

# The Breastfeeding Companion

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## Reverse Pressure Softening - Video 81

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If you happen to get engorged at any point, your nipple and areola area also then become engorged too, this can cause your nipples to flatten, and it's much harder for your baby to latch at that point because of this extra congestion around that area.

Now usually hand expression is enough to soften that area and enable the nipple to protrude and your baby to latch, but if you find that hand expression alone isn't being effective, then a simple but effective technique called reverse pressure softening might be the thing you can try.

This technique was discovered by an IBCLC called Jean Cotterman – and she discovered that applying pressure to a 1 to 2 inch area around the base of the nipple, around the areola area, will in effect push fluid back inside, upward and backward, which can enable the nipple to protrude better and therefore allow your baby to latch better too. So in effect this will help your baby to get more milk and it will reduce your risk of sore nipples in the process, and it can also help to reduce and resolve that engorgement too.

So if you are going to use reverse pressure softening, remember to do this technique 60 seconds before latching your baby. And this will give an ample opportunity for that fluid to backtrack inside, for your nipple to protrude and allowing your baby to latch, and it will cause little dimple areas around the areola, but this will also start to come back again after a while. Now you may want to consider lying flat on your back and doing the technique to push fluid inside, sixty seconds before latching.

Lying on your back will enable that fluid to stay there for longer before it starts to come back again so it can work quite effectively.

So to demonstrate this, although I must admit I'm not going to lie on my back as I might not be able to get back up at my age (!) but firmly but gently you're going to press into the areola area for 60 seconds before latching and that pressure shouldn't be causing you any pain.



But press inside for the full 60 seconds. Any finger combination can be used so you can do it any way that works, and just a handy tip if you're going to use this method. Keep your fingernails short and curved just to make it more comfortable and you may also wish to alternate the positions for periods of time. 60 seconds here and then 60 seconds elsewhere just to keep that fluid backtracking to allow your nipple to protrude.

And finally once you've used this technique try then using hand expression and you'll often find that it's easier then to get milk out of the breast and to soften that area to enable your nipple to protrude really well so that your baby can latch better.