

# Restraining a Cat for Blood Sampling



## Disclaimer

A series of booklets has been developed by the Clinical Skills Lab team (staff, recent graduates and students) from the School of Veterinary Sciences, University of Bristol, UK. Please note:

- Each booklet illustrates one way to perform a skill and it is acknowledged that there are often other approaches. Before using the booklets students should check with their university or college whether the approach illustrated is acceptable in their context or whether an alternative method should be used.
- The booklets are made available in good faith and may be subject to changes.
- In using these booklets you must adopt safe working procedures and take your own risk assessments, checked by your university, college etc. The University of Bristol will not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from failure to adhere to such practices.

This work is under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.



© The University of Bristol, 2018



University of  
**BRISTOL**

Year Group: BVSc1 +



Equipment for this station:

- Model cat

Considerations for this station:

- There are useful videos on Blackboard that demonstrate this technique as well as other skills. These can be found in the Animal Management 1 section → eLearning and then navigate to the relevant documents & videos.
- See 'CSL\_D03 Locating Cat and Dog Injection Sites' for further details on injection sites.

Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL\_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL\_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL\_I02 Lab Area Rules'

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.



# Clinical Skills:

## Restraining a Cat for Blood Sampling Cephalic Vein



1  
Position the cat near the edge of the examination table, either sitting or in sternal recumbancy, with its head facing towards the person taking the blood sample.



2  
Gently restrain the cat's head by placing a hand under its head/neck.



3  
Place your other hand behind the cat's elbow and extend the limb forward a little.

Providing the cat is calm and relaxed, this may be enough restraint to take a blood sample.



4  
Use your arm to gently hold the cat against your body, this will help prevent the cat from wriggling.

At this stage, the fur on the upper forelimb (over the region of the cephalic vein) will be clipped and the site prepared aseptically (before raising the vein).



Cephalic vein

5  
Use your thumb to raise the vein. Place your thumb over the dorsal aspect of the forelimb at the level of the elbow and slightly rotate the thumb laterally to bring the vein to an optimum position.

The person taking the blood sample will also often hold the distal end of the limb to help stabilise the leg.



# Clinical Skills:

## Restraining a Cat for Blood Sampling Jugular Vein



1  
Position the cat near the edge of the table either sitting or in sternal recumbency, with its head facing towards the person taking the sample.



2  
Hold the cat's head upwards by placing the fingers of one hand under its chin. Ensure your fingers are not obstructing the jugular vein.



3  
Use your other hand to hold the cat's forelimbs. Place your hand underneath the body behind the forelimbs. Use your fingers to hold the limbs together, with one finger in between the forelimbs.



4  
Use your arm to gently hold the cat against your body, this will help prevent the cat from wriggling.

At this stage, the fur on the neck (over the region of the jugular groove) will be clipped and the site prepared aseptically (before raising the vein).



5  
The person taking the sample will raise the vein by pressing into the jugular groove near the base of the neck.

You may be asked to adjust the head position to make the vein more visible.



University of  
BRISTOL

# Resetting the station:

## Restraining a Cat for Blood Sampling

1. Return the basket ready for the next person.

*Station ready for the next person:*



Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.



University of  
BRISTOL

## I wish I'd known:

### Restraining a Cat for Blood Sampling

- Often 'less is more' with feline patients. The least restraint you can use to obtain the blood sample the better.
- With a fractious or wriggly cat, using a towel can be helpful. You would hold the cat in the same position, but wrap it in a towel leaving its head (and leg in a cephalic sample) out of the towel.
- If the table surface is slippery it may be helpful to put a towel on the table and place the cat on the towel.