



Curtin University Standard Operating Procedure

HANDLING AND RESTRAINING MICE

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REVIEWER	Reviewed Annually by Dr Beng Hooi Chua	Dr Tara Pike	Dr Tara Pike		

Aim/Purpose: To safely and humanely handle and restrain mice for general husbandry practices and for injections, ear tagging and taking blood.

All employees have a duty of care (see Occupational Health and Safety) to ensure their own health and safety, and that of their fellow workers at all times.

ALL ANIMALS MUST BE HANDLED HUMANELY i.e. carefully and kindly.

HANDLING

Given the correct techniques, the small size makes the mouse easy to handle. Mice do bite if handled roughly, so be gentle! The different strains of mice vary in temperament; some strains are easier to handle than others.

Regular handling and consequent tameness will reduce the stress associated with handling. This is termed habituation. Animals not habituated to humans or changes in the environment will experience significant disturbance which will alter blood chemistry and produce fear reactions.



1. To change boxes catch mice by the tail, or the scruff of the neck, and lift. For heavy mice support the body during the lift. Lower the mouse into the cage and let go of tail or scruff when the feet touch the bedding.
2. To change boxes litters or groups of mice can be scooped up in two hands and placed gently in the new box. This is best suited to very young (less than 3 weeks of age as they are less likely to jump) or placid strains.
3. For mice less than two weeks of age if individual handling is required, pick up by skin over neck and shoulders.

RESTRAINT

1. The mouse is picked up about half way down the tail and moved to a surface where the mouse can hold on (e.g. the bars on top of a cage Fig 1 & 2).
2. Whilst holding the tail, the base of the tail is manipulated to be held between the 3rd and 4th or the 4th and 5th fingers of the operator's hand, depending on the size of the mouse and the operator's hand. (Fig 4 shows position of 4th and 5th finger).
3. The hand that holds the tail base is then rotated so that the thumb and forefinger lie over and to either side of the neck of the mouse. (Fig 3). Alternatively the mouse can be restrained by the tail base between thumb and forefinger of one hand and the thumb and forefinger of the other hand positioned at the neck.
4. The thumb and forefinger are apposed in order to pinch up the skin over the scruff of the mouse. Sufficient skin needs to be held in order to immobilise the mouse without strangulation. It is helpful to push down gently when taking scruff, as this helps immobilise the animal whilst grip is secured. (Fig 4)



The second hand (less dominant hand) can now be used to undertake the procedure.

Fig 1.

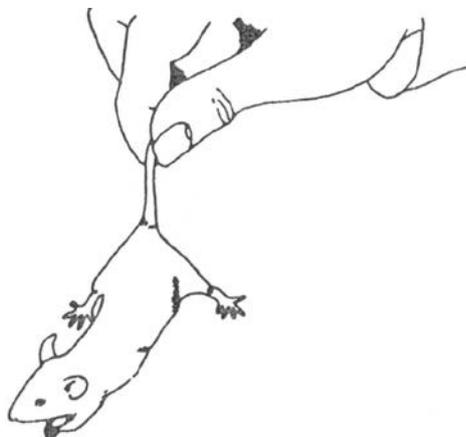


Fig 2.

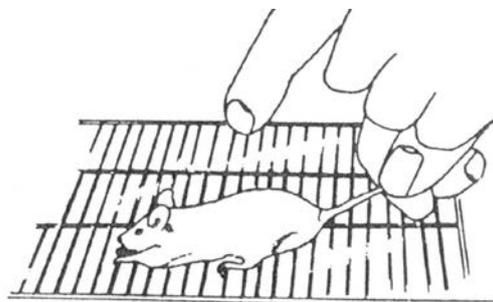


Fig 3 Hold the mouse between thumb and index finger high up behind the ears.

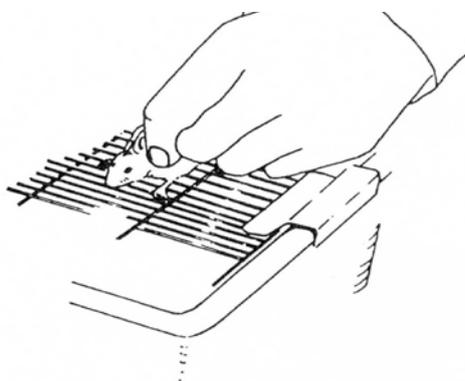


Fig 4. Tuck the tail in with the little finger and the mouse can be turned over for inspection or inoculation.

