

Personal Best

HOPE HealthLetter®

SEPTEMBER 2022

Got Noisy Joints?

Sounds in the knees are fairly common.

You may hear a snapping or clicking sound when you bend or straighten your knees, or when you walk or go up or downstairs. Called **crepitus** (Latin for **rattle**), this can also occur in shoulder, elbow or neck joints. Often, the older you get, the louder the noise.

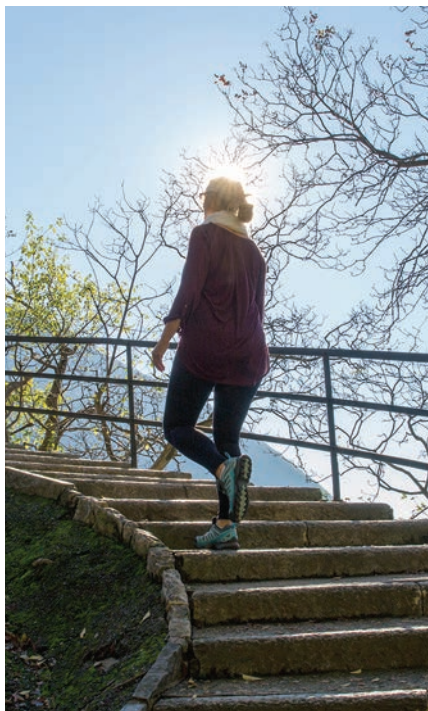
Benign (painless) crepitus is caused by the rubbing of cartilage on the joint surface or other soft tissues around the joints during joint movement, likely a result of air movement in the joint. The mechanics of your knees and other joints naturally make some level of noise when they're in use.

Crepitus with pain can be a sign of arthritis, dysfunction of the patellofemoral joint (between the knee cap and the thigh bone), injury with scar tissue, a meniscus tear, or a tendon moving over a bony prominence within the joint.

Even though benign crepitus or a joint clicking sound is not typically harmful or unhealthy, it can be annoying during exercise or other activities, such as climbing stairs, or simply rising from sitting.

Effective solutions for reducing joint clicking or pain during movement: Adopt a gentle stretching routine prior to strenuous physical activity or exercise. In addition, focus on muscle training exercises that strengthen your knees, legs and neck to lessen crepitus.

If you have regular joint noises accompanied by pain and/or swelling, consult your health care provider.



The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, **Save Your Neck**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V9tools.

BEST bits



■ During Cholesterol Education Month in September, we are

reminded that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. — and that unhealthy blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease, causing heart attack and stroke. **Cholesterol's main function is to maintain the health of your body's cell membranes.** Your body, specifically your liver, makes all the cholesterol you need. Excess cholesterol is produced in your liver from what you eat, namely foods high in saturated fat, including fatty meats, poultry, full-fat dairy products and tropical oils. Other factors affecting your cholesterol level include: being overweight, older or inactive; smoking; and having relatives with elevated cholesterol.



■ Fruits and Veggies — More Matters Month is observed each

September, reminding us of the health benefits of consuming produce every day to obtain vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients essential for continuing good health and helping to reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases. Consumption of produce in the U.S. is declining, according to the *2020 State of the Plate: Fruit and Vegetable Consumption* report from the Produce for Better Health Foundation. Discover the health benefits of produce at eatright.org/food, and learn to boost your daily intake of produce.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date pandemic information visit coronavirus.gov.

“Good food is the foundation for genuine happiness.”

— Auguste Escoffier



TIP of the MONTH

It's Whole Grains Month



Whole grains, such as brown rice, oats, barley, quinoa, whole-grain wheat, popcorn (yes, popcorn) and whole rye, offer an array of nutrients. They include fiber, vitamins, minerals, as well as antioxidants, and are the perfect salad base or side dish. Fill a quarter of your plate with whole grains to help reduce your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, inflammation, cancer and type 2 diabetes. Celebrate Whole Grains Month every day of the year.

eating smart

Tame Your Grocery Bill

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Grocery prices steadily increased in recent years due to the pandemic, supply chain issues, and shortages of transportation and labor. All of this adds up to sticker shock at the cash register, but there are some things you can do to lower your grocery bill.

The largest price increases have occurred in meat, dairy and seafood products. With animal-based food prices going up, it makes sense to add more affordable plant-based proteins to your plate, such as tofu, beans and lentils. Studies show that plant-based diets cost up to 34% less than animal-based diets. Even a flexitarian plan, where you eat meat, fish or poultry occasionally, can cut costs by 14%.

