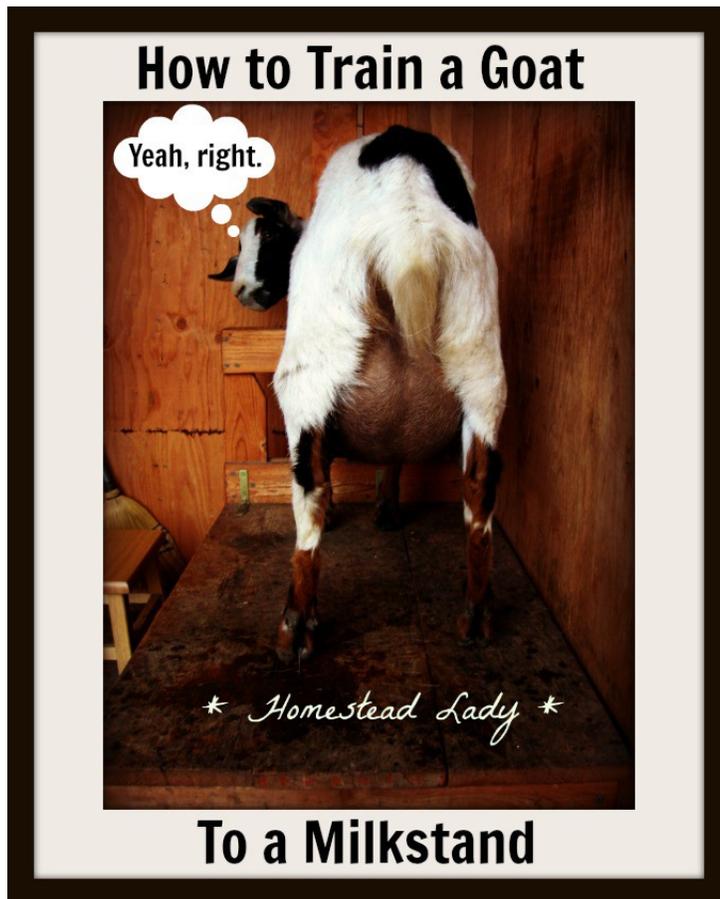


How to Train a Goat to a Milk Stand

<http://www.homesteadlady.com/how-to-train-a-goat-to-be-milked-on-a-milk-stand/>

March 24, 2014 by Homestead Lady

A Merry Heart Doeth Good Like a Medicine - Spread the Joy and Share the Post!



“Without killing her” should be the last part of the tagline for this article. Aaaaaahhhhhh! Ok, so not all goats are butts, however a large number of them rank somewhere on the severe butt spectrum. There’s a reason why the Lord said that goats were on his left hand! Sorry, I haven’t had time for Yoga since I started milking the goats again and it’s beginning to take it’s toll. *In my calmest voice*, Come friend as we explore how to train a goat to a milk stand.

My kingdom for a milk stand!

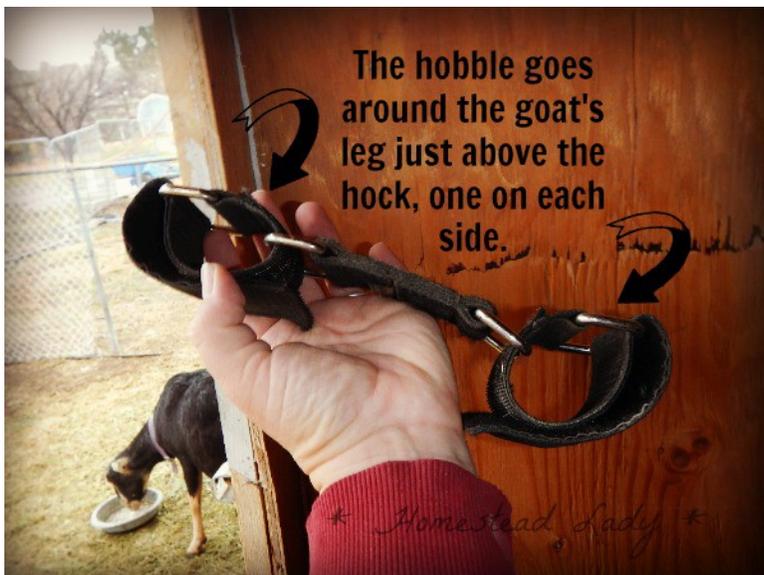
The first thing you’re going to need in order to train a goat to be milked on a milk stand is...a milk stand. I know there are hard core South American kids who blithely milk free standing goats – I’ve seen the pictures in National Geographic. Yeah, that don’t happen in my barnyard. I use a milk stand with two locks on it to secure their ever squirming heads. Farming My Backyard has a post about building her milkstand and there are places online that will send you a set of plans. Ours has a dish at head level in order for the goats to eat while I milk them. Some goat owners choose not to feed their goats while they milk

because they want them to learn to hold still without treats. Yeah, that don’t happen in my barnyard, either.

