

What is the grating sensation and sometimes noise in a joint?

This is referred to as crepitus, which is sometimes called crepitation (krep-i-tay-shen). According to Athritis-Health.com it describes any grinding, creaking, cracking, grating, crunching, or popping that occurs when moving a joint. People can experience crepitus at any age, but it becomes more common as people get older. Sometimes this sensation is caused by possible gas or negative pressure in the joint with no pain, or a snapping tendon or ligament that may have pain, or worst Arthritis—typically either osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis—that causes a joint's articular cartilage to degenerate. While arthritis often leads to pain, not everyone with joint degeneration will experience it.

A most common crepitus area that I see in people is at the knee. When a knee joint's cartilage degenerates the joint is no longer adequately protected against friction and impact forces from say walking and running. The ensuing loss of cartilage can alter the joint's biomechanics and cause bones to grind against one another. If a meniscus is torn, the shredded or detached edges can get caught during movement. This causes swelling, pain, and popping or clicking noises. These changes can result in crepitus. A dull ache behind the patella (kneecap) can indicate that there is an underlying injury or that it has been overused and with movement, there is usually a crunching or grating sound which accompanies the pain. All of which should be addressed. Other areas where there may be crepitus is the hip, shoulder, neck and spine. This is different than an occasional pop. It is pretty consistent with movement.

According to Athritis-Health.com crepitus usually is not a cause for concern. In fact, most people's joints crack or pop occasionally, and that is considered normal.

But if crepitus is regular and is accompanied by pain, swelling, or other concerning symptoms, it may be an indication of arthritis or another medical condition. Please talk to your physician about this.

We can also help you with a conditioning program if you have pain. [See our Joint Care Page.](#)

Do You/CAN YOU
DO THIS?

Short Wellness Self-
Checks

DO YOU CREAK?

