



Curtin University Standard Operating Procedure

HANDLING AND RESTRAINING RATS

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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 rats 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

**Avoid sudden movements or loud noises.

1. To lift an animal from the cage the rat can be gently held around the body and lifted out and placed it in the crook of the arm or on a cloth covered table. Continue to support the weight of the body at all times and do not let go (Fig 1). Picking up by the tail should be avoided if possible but if necessary hold near base (about 2-3 cm from tail base) for very short periods. (Fig 2). If holding by the tail, ensure the body is supported by the arm as well. Rats will pull and try and get out of the grip so be prepared to restrain against this.

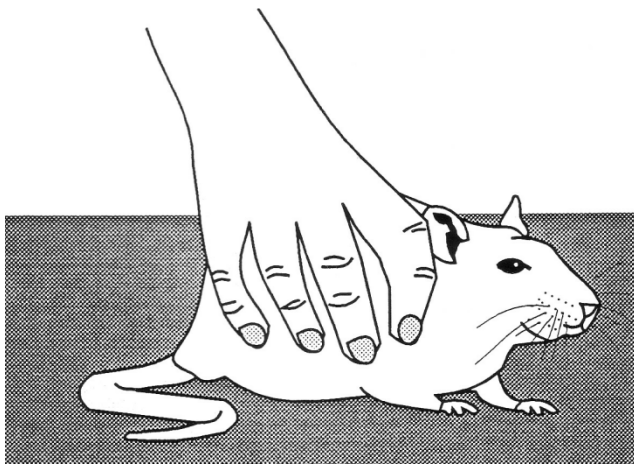
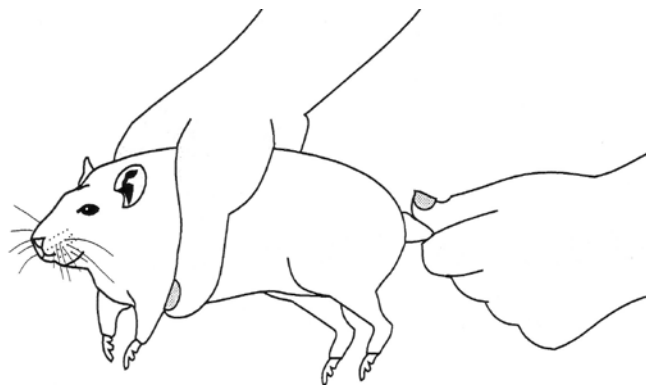


Fig 1 and 2



FIRM RESTRAINT

For procedures such as, ear marking or intraperitoneal injection the rat needs to be restrained more firmly to expose the abdominal area.

1. Rats may be picked up by placing the hand firmly over the back and the rib cage. The forelegs may be pushed forward and across the upper body (crossing in front of the head) using the thumb and forefinger to reduce the head movement. Fig 3.
2. A further technique is to place index and middle finger around the back of the neck other fingers wrap around the body. Fig 4.
3. The lower body is held by the other hand either at the base of the tail or above the hind limb to maintain some tension on the abdominal region. Fig 5.
4. Support of the lower body can be maintained during restraint when working alone by using your body, leg or bench top.



- 5 All of these techniques should be tried and competency developed in at least one technique.

Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



In Fig 5, be cautious with positioning around the neck to ensure not restricting the breathing