

Power Pumping to Increase Milk Supply

By Amanda Glenn May 16, 2018 This post may contain affiliate links.

<https://exclusivepumping.com/power-pumping/?fbclid=IwAR0lab14GXAb0MKRjzR99kuEVew-dPNI3hb6z8wsNvp2QiZ-NxmDpJIM5hE>

One thing that often gets recommended to women that are trying to **increase their milk supply** is power pumping. One advantage of power pumping is that it doesn't require trying any new supplements or medications, and anyone can do it. Here is everything you need to know to try it out.

What is power pumping? How can power pumping help me increase my milk supply?

Power pumping attempts to mimic cluster feeding, but with a breast pump. (This is why it's also called "cluster pumping.")

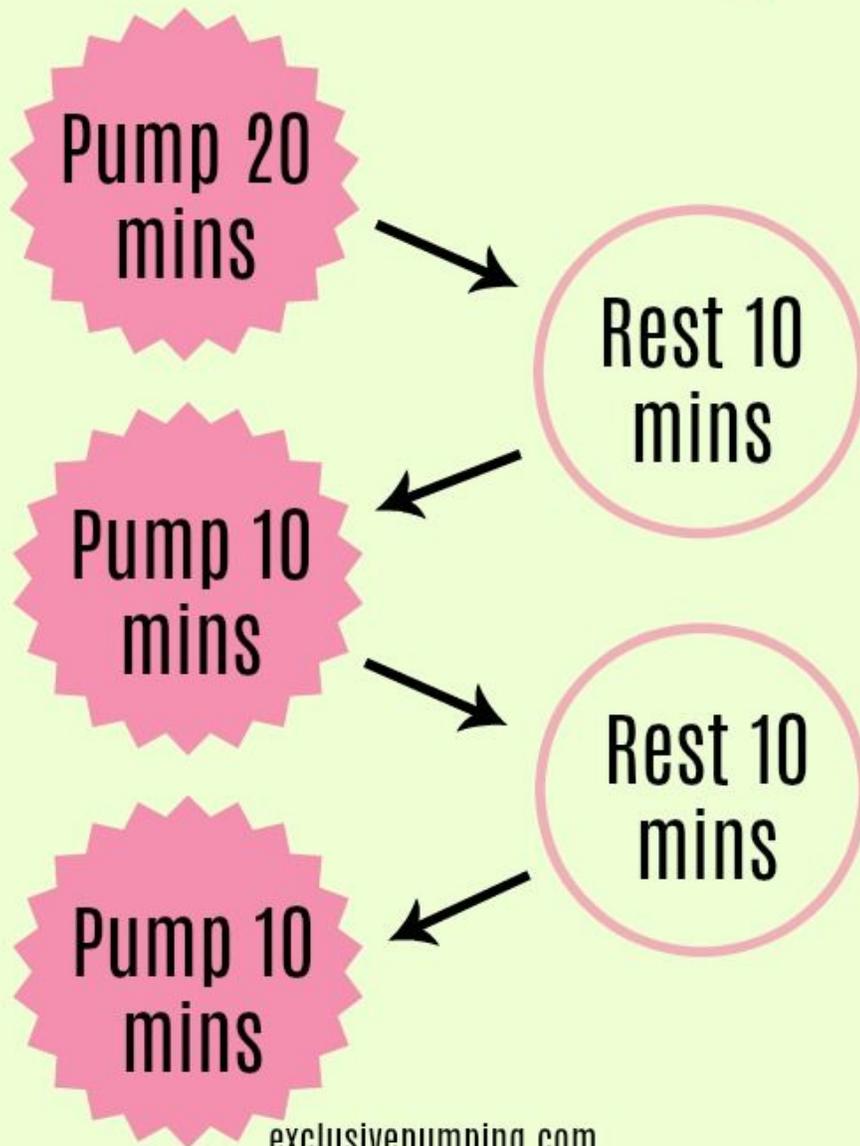
When a nursing baby cluster feeds, he stays at the breast, nursing on and off and trying to get more milk. Often, this happens in the **early evenings** – both because that's when babies start to tank up for a longer stretch of sleep and because breastfeeding mothers tend to **have lower milk supply at that time**. It also happens when babies have a growth spurt, and they need more milk than they normally do.

Because breast milk works as a **supply and demand system** – meaning that the more milk your body thinks your baby needs, the more it will make – the baby staying at the breast signals the body that there is more demand, which often leads to a higher milk supply.

Power pumping breast milk is just your pump staying at the breast and trying to get more milk, instead of your baby. Fortunately, your pump likely to be less fussy than a hungry baby.

How do I power pump to increase supply?

How to Power Pump



In order to power pump, you'll want to sit down and pump on and off at an interval for about an hour. You can choose the interval that works for you – you can do 20 minutes first and then 10 minutes off and on, 12 minutes on and 8 off, 15 and 5, etc. The amount of time doesn't have to be exact – cluster feeding babies don't nurse for exactly 15 minutes, take a 5 minute break, etc. You just want to spend more than half the time pumping and some time resting.

That's pretty much all you have to do!

One power pumping session replaces one of your pumping sessions from [your normal schedule](#), so you can just pump at your usual time, but for longer than you normally would and at intervals.

Note: If you're power pumping and nothing is coming out, you should keep pumping! Your goal is to [get another letdown](#), which will give you more milk.

How often should I power pump?

Once per day is great. If you want to do twice and you can manage it, that's fine, but make sure that you don't pump so much that you get burned out and miserable. You are worth more to your baby than a few extra ounces of breast milk.

Can I power pump with a manual pump?

Yes. To use a manual pump when you cluster pump, you could pump each side for 12 minutes, and then switch back and forth on each side for 8 minutes. So instead of resting completely, each side takes a turn to rest.

As an example, you could do:

- Left side – 12 minutes
- Right side – 12 minutes
- Left side – 8 minutes
- Right side – 8 minutes
- Left side – 8 minutes
- Right side – 8 minutes
- Left side – 8 minutes
- Right side – 8 minutes

(If your hand gets tired, you can obviously take a few minutes to completely rest in between sides, too.)

How can I make power pumping easier?

Do something that you enjoy while you power pump! Pick a time when you can sit and relax a little bit (just, you know ... with your breast pump). Watch a show you love, read a book, spend time looking at cat gifs, whatever makes you happy.

Make sure that you have a [pumping station](#) set up with everything you need, since you'll be there awhile. Also, a [hands-free bra](#) is key – no one wants to spend an hour holding flanges up to their breasts.

If possible, don't try to [take care of a baby and power pump at the same time](#). I would try to save power pumping for when your baby is sleeping or you have help.

What are typical power pumping results? Does power pumping work?

It takes a few days for your body's supply to respond to the increased demand from your breast pump. Try to power pump for at least four days in a row (up to a week of "power pumping boot camp") and then evaluate how it's going.

The actual results will vary. Some women don't see results, many see a gain of a 2-3 ounces, some see more than that.

Good luck! If you've tried power pumping, please feel free to share your experience in the comments!