

Joint that make those popping or cracking sounds

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(HealthDay)—If you've ever heard a loud pop as you bent down to pick

something up, you'll be relieved to know that it's normal for your joints to make popping and cracking noises.

These sounds can be caused by a number of things, including when soft tissues—such as tendons and ligaments—rub or snap over other tissues and bones, explained Dr. Aman Dhawan. He is an orthopedic sports medicine specialist at Penn State Health's Milton Hershey Medical Center.

"Our [joints](#) are mobile, so there are a lot of things that slide over or run past each other. When they move, there is the potential for anatomy to intersect," he said in a Penn State news release.

The sounds can also be caused by pockets of [nitrogen gas](#) within the fluid that helps lubricate joints and provides nutrition to cartilage, Dhawan added.

According to Dr. Robert Gallo, another orthopedic sports medicine specialist at Hershey Medical Center, the only time you need to be concerned about noisy joints is if you also have swelling or pain.

There's no link between joint sounds and arthritis, both doctors agreed. And cracking your joints does not make them swell up or become arthritic, they added.

"Joint sounds are not really an indicator of health or lack of health," Dhawan said. He pointed out that the cracking or popping sounds "may be irritating to the listener, but that's a separate issue. There is really no evidence that it causes any damage."

Some people believe chondroitin and glucosamine supplements or injections help lubricate joints. But there is little evidence to prove they are effective, Gallo said.

Your joints can benefit from stretching and strengthening exercises, low-impact workouts (such as swimming and bicycling), maintaining a healthy weight and not smoking, the doctors advised.

"There is good data to support getting rid of excess weight because it does improve pain in the joints of the lower extremities, as well as decreases your risk of getting arthritis or of having it progress," Dhawan said. "The joints carry the weight of our bodies, so the less stress you put on them, the longer they will stay healthy."

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases has more on [joint health](#).

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