

February 19, 2025

Move It or Lose It...

While manning the booth at the AHR Show in Orlando last week, a contractor challenged our booth staff. “I’m rehabbing an old building, and I found an old Milwaukee Valve gate valve,” said the contractor. “It’s 40 to 50 years old, and the handwheel won’t budge. What would you guess is the problem?”

“Exercise,” was the immediate reply from the MV booth. “There’s a better than even chance that the valve in question has never been closed and reopened, and now, it never will. It’s time for a replacement.”



Bronze gates found in a manifold system can and should be easily exercised within a system.



Exercising a ball valve is just a flip of the wrist.

When it comes to keeping the water moving, valves are a vital part of your system. But when they are left without maintenance for long periods of time, they can become a big part of a very serious problem, especially in an emergency when every moment counts.

Fortunately, it's not too hard to add a valve maintenance and exercise program into your schedule. Here's why it's important and how to get it done.

Surely the condition of the valves in your system is not that bad, right? Unfortunately, the national average for valve operability is an *astoundingly low 60%*, meaning that the valves you need to operate will work less than two-thirds of the time. That's a pretty serious failure rate! By putting valves through their range of motion on a regular basis, you can make sure that the valves will operate when they're needed for a repair, such as a burst pipe, a leaking or new appliance or when



It doesn't matter when this big iron gate gets exercised... with a disc weighing more than 50 lbs., it ain't moving under any circumstances if installed in this position.

adding additional service. When a valve won't work, the repair crew will need to go to a valve further back, potentially cutting off service to other customers and wasting time as they hunt down the next problem valve.

But how often should valves be exercised and have maintenance performed? To a certain extent, this will depend on the service. A hospital, restaurant or industrial complex may have stringent needs for regular water delivery. Major supply lines need quick service to keep things

flowing. These valves should/must be exercised and maintained more frequently, reducing the time without water to an absolute minimum. By comparison, a single home's water main valve can be checked less frequently. But even at a minimum, you'll want to exercise valves at least every few years, if not more often.

If properly installed and maintained in most plumbing applications, a valve can and should last as long as the building. More demanding services may require additional service and replacement.

Need help with a stuck valve in your facility? Consult [your Milwaukee Valve sales representative or regional manager](#) for guidance.



MILWAUKEE VALVE

www.milwaukeevalve.com
262.432.2700



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www.hammondvalve.com
262.432.2702

16550 West Stratton Drive, New Berlin, WI 53151



Milwaukee Valve | 16550 West Stratton Avenue | New Berlin, WI 53151 US

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