

Do the twist

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The twist.....it may not always be in fashion on the dance floor, but it should always be practised in the parlour. 'Break, wait, twist and drop'.....the key steps in taking clusters off cows. It's crucial that clusters are not pulled off under vacuum, as this creates air impacts. Air impacts contribute to teat-end damage, and can drive potentially bug-laden milk up the teat canal, leading to new cases of mastitis.

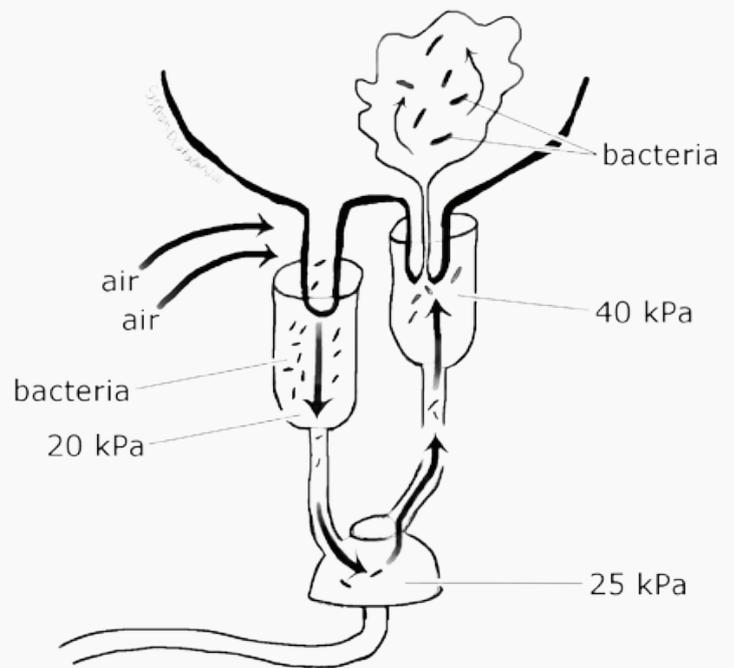


Figure 1. Air entering the cup can cause vacuum fluctuations and create air impacts at the teat end



Be patient - don't yank off the clusters!

1. **Break**-Use the button on the claw bowl, or kink the long milk tube to break the vacuum
2. **Wait!** 1-2 secs
3. **Twist**-Gently twist the cluster 30-60° -this helps to make sure that all 4 liners release at the same time
4. **Drop**-Clusters should then drop freely off the teats

▶ CELLCHECK TIP OF THE MONTH

Clusters that are hard to remove, or are not releasing correctly, are a sign that the equipment is not working properly. If this is happening, make sure that buttons on the claws are working correctly. Check air admission holes regularly.

Cluster handling is given very little attention, considering the important role it has to play in milking efficiency, mastitis prevention and cow comfort. But don't just think about cow health.....consider your own health too. Too many milkers suffer repetitive strain injuries (RSI) such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, from years of putting on and taking off clusters incorrectly.

How many times have you ever stopped to think how many times in your milking career you will put clusters on cows? And how many times you'll take them off? If you're milking 90 cows, twice a day, with an average lactation length of 280 days, you'll put those clusters on over 50,000 times a year. Over a lifetime of milking that repetitive action adds up. After 40 years, you'll have put on over 2 million clusters.....and taken them off over 2 million times too!



When cupping cows, remember to:

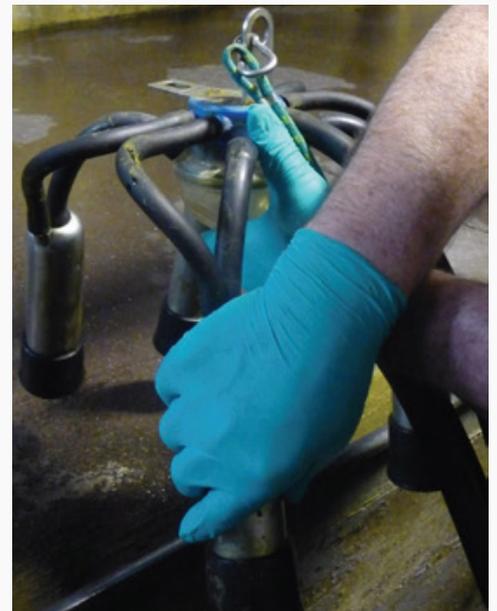
- minimise air admission
- alternate hands for both sides of a herringbone to avoid RSI and muscle/tendon over-use
- hold the cluster in one hand and apply all the cups in a “round-the-circle” fashion. This is an efficient and milker-friendly way of cupping cows.



“Round-the-circle” cluster attachment

Use the right hand to put the cups on the right hand side row of cows (facing the exit) because it is easier to reach through the back legs.

1. Holding the clawbowl in your left hand,
2. reach over the left arm with your right hand, to put on the left back cup,
3. then left front,
4. then right front,
5. and finally right back.



For more information on recommended milking techniques, see Guideline 5 in the Lactation section of the CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Mastitis Control

When cupping the right hand row of cows, hold the cluster in your left and start with the left back cup