I use the goats’ milking time to administer their herbal wormer, special herbal supplements for each goat and treats like rose hips and black oiled sunflower seeds. If your herd is over two goats, feeding time can disintegrate into a flurry of butting heads and games of killer tag as the goats fight each other over their feed. Which is why some people choose not to grain their goats at all. Someday.



The next thing you'll need to be able to train a goat to be milked on a milk stand is a collar and leash. Sounds basic but I've gone over six months now without collars for all but one of my baby goats and, holey moley, there's just no controlling them! (Why don't I have collars, you ask? Because I just don't have time to go to the feed store and buy them, that's why. Fur reelz.)



Then you're going to need, and I mean need, a pair of hobbles. Some goat owners train their goats with their minds, using only their powers of psychic persuasion and their gentle voices to get the goats to do as they're asked. Yeah, that don't happen in my barnyard, either. There are lots of different designs but I like these vinyl ones with Velcro closures. You should only need these for a few weeks to a few months, depending on the stubbornness level of the individual goat. I had one that I hobbled every single time for as long as I owned her because she kicked the bucket without fail if I didn't. Don't try to make your goat be something she's not - respect her nature as you ask her to respect yours. If she's a kicker or a dork, hobble her as long

as it takes.

How to approach your new milk goat

We have some new families in our congregation at church and recently we sat behind one – the dad, to be specific. My one year old was standing behind his chair alternately eating dried apple bits (covering her hand in drool) and whacking this good brother's hand in a slobbery game of tag-you're-it. The first few times this loving dad was busy with his own three little ones and didn't seem to notice but my baby is persistent and kept whacking and laughing until she caught his attention. He gave her a big smile, which she returned, but instead of moving his hand away as I expected he might, he started reaching his fingers out to grab her little hand each time she popped him.

Gracie thought this was the best game ever and kept it up; each time she touched his hand, he gently grabbed for hers until she let him hold her hand. Once he had to wipe the considerable drool from his hand and turned back to give us all a smile. I smiled back and thanked him for being so sweet to my baby, at which point he returned his hand to Grace and left it there until she toddled off to eat the hymn book.

That, in essence, is training a goat to a milk stand. Your goats have their own personalities and natures – some are playful and others are reserved. Some goats just want to have fun and others want to be in charge. Figure out what kind of goat you have and be patient while you establish relationships of trust with each other. Think about what milking is – you're going to be touching what is, especially for first time moms, a very sensitive and newly functioning area. Your goat is still figuring out what all this milk/nursing/being milked experience is! At least you're in this together, so be patient with both your goat and yourself. And have some fun.

Routines to help train your goat to a milk stand

I usually milk at feeding times so I made sure to have a milking stand that included an attached bowl for my girls to eat out of while I milk them, as I mentioned before. I have one goat who figured out how to toss that bowl off when she thought I should give her more treats, even though she still had a bowl full of rose hips and sunflower seeds, and so I also had my husband figure out a way to lock the bowl and the neck brace in place. Goats are very strong and it's important that they be as secured as possible for their safety as well as yours.

I once had a goat (that same bowl tossing one) buck and wiggle so badly that she catapulted off her stand and fell with it twisted around her neck, still in her hobbles. Can you tell that I'd just gotten up to get something when all this happened? I was so surprised she didn't break her neck that ever since then I make it a point to stay very near if my girl is up, locked in and hobbled. I do NOT wander because its just not safe.

For new moms learning how to be milked there's no one right way to go about their training. Its mostly a matter of their temperament and yours. I've had goats that take right to it and others that were so upset and bucky (or worse, so annoyed they just sat stubbornly down) that the first few times I only milked a little and turned their babies loose on them to finish. The key is persistence and patience and establishing those aforementioned relationships of trust.

Don't chase your goat deers down with a stick and a shout and expect them to forgive you quickly. In my experience, goats have very vivid and very long memories. Be kind and stay aware of the temperature of your goat's mood; don't be afraid to call the training session a draw if your dam just needs a rest from you and the weird things you want to do to her. I always dam raise my kids and so I have them on hand if my mama goat is still packing quite a bit of milk from a less than stellar training session on the milk stand. If you don't have kids to relieve your mama goat of her milk supply, you'll have to do it – no options. In that case, suck it up, repent and just get in there and get 'er done.



**New moms especially
can be sensitive; be
gentle but move
quickly.**

** Homestead Lady **

**Arrange your stool so your facing the
teats - sideways, straight on, whatever
is comfortable.**

I find that when I'm newly training a first time milk goat to the stand its helpful to have a second person there, milling around just in case you need them to assist with running back to the house for anything you forgot or holding the back end of your skitterish goat still while you milk her.

In the first stages of their milk stand training, I also like to brush the goats thoroughly so they have a comforting experience. Word to the wise, pet a goat's ears only if you have a good relationship established with that goat. Goats are choosey about who messes with their ears and if they let you get in a pet or two, you can know that you're loved.