

Why Is My Hip “Popping”?



Our bodies can make lots of weird noises, but it is particularly disconcerting to hear “popping” sounds coming from our joints or bones. If you have been experiencing a popping or snapping sensation in your hip when walking, rising from a chair or bed, or doing certain stretches, you may have what is commonly known as “**snapping hip syndrome**.” Luckily, this condition sounds a lot worse than it is. Unless the popping sensation is accompanied by pain, typically it is more of an annoyance than a significant problem.

The two most common causes of snapping hip syndrome are **tight hip flexor muscles** and a condition where the ligament that helps control the hip joint can **tighten and “snap”** over the large bump of the femur bone. The best way to alleviate your symptoms (or avoid them altogether) is to **stretch properly**, as this condition can be related to overuse of the hip flexors—in fact, dancers and athletes are far more likely to develop a snapping hip.

Exercises that include **hip and knee extensions** can be very helpful. So can **strengthening the hip flexors**. Some people obtain relief from anti-inflammatory drugs (but make sure to consult a doctor and tell your physical therapist before beginning any drug regimen). Often, the popping will subside on its own.

However, if the popping is painful, or you develop these symptoms after an injury or surgery, there may be a more serious reason behind the pops and snaps. Sometimes, a piece of cartilage can detach and cause the hip to “catch” or lock up. In these cases, the sound you will hear will often be more of a snap than a pop and may be accompanied by a sensation of hip-bone movement or loss of control. If you are experiencing any **painful symptoms**, see your doctor, since more serious conditions may require surgery or other interventions.