TECHNICAL NOTE

A BODY SLING TO KEEP DOGS IN THE STANDING POSITION¹

Elaborate harnesses are generally employed to immobilize conscious dogs, restraining them in the standing position during many types of psychological and physiological experiments. An inexpensive, adjustable body sling designed to immobilize the dog and maintain it in the standing position is described. By using a woven nylon tape fastener, Velcro (Canadian Velcro Ltd., Bramalea, Ontario), enough adjustment is achieved to accommodate dogs within a given range of body shape and size (about 15 to 25 kg).

The canine body sling, shown in Fig. 1, is made of heavy duck canvas measuring 36 in. by 38 in. with properly spaced circular openings, provided with bindings around their edges, for the front and hind limbs. Two-inch wide mating strips of Velcro, consisting of hook and pile tapes, form a secure closure when engaged, but can be peeled apart quite easily. The hook tape is sewed along one border of the canvas on the outer surface and the pile tape is sewed along the opposite border on the inner surface, so that when the edges are approximated and pressed together a tube is formed. The paws of a dog are placed through the openings, the longer free end of the sling with the pile tape is placed over the support bar of an adjustable dog stand, then pressed against the hook tape on the other edge as illustrated in Fig. 2. The fastener may be

pressed together obliquely in such a manner as to take up the slack at the front or back of the sling. In addition, the material of the sling may be folded over on itself to shorten its length to fit smaller dogs.

Cardiovascular experiments in this laboratory using unanaesthetized dogs trained to lie on their sides for many hours during an experiment on a dog table, made it quite difficult to keep them quiet in a standing position for any length of time when left alone. The animals appeared to be content in the sling after a few hours of experience and then no longer used it as a crutch, but stood quietly, supporting their own weight. Ordinary untrained dogs responded almost as quickly, using classical conditioning techniques.

The replacement of the canvas with a fabric made of spandex fibers (Lycra, DuPont of Canada Ltd., Montreal) an elastic material which has had widespread use in apparel for woman, would provide a "better fit" if this feature were necessary. The canvas sling can be quickly and inexpensively made using local facilities.

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Fig. 1. Canvas canine body sling provided with Velcro tape fastener.

Fig. 2. Dog restrained in stand using the canine sling.