

Questions from the Field:

Q: My ankle cracks and pops. It doesn't hurt, but is this normal? *AD, Marion*

A: The ankle joint is considered "normal" when it cracks, as long as there is no pain with the sound. In fact, many physical therapists consider the joint hypomobile, or lacking mobility, when no audible crack exists. There are many tendons around the bony ankle joint, and when the tendon rubs across the bony prominences, the ankle makes the normal cracking sound. Pain associated with the crack could indicate a pathological problem, so if this occurs, you should consult your physician.

Q: My shoulder hurts after all the snow shoveling, my friend told me I have to work the pain out of it and it will eventually get better. Is this true? *MS, Ontario*

A: The rotator cuff, the muscles inside your shoulder, has a poor blood supply. This means that tendons have a harder time healing than most other joints. Working through the pain and doing improper exercises can actually make the condition worse and slow the healing. The best thing to do is consult your physician or physical therapist to see the proper exercises or activities for your shoulder. Shoulder problems also do not typically go away on their own, so the longer you wait, and possibly do the wrong thing, the longer it will take to get better.

Q: I have wrist pain when I am typing. Is this carpal tunnel? *PS, Walworth*

A: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is a condition that involves a pinching on the median nerve in the carpal bones in the wrist. Although wrist pain is sometimes associated with CTS, the most distinct signs and symptoms are numbness in the thumb, pointer finger, and middle finger. Wrist pain that does not accompany finger numbness is not common with CTS, but should be checked out by your physician or physical therapist.

The above is intended as general information only. Be sure to contact your physician for advice or your own specific medical problems. Have a question? Write to Questions from the Field, Gananda-Walworth Physical Therapy and Village Fitness, PO Box 162, Macedon, NY 14502, or send e-mail to gwpt@rochester.rr.com.