Debunking Medical Myths: Does Cracking Your Knuckles Cause Arthritis?

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Recommended Citation
Chen, Dawei; Rafique, Rumyah; Mogasala, Saiteja; Kelleher, Cecily; Muralidharan, Arjun; and Halkias, Eleftherios, "Debunking Medical Myths: Does Cracking Your Knuckles Cause Arthritis?" (2022). Patient Education Projects. 287.  
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Myth: Does Cracking Your Knuckles Cause Arthritis?

Have you ever been told that cracking your knuckles causes osteoarthritis? Well, research says otherwise!

What is the mechanism of "knuckle cracking"?

- Joints get manipulated in several directions
- Pressure between joints decreases
- Gases in the joint fluid form bubbles
- Joint fills with gas bubbles, which then collapse
- Sound of "knuckle cracking"

Though some believe that cracking knuckles creates enough force to damage cartilage, this theory remains unsubstantiated.

Multiple Studies Found No Association Between Knuckle Cracking and Osteoarthritis! ¹ ² ³ ⁴

- A 2017 study found no significant difference in people who cracked their knuckles on a regular basis and those who didn't.¹
- Another study that investigated risk factors for osteoarthritis (OA) found that the prevalence of habitual knuckle cracking was similar among people with and without OA.²
- A randomized control study in 2017 found no difference in grip strength between habitual knuckle crackers and the control group.³

One study even shows that there is an increase in the range of motion of a joint after habitual knuckle cracking!¹

What Are Some Proven Risk Factors for Osteoarthritis?²

- Increasing Age
- Previous Trauma to Joints
- Familial History of OA
- History of Heavy Labor
- Genetic Disposition

If you or a loved one are experiencing symptoms of osteoarthritis, such as joint pain, stiffness, or swelling, consult a medical professional for treatment options!