

DO YOU/CAN YOU

DO THIS?

SHORT WELLNESS SELF-
CHECKS

Do You Crack Your Joints



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Sometimes a good crack can make you feel better. Unfortunately the research has shown that this may be a psychological placebo effect, but the good thing it may **not** do any harm. Much of the research on joint damage from self cracking has been in the knuckles and from what we see there is no correlation between knuckle cracking and joint damage or arthritis ([Harvard Health](#)). That being said, **I typically tell people not to crack, but rather find the solution to why you need to crack.**

According to Keck Medicine of USC there is no evidence that cracking your neck or back is a risk factor for disc degeneration. While it's probably okay to occasionally self-crack your neck or back, don't have a non-professional do it rather get adjusted from a licensed chiropractor or physical therapist.

There are other remedies that may be more effective for neck and back pain besides cracking. Try massage, apply heat, alter your posture, remember to stretch, or the best thing for joints is to move and strengthen around them. Typically you would want to stretch the muscles that are shortened and strengthen muscles that are weak. We can help you identify which those are.

Although cracking is probably harmless, the exception is if it causes pain and/or swelling. Some people with arthritis (inflammation of joints, usually painful), bursitis, or tendinitis notice having cracking sounds because of the snapping of irregular, swollen tissues. If you already have pain with cracking with these conditions talk to your doctor to address the underlying problem.

Cracking is almost normal and is part of aging. **The idea of the cracking is from a bone being out of place does not stand though.** “When considering all of this research evidence, it becomes nearly impossible to genuinely support a continued “bone out of place” hypothesis for spinal manipulation.” The most likely cause of cracking is a tendon moving back and forth, it could be from gas pockets, bone or bone contact (crepitus), or the creation of negative pressure. No one knows exactly what causes the common sounds of non-painful joint cracking and popping. If there is pain a most likely cause is arthritis. If there is pain talk to your doctor.