

CLICK! CREAK! CRACK!

WHAT YOUR JOINTS ARE TRYING TO TELL YOU

Ever wonder what's behind the creaking and crackling your joints make as you go through your day? Perhaps you're most aware of your joints when they click as you climb the stairs or crack as you reach for that can of peaches tucked away on an upper shelf. Generally, these noises are harmless, but if you feel pain along with the noise, see your healthcare provider.

So what's with all the racket? Here are four common causes:

1. Your joints are filled with synovial fluid, a lubricant that contains oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide. When you stretch a joint, the pop you hear is the sound of the gas being released.
2. When you move, tendons—the bands of tissue that connect muscle to bone—move. You may hear a snapping noise as tendons rush back in place.
3. Connective tissue that binds joints together and connects bones and cartilage may also tighten as you move your joints, creating a cracking sound.
4. People with arthritis often lose cartilage. The resulting roughness of the joint surface can create a creaking noise. This sound is called crepitus.

