used, followed by *-tmp-* (six random characters are then appended to produce a unique name in cases where a script may be run multiple times in parallel).
- **SparseDataInitialSize** *default: 16777216*

Initial buffer size for data in MRtrix sparse image format file (in bytes).
- **SpecularExponent** *default: 5.0*

The default exponent for the specular light in OpenGL renders.

- **SpecularIntensity** *default: 0.5*

The default intensity for the specular light in OpenGL renders.
- **TckgenEarlyExit** *default: 0 (false)*

Specifies whether tckgen should be terminated prematurely in cases where it appears as though the target number of accepted streamlines is not going to be met.
- **TerminalColor** *default: 1 (true)*

A boolean value to indicate whether colours should be used in the terminal.
- **TmpFileDir** *default: '/tmp' (on Unix), '.' (on Windows)*

The prefix for temporary files (as used in pipelines). By default, these files get written to the current folder on Windows machines, which may cause performance issues, particularly when operating over distributed file systems. On Unix machines, the default is /tmp/, which is typically a RAM file system and should therefore be fast; but may cause issues on machines with little RAM capacity or where write-access to this location is not permitted.
- **TmpFilePrefix** *default: 'mrtrix-tmp-'*

The prefix to use for the basename of temporary files. This will be used to generate a unique filename for the temporary file, by adding random characters to this prefix, followed by a suitable suffix (depending on file type). Note that this prefix can also be manipulated using the `MRTRIX_TMPFILE_PREFIX` environment variable, without editing the config file.
- **ToolbarStyle** *default: 2*

The style of the main toolbar buttons in MRView. See Qt's documentation for `Qt::ToolButtonStyle`.
- **TrackWriterBufferSize** *default: 16777216*

The size of the write-back buffer (in bytes) to use when writing track files. MRtrix will store the output tracks in a relatively large buffer to limit the number of write() calls, avoid associated issues such as file fragmentation.
- **VSync** *default: 0 (false)*

Whether the screen update should synchronise with the monitor's vertical refresh (to avoid tearing artefacts).



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MRtrix 0.2 equivalent commands

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For those users moving to *MRtrix3* from the old MRtrix 0.2.x software, this list provides the equivalent command names for the functionalities that they are accustomed to from the older version of the software. The new command naming scheme was carefully designed, so we hope people agree that it makes sense, and allows users to easily find the command functionalities available that are relevant for the data they are processing.

Further information can be found on these commands either through the [documentation](#), or by typing the binary name at the command-line with no arguments to access the help file for that command.

MRtrix 0.2.x	MRtrix3	Comments
average	<i>mrmath</i>	Use mean statistic as second argument, and <code>-axis</code> option
cat_tracks	<i>tckedit</i>	Simply provide multiple input track files to the command
cleanup_ANTs_warp	<i>no equivalent</i>	
csdeconv	<i>dwi2fod</i>	
dicom_filename	<i>no equivalent</i>	See <i>dcminfo</i>
dir2amp	<i>peaks2amp</i>	
disp_profile	<i>shview</i>	
dwi2SH	<i>amp2sh</i>	
dwi2tensor	<i>dwi2tensor</i>	
erode	<i>maskfilter</i>	Specify erode or dilate algorithm as second argument
estimate_response	<i>dwi2response</i> manual	The <i>dwi2response</i> script also has a number of algorithms for automatically selecting
filter_tracks	<i>tckedit</i>	
find_SH_peaks	<i>sh2peaks</i>	
gen_ROI	<i>no equivalent</i>	
gen_WM_mask	<i>no equivalent</i>	Use of this command was discouraged and so it has been discontinued
gen_unit_warp	<i>warpinit</i>	
gendir	<i>dirgen</i>	The electrostatic repulsion algorithm now only uses an exponent of 2 by default,
import_tracks	<i>tckconvert</i>	
median3D	<i>mrfilter</i>	Specify median algorithm as second argument
mrabs	<i>mrcalc</i>	Use <code>-abs</code> operator
mradd	<i>mrcalc</i> or <i>mrmath</i>	E.g. <code>mrcalc A.mif B.mif -add out.mif</code> or <code>mrmath A.mif B.mif</code>
mrconcat	<i>mrconcat</i>	

MRtrix 0.2.x	MRtrix3	Comments
mrconvert	<i>mrconvert</i>	
mrinfo	<i>mrinfo</i>	
mrmult	<i>mrcalc or mrmath</i>	E.g. <code>mrcalc A.mif B.mif -mult out.mif</code> or <code>mrmath A.mif B.mif</code>
mrstats	<i>mrstats</i>	
mrtransform	<i>mrtransform</i>	
mrview	<i>mrview</i>	
normalise_tracks	<i>tcktransform</i>	
read_dicom	<i>dcminfo</i>	
read_ximg	<i>no equivalent</i>	
resample_tracks	<i>tcksample</i>	
sample_tracks	<i>tcksample</i>	
sdeconv	<i>dwi2fod</i>	
select_tracks	<i>tckedit</i>	
streamtrack	<i>tckgen</i>	
tensor2ADC	<i>tensor2metric</i>	Use <code>-adc</code> output option
tensor2FA	<i>tensor2metric</i>	Use <code>-fa</code> output option
tensor2vector	<i>tensor2metric</i>	Use <code>-vector</code> output option
tensor_metric	<i>tensor2metric</i>	
threshold	<i>mrthreshold</i>	Note that automatic threshold parameter determination (i.e. if you don't explicitl
track_info	<i>tckinfo</i>	
tracks2prob	<i>tckmap</i>	
tracks2vtk	<i>tckconvert</i>	
truncate_tracks	<i>tckedit</i>	

## CHAPTER 47

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