Shop with a grocery list, so you only get what you need and don't duplicate what you already have. Buy what's in season and what's on sale. After you shop, use the most perishable foods first before they go bad and go to waste. Remember to compare prices as you shop. Often generic or store brands cost less than the leading brands and offer the same high quality.

You can often save money by opting for frozen or canned vegetables, fruit, beans and fish — and they are just as nutritious as fresh. Buying foods in a near-natural state will save money, too — for example, whole carrots and a head of lettuce cost less than baby-cut carrots and bagged salad. You pay for the ready-made convenience, but you may not need to.

Finally, it may help to use a credit card or store-based loyalty card that offers cash back on grocery purchases, or redeemable points that you can put toward free groceries.



Farro Apple Salad with Arugula

EASY recipe

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 cup farro grain, wheat berries or pot barley | ¼ cup chopped pecans |
| 3 cups arugula or salad greens | ¼ cup crumbled goat cheese |
| 1 medium apple, diced | 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil |
| ½ cup each fresh chopped mint and basil | 1½ tbsp apple cider vinegar |
| | 1 tsp Dijon mustard |
| | Pinch salt and pepper |



Add farro to a pot with 3 cups of water. **Bring** to a boil and reduce to simmer. **Cook** for 40 minutes or until tender. **Drain** and run under cool water. **Set** aside. **In** a large serving bowl, add cool farro, arugula, apple, mint, basil, pecans and goat cheese. **In** a small bowl, mix olive oil, vinegar, Dijon, salt and pepper. **Pour** over salad, stir to combine and serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 362 calories | 10g protein | 18g total fat | 3g saturated fat | 10g mono fat | 4g poly fat | 40g carbohydrate | 6g sugar | 5g fiber | 371mg sodium

Parenting College Kids

When your children start college, your role changes.

Your interest and support are still important. But you also need to recognize college is a time when your child is becoming more independent as they move into adulthood.

No matter how much advice you've given to your son or daughter, it will take time for them to learn how to handle many aspects of college life themselves — from studying and turning in assignments on time, to handling their money responsibly and doing their laundry. They are bound to run into problems if they're homesick or upset with a roommate, and they turn to mom or dad.

While it may be hard, experts advise letting college students handle problems on their own. Listen to your child's concerns but don't try to fix them. Instead, ensure your student has contact information handy for appropriate help, such as their dorm resident adviser or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Emory University psychology professor Marshall Duke, who has helped smooth the transition for parents seeing kids off to college, offers these tips:

- Establish a regular communication schedule when your offspring contacts you; don't constantly text and call.
- Don't change your child's room at home (at least not for a semester or two) so they have a home base.
- Be realistic about grades. Few students make it through college with a 4.0 grade point average. New college students need time to learn how to study and do their best at college level.

If your newly minted college students are living at home, talk things out. Discuss expectations about any household duties, such as laundry, they need to attend to. But remember: They are young adults and need independence to thrive academically and personally.

Where's Your Motivation?

Motivation is what drives us to make things happen. Consider the last time you felt inspired to achieve an important goal within your personal, social or work life. Did you feel inspired by reading a book, listening to a speech or talking with coworkers, friends or family who have reached goals similar to ones you are setting?

While we need motivation to get things done, following through isn't always easy. Here are tips to become and remain inspired:

Set goals. They can help you identify and pursue what you want. Goals give you a direction to focus on — one that's measurable and helps you visualize an end point.

Choose goals that interest you. You're more likely to stay motivated if you're working for something that you genuinely want to do or achieve, rather than what other people want for you. **Example:** Rather than stick with a hobby that doesn't inspire you, look at options for a more positive pursuit.

Find things that interest you within goals that don't. Often, other people set goals or tasks for us that we don't find appealing. So, identify an aspect within that task that *does* motivate you. **Example:** Maybe you find math challenging, but it's needed to help you become an engineer, which you want more than anything; as an option, maybe seek a mentor's guidance to help you stay motivated.

Plot your progress. When working toward something, reviewing your progress in stages along the way can be motivating. **Example:** Create a chart showing steps achieved toward your goal.

Start with easier tasks. Work your way up to bigger challenges. Breaking up a task in your mind into smaller, achievable chunks helps build confidence to move forward toward success.

