



Exercises for Milking

1. Introduction

Milking can provide healthy physical exercise if approached correctly. Warm up exercises in the morning before milking and then stretching prior to the afternoon milking can really reduce the impact that milking has on the body.

2. Interpretation and relevance to Australian conditions

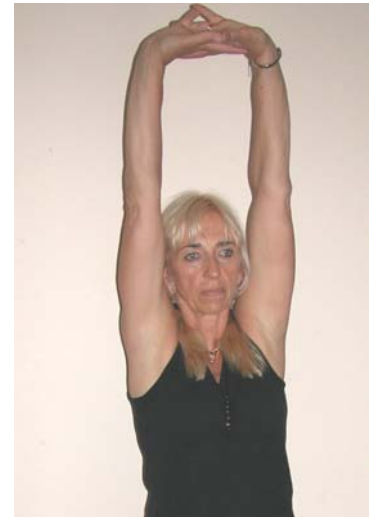
Milking can be a physically demanding activity requiring a range of repetitive tasks. Over time this physical activity can take a toll on a person's body. Exercises can prepare the body for milking and can reduce the negative impacts, making milking an easier and more pleasant occupation.

3. The exercises

#1 Knuckle/arm stretch

This exercises the knuckle joints of the hands and arms. The chest is broadened and lengthened.

- Stand with feet apart, toes slightly inward.
- Align ankles, pelvis and shoulders perpendicular to the floor.
- Interlock the fingers in front of you. Your thumbs should touch each other and little fingers should too.
- Rotate the palms of the hands and twist away from you (thumbs pointing towards the floor) then straighten the elbows.
- Extend arms upwards towards the ceiling, upper arms in line with ears, eyes at eye level focussing on a point straight ahead.
- Hold for 5 slow breaths.
- Lower arms to shoulder height and change the interlock of fingers and repeat.
- Learning to interlock fingers is important for stretching and holding cups for milking.
- Vertical extension of the body is important for good posture.



#2 Upper limb stretch

These two exercises help to stretch the shoulder and upper arms.

Part A

- Holding your right elbow with your left hand, gently pull the elbow behind your head until you feel a stretch in your shoulder or the back of your arm.
- Aim is to get arm vertical with armpit wide open.
- Hold for 30 seconds – about 5 slow breaths.
- Repeat to the other side.

Part B

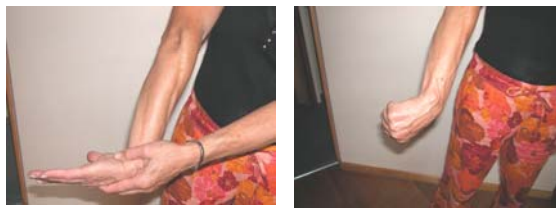
- With the upper arm in place behind the back, try to bring your other arm up and lock your fingers in a grasp. This may not be possible in the short term so try using a towel between your hands – even a broom stick, belt or polypipe will help. Over time your flexibility will improve!!



#3 Wrist twist

This is a good exercise for stretching the wrist and elbow. Use it after milking has finished or at any time you think about it.

- Stretch your arm straight outwards parallel to the floor.
- Turn palm vertical with thumb towards the floor.
- Bend your wrist (use your other hand to help if you wish).
- Hold for 30 seconds or 5 slow breaths.
- Repeat with the other arm.



This can also be done with your hand clenched into a fist.

#4 Squat

This exercise is done for back flexibility and flexible hip joints.

- Keep your eyes at eye level (on the horizon).
- Shift your butt behind your heels.
- Bend your hips before your knees slowly.
- Keep your back straight but tip over to horizontal as you bend your knees, and stretch your arms out in front (use a wall for support if necessary).
- Your pubic bone drops between your thighs.
- Your armpits come towards your knees (hopefully).
- **Always feel your weight on your heels.**
- Variation: Place your hands on your hips
- Repeat up to five times.

**4. Expected benefits**

These exercises are useful to prepare yourself for the various jobs in the dairy, such as lifting and reaching. If properly stretched and warmed up it should be possible to reduce the negative impacts that some milk harvesting tasks can have on your body.

5. Potential issues with implementation

If you experience pain when doing any of these exercises you should stop and seek professional help. These exercises are for general use only and are intended to help you lessen the impact milk harvesting on you. There are many more stretches and exercises, some which can be tailored to meet individual needs. It may be to your benefit to seek professional help in determining which exercises will be best suited to you and your situation.

6. Robustness of this information

Top level sports persons would not dream of skipping their pre and post activity stretches! Milking can also be a strenuous activity and preparing the body for milking should be a part of everyone's routine.

7. References and further reading

This material was adapted from advice given by Karen Wilde, physiotherapist and certified senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher based in Western Victoria.

Reference:

Iyengar, Gita S., 2000, Yoga in Action, Utkarsh, Prabhadevi, Mumbai, 400 025 , India ISBN 81 87603 011

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