A TRAINING TECHNIQUE FOR THE DAILY CHAIRING OF MONKEYS¹

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Monkeys are often maintained in restraining chairs throughout an extended experiment. Continual maintenance of animals in chairs may not be desirable; for example, squirrel monkeys do not survive well under these conditions. Levison, Ferster, Niemann, and Findley (1964) avoided the use of restraining chairs by training baboons to extend their arms for drug injection. However, in several experiments animals must be kept in chairs during behavioral testing. Hence, when squirrel monkeys had to be restrained, they were placed in the chair for each day's training and then unchained and returned to the home cage after the training period. It was noted that, over time, squirrel monkeys often showed less resistance to this procedure, even though they were being trained on classical conditioning procedures with mild shocks. This suggested that chairing might be rapidly accomplished as a simple exercise in operant conditioning for the larger old-world monkeys.

Four *Macaca mulatta* monkeys, previously chronically chaired but now living in cages, have been trained to chair themselves. During the shaping procedure, they were allowed to emerge from the home cage into an enclosed space between the upper and lower plates of the restraining chair which was placed against the home cage. When trapped in this space, the animal was enticed, with small pieces of fruit, to place its head through the head hole

of the upper plate. This allowed the neck plate of the restraining chair to be positioned and all other adjustments could then be easily done. After two to three days of training the chairing procedure was accomplished quite rapidly. Now, after being released from the cage, the monkey runs to the chair and jumps in, even when the chair is across the room. Two of the monkeys have chronically implanted electrodes, and as long as the wound around the electrode plug was allowed to heal, no serious problem was encountered with picking at the wound when the arms were free in the home cage.

This procedure has, if anything, improved performance of animals in behavioral testing. Only minor transient instabilities in performance were noted during the first few days.

To date, this daily chairing procedure has been successfully used with monkeys up to 5 kg in weight, all of which were being trained with food reinforcement. It has not yet been tried with aggressive animals, with those over 5 kg in weight, or with animals having especially delicate, chronically implanted electrode assemblies.

REFERENCE

- Levison, P. K., Ferster, C. B., Niemann, W. H., and Findley, J. D. A method for training unrestrained primates to receive drug injection. *J. exp. Anal. Behav.*, 1964, 7, 253-254.

¹This study was supported by grants FR 00166 and MH 06722 from the National Institutes of Health, United States Public Health Service.