Where there is a will, there is a way. If there is a chance in a million that you can do something, anything, to keep what you want from ending, do it. Pry the door open or, if need be, wedge your foot in that door and keep it open.

— Pauline Kael



Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

shines a light on a serious problem. One in five American youngsters is overweight or obese due to issues, including poor diet, lack of exercise, genetics, race, poor social supports and lack of access to medical care. This puts some children at increased risk for asthma, type 2 diabetes, joint problems and depression. One part of the puzzle is to boost kids' exercise daily, from walking the dog to dancing around the house. For other ideas, visit [health.gov/moveyourway](https://www.health.gov/moveyourway). The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion encourages children (and adults) to **Move Your Way** — with enjoyable physical activities that fit in with busy schedules.



“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.”

— Booker T. Washington

Here's a prescription for better physical (and financial) health.

It doesn't come in a pill — it's staying physically active throughout adulthood. The National Cancer Institute, CDC and Newcastle University researchers analyzed responses from hundreds of thousands of people who reported on physical activity from their teen to later years. The results showed staying active is linked to better health, and it dramatically lowers health care costs. What's more, you don't have to run marathons or anything else extreme. The key is to stay active — whether playing sports, walking regularly or exercising at a gym.



body&mind

Q: What's the best way to manage anger?

A: Everyone gets angry once in a while. But when it starts to affect your health, it's time to find ways to respond calmly and directly. Try these approaches:

- **Soothe yourself.** Deep breaths, calming words, images and gentle movement, such as yoga, can all bring down your emotional temperature.
- **Revise your thoughts.** Replace extreme words, such as **always** and **never**, with more balanced, realistic ones.
- **Look for solutions.** Instead of fuming about something that's already happened, brainstorm about how you can improve the current situation.
- **Pause before reacting.** Going on the attack can put others on the defensive; consider listening to their side first, which also buys you time to calm down.
- **Try humor.** If you can see a funny angle to the situation, your anger will diminish — but avoid sarcastic or hurtful humor.
- **If you frequently feel angry,** consult a mental health professional or your health care provider for guidance.

— Eric Endlich, PhD



Fall and Winter Allergies

Stuffy noses and sneezing in fall and winter don't always mean you have a cold.

Although spring's allergy-provoking pollen is long gone, runny noses and other allergy symptoms can affect some people hard this time of year. The reason? Indoors and out, fall and winter air can be loaded with allergy triggers.

Ragweed is the main fall culprit for allergies.

Ragweed pollen rises as autumn begins and persists until there's frost, usually in November. In many places, ragweed pollen levels are highest in early to mid-September. Mold spores, which spike during the hot humid months, are still plentiful this time of year, too.

Fall allergy symptoms often include congestion, itchy eyes and fatigue along with sneezing and coughing. And those with asthma and/or eczema may experience more flare-ups from allergens in fall, according to allergists.

Dry, cold air outside and sometimes overheated inside air can irritate throats and noses.

And being indoors most of the time in winter can expose you to more allergy triggers, including indoor mold spores, dust, dust mites, pet dander and environmental allergens, such as cleaning products.

Vacuuming your home once or twice a week can reduce indoor allergens. Using an air cleaner with a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filter also helps control indoor allergens, advises the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. Consider using an air filter in your home or onsite office.

Allergy symptoms can be confused with colds, flu or COVID-19. If you have a fever, a persistent or worsening cough, or persistent allergy symptoms, contact your health care provider.



September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.



Q: Prostate cancer screening?

A: The American Cancer Society recommends a discussion with your health care provider about prostate cancer screening starting at age 50 for men at average risk. Men at increased risk should have the discussion earlier — usually at age 40 or 45, depending on the level of risk.

For men at high risk, the discussion should occur at age 45. Men at high risk include African Americans and men who have a father or brother who was diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65.

For men at even higher risk, the discussion should occur at age 40. Men in this group include those with more than one first-degree relative (father or brother) who was diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65.

Ask about the benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening. If you decide to proceed, screening can be done with a PSA blood test and digital rectal exam.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD



Stretching for Life



Beyond building muscle and aerobic fitness, we need to be flexible. Routine stretching moves us in the right direction. It can help keep your muscles flexible and strong while maintaining a healthy range of motion in your joints. Without that flexibility, the muscles shorten and become tight.

For example, tight leg muscles, a common result of long periods of sitting, may inhibit your ability to fully extend your legs and maintain leg strength. Inflexible hamstring muscles across the hip and knee can lead to chronic low back pain.

