

Mayo Clinic Minute

A hand surgeon’s advice on knuckle cracking

VIDEO	AUDIO
	Snap, ...
	<i>Sound of a knuckle being cracked</i>
	... crack, ...
	<i>Sound of a knuckle being cracked</i>
	...pop.
	<i>Sound of several knuckles being cracked at once</i>
	Nearly half of us crack our knuckles, and some do it a lot.
Title: Sanj Kakar, M.D. Orthopedics Mayo Clinic	“... Habitual knuckle-crackers. And they crack, on average, more than five times a day.”
Graphic: Tribonucleation Bubbles in synovial fluid	Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Sanj Kakar explains that tribonucleation is the process of creating bubbles within the synovial fluid in our finger joints. The sound we call cracking is actually those bubbles bursting.
	<i>Sound of a knuckle being cracked</i>
	“You’ve got bubbles within the joint, and you’re breaking those bubbles up – just like bubble wrap. You’re pressing them, and then the bubbles are bursting.”
Graphic: Same Function Grip strength Range of motion Thicker cartilage	Studies show knuckle crackers have the same function, grip strength and range of motion as those who don’t crack their knuckles, although cartilage can become thicker in people who burst their own bubbles.
	<i>Sound of a knuckle being cracked</i>
	And what would Dr. Kakar say to a person with this

	snappy habit?
	<i>Sound of several knuckles being cracked at once</i>
	“I would ask them what do their friends and family say. If they find it’s annoying, then stop. But, otherwise, if it’s causing no pain to them, really, I don’t think they’re doing any harm. I do it myself.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Jeff Olsen.