

# Hand Expression and Reverse Pressure Softening



## Hand expression might be helpful if:

- You are expressing milk for your baby in the first few days after birth. Often your hands work better than the pump to express colostrum (newborn milk) which is thicker and stickier than mature milk.
- You are engorged and need to soften your breast for baby to get a good latch. If your nipple has flattened out due to swelling, try reverse pressure softening (page 2).
- You are trying to boost your milk supply. Hand expressing after you breastfeed or pump can increase your milk output.
- You forgot your pump, your pump breaks, or the power goes out.

## How do I hand express?

1. Wash your hands and gently massage all around your breast. You may feel warmth or tingling as this stimulates the “let-down” reflex.
2. Hold a clean container under your nipple. Place your other hand in a “C” shape about one to two inches behind your nipple.
  - Gently press your fingers and thumb back toward your ribs.
  - Press your fingers and thumb together.
  - Relax your hand.
  - Repeat.
3. Rotate your hand around your nipple to empty all areas of the breast. When milk flow slows down, switch to your other breast.
4. It may take some time before you see milk. Keep practicing and you will have an extra tool to provide nourishing breastmilk to your baby.

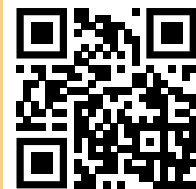
## Reverse pressure softening might be helpful if:

The nipple has flattened out due to engorgement and your baby is unable to latch. It helps move swelling away from your nipple, allowing it to push back out.

## How do I use reverse pressure softening?

1. Place your fingers and thumb on the areola around your nipple.
2. Firmly but gently push inward on the breast toward your ribs.
3. Hold this pressure for at least 60 seconds, and up to 3 minutes until the swelling is pushed away from your nipple.
4. Release your fingers.
5. Latch your baby quickly before swelling returns.

Scan here to view an animation  
of hand expression and  
reverse pressure softening.



**Find more tips at [BreastmilkCounts.com](https://www.BreastmilkCounts.com)**

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