The primary areas to maintain mobility are in your lower extremities: calves, hamstrings, hip flexors in the pelvis and quadriceps in the front of your thighs. Routinely stretching your shoulders, neck and lower back is also helpful.

Extra benefits: Stretching also improves posture and balance, and helps prevent falls.

Goal: Choose a routine stretching program you can perform at least four to five times a week. Review the basics with your health care provider, or learn more at [acsm.org](https://www.acsm.org).

Example: A hamstring stretch can help keep the muscles in the back of your thighs flexible. Sit on the floor with your legs straight in front of you. Bend forward holding your hands down your legs until you feel a mild burn. Hold for 30 seconds; then slowly return to a sitting position.

Stay committed long term. It can save your muscles from becoming stiff, achy and weak — and improve your energy and comfort.

“A mistake is simply another way of doing things.”

— Katharine Graham



September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.

Learning about ovarian cancer can save lives. More than 12,000 American women die of this disease yearly. It can be deadly because symptoms, including bloating, back pain, and abdominal discomfort, are easily mistaken for a more common condition, such as constipation or PMS, delaying diagnosis and treatment. Risk factors include being age 50 or older, never having been pregnant, a family history of the disease and having endometriosis. **Note:** There is no screening test for ovarian cancer. To learn more, search for **ovarian cancer** at [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).

dollars&sense

Creating a Budget? Don't Forget These Expenses

By Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, CFP, AFC, MBA

Accuracy is a critical component of budgeting. However, some expenses are easy to overlook. Read on to see if you are omitting these potential sources of spending:

1. Gifts: It is easy to miscalculate how much you spend on gifts. Anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, baby and bridal showers, weddings — the bottom line can become costly. Create a calendar, noting who has special days each month and how much to spend on each event (e.g., anniversary, birthday, shower, etc.). If you buy gifts for people during holidays (e.g., Christmas), make a list of whom you buy for and how much you spend for each person. After you finish your list, add up your totals and divide by 12 to determine how much to save each month to cover gifts.

2. Eating out: Food can be a budget buster for most people. Cash is a great way to battle overspending on restaurant fare. Determine your weekly allowance and carry that amount in cash; when the cash is gone, stop spending until the next week begins.

3. Annual subscriptions: For non-monthly expenses, divide the annual amount by 12 and reserve that amount each month to cover their costs.

4. Miscellaneous: car maintenance, hobby supplies, out-of-pocket health care costs and monthly bank fees.

Tip: Record expenses for a year.

safety solutions

Child Passenger Safety Week is September 18 to 24.



Ensure Child Passenger Safety

Car seats, boosters and seat belts are the safest way for children to be protected in a vehicle. Review these steps to ensure children are safe in your vehicle:

Find the right seat. There are four basic types of car safety restraints: rear-facing car seats, forward-facing car seats, booster seats and seatbelts. Car seat and child restraint laws vary by state, and they may change from time to time. To view laws and updates specific to your state, visit safeconvertiblecarseats.com/safety-resources/car-seat-laws-by-state.

For car seat recommendations from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, visit nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#age-size-rec.

Install your seat correctly. Follow all manufacturer's instructions and get your car seat installation checked at a station nearest you before allowing a child to travel. Find a station closest to you at nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#installation-help-inspection.

Register your car seat. Register online or by mail with the manufacturer. This way you can receive all information about recalls or safety notices.



Falls Prevention Week is September 18 to 24.



Preventing Falls, Slips and Trips

Falls are the leading cause of all injuries in older adults, but surprisingly, falls are also a major cause of injury in young adults, according to a Purdue University study. Why? The study attributes many risk factors associated with falls in young adults, including their gender and higher amounts of physical activity. And, as in older adults, some prescription medications can increase the likelihood of falling.

How can you prevent falls?

- **Ask** your health care provider to evaluate your risk for falling.
- **Review** your medications and check with your provider or pharmacist about side effects that might make you dizzy or sleepy.
- **Exercise** regularly to improve balance and strength in the muscles in your legs and lower body.
- **Get** your eyes checked.
- **Ask** your health care provider about taking vitamin D supplements, which may boost your muscle strength and help improve balance.
- **Make** your home safer by removing trip hazards, adding railings and grab bars, improving lighting and adding bathmats to tubs and showers.
- **Don't** walk and text or scroll. Stop to text or put the phone away until you reach your destination.



