

Click! Creak! Crack!

What Your Joints Are Telling You

What's behind the creaking and crackling your joints make as you go through your day?

- 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.



Keeping joints healthy

Exercise can preserve range of motion and flexibility and increase joint stability. Doing these gentle exercises below once a day can improve your range of motion. You may find that walking, climbing stairs, exercising and simply reaching overhead all become a lot more comfortable. **Perform each movement slowly. Stop if you feel pain. If you have arthritis or any other chronic medical condition, get your doctor's OK before performing new exercises.**



Calf Stretch

Place both hands on the wall in front of you. Step one foot back behind you in a stride position, keeping the heel in contact with the ground and both toes facing forward. Keep the knee straight for the first part of the stretch, then allow the knee to bend slightly, switching the focus of the stretch to the lower calf. Alternate these stretches on each leg. **Hold position for 30 seconds, two times each.**



Hamstring Stretch

Using a stable bed or table, sit on one hip and extend one leg out along the table or bed with toes to the sky and ankle relaxed. Leave the opposite foot firmly planted on the floor with toes facing forward. Sit up nice and tall, then bend from the hip forward to stretch the extended leg. Alternate the stretch on right and left leg. **Hold for 30 seconds, two times each.**



Pec Stretch

Locate a doorway or corner of a wall. Place the inside of the elbow just above 90 degrees with hand flat on the wall and pointed toward sky. Keeping the core engaged and spine straight, gently lean forward to feel the stretch in the front of the chest. Alternate stretch on both right and left arms. **Hold each stretch for 30 seconds, two times each.**