Debunking Medical Myths: Knuckle Cracking Causes Arthritis

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Medical Myth: Knuckle Cracking Causes Arthritis

How does it work?

Increase in joint space and decrease in joint pressure allow gases in joint fluid to make bubbles -> collapse of bubbles = “crack” sound


Studies show...

When looking at 300 patients, osteoarthritis (OA) had a prevalence of 16% in both knuckle-cracking and non-knuckle-cracking populations

Knuckle crackers had increased hand swelling and lower grip strength but no increased tendency to develop OA

Radiograph-confirmed OA did not show higher rates of disease in groups who cracked knuckles, even when looking at frequency of knuckle cracking

To conclude...

While knuckle cracking is not a harmless habit, it does not contribute to increased risk of OA

Don't let it get out of hand!