Vaccines: Facts You Need to Know

By Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus

Vaccines are a proven, effective means of controlling life-threatening illnesses around the globe. They boost your body's natural immune response to diseases caused by viruses and bacteria. Vaccine programs throughout the world have led to improved overall health of our population by shrinking the spread of disease, permanent and temporary disability and infant mortality.

Although vaccines are proven to be safe and effective based on sound scientific evidence, several myths about their effectiveness and risks have continued for decades. While some people need to forgo vaccinations due to potential allergic reactions, others refuse them for themselves or their children for several reasons, mainly a mistrust of the science.

As we enter flu season, review some current facts about vaccines in the U.S.

✓ **FACT:** Vaccines undergo five phases of research and development that can take up to 15 years before approval by the FDA for public use.

Note: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. government declared that circumstances existed to justify the emergency development and use of vaccines to prevent contagion.

✓ **FACT:** Billions of vaccine doses have been safely administered in the U.S. for more than 50 years. To date, more than 365 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the U.S. and the number is growing.

✓ **FACT:** Worldwide, vaccines prevent an estimated 2.5 million deaths among children younger than age five each year. Routine vaccinations in children are recommended to prevent diseases, including chickenpox, influenza (flu), measles, polio, and others.

✓ **FACT:** Pregnant women are advised to get vaccinated against flu and whooping cough (pertussis) during each pregnancy to protect both mother and baby. Pregnant women are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Some women may need other vaccines before, during or after they become pregnant. Check with your health care provider.

✓ **FACT:** Older adults and those with chronic health conditions have a greater risk of complications from influenza and other vaccine-preventable diseases. Several vaccines are advised for those age 65-plus and younger adults with diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or other chronic conditions that put them at greater risk. Adults who have heart disease are six times more likely to have a heart attack within seven days of flu infection.

✓ **FACT:** The best way to prevent flu and potentially serious flu complications is to get an annual vaccination. The CDC recommends annual flu vaccination for everyone age six months and older.



✓ **FACT:** Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the best protection against contagion. Studies suggest that if you have had COVID-19 and are not vaccinated against it, your risk of getting reinfected is twice as likely than for those who were infected and got vaccinated.

✓ **FACT:** All three COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. underwent rigorous clinical trials, testing on 118,000 people. Side effects, including pain at the injection site, headache, fatigue and nausea, were mild to moderate and resolved within a few days.

✓ **FACT:** The vaccines cannot infect you with COVID-19. They do not contain the COVID-19 virus. Follow your health care provider's recommendation for booster shots.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant illness and loss of life for the world's population. Despite the approval of vaccines to prevent COVID-19 illness, myths continue circulating about the production, effectiveness and risks of this vaccine.

Learn more about vaccines at historyofvaccines.org.

DR. ZORBA'S corner

Olive Oil Study

Increasing intake of olive oil is linked to living longer.

A recent study revealed that people who consumed as little as ½ tablespoon of olive oil had a nearly 20% decrease in risk of dying from heart disease, a 17% decreased risk of death by cancer, and a 29% decrease in neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's. Researchers examined data from approximately 90,000 people for 28 years. The participants had no history of cancer or heart disease and answered dietary questionnaires every four years. The study team estimated that replacing ten grams daily of fats, such as butter, margarine and mayonnaise, with the same amount of olive oil could reduce the risk of overall death and disease by as much as 34%. The study was published in January by the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

— Zorba Paster, MD

September Fill-in-the-Blank Puzzle

Find out how well you know the topics covered in this issue of the newsletter.

- 1 Affordable plant-based proteins include tofu, beans and _____.
- 2 A flexitarian plan, where you eat meat, fish or poultry occasionally, can cut food costs by _____.
- 3 Fill a quarter of your plate with _____ to help reduce your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, inflammation, cancer and type 2 diabetes.
- 4 One way to reduce childhood obesity is to boost kids' _____ daily.
- 5 _____ pollen rises as autumn begins and persists until there's frost, usually in November.
- 6 Staying _____ is linked to better health, and it dramatically lowers health care costs.
- 7 The American Cancer Society recommends that men discuss _____ cancer screening with their health care provider starting at age 50 for men at average risk.
- 8 _____ of vaccine doses have been safely administered in the U.S. for more than 50 years.



You'll find the answers at personalbest.com/extras/Sep2022puzzle.pdf.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, Save Your Neck, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V9tools.

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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