

# TECHNIQUES TRAINING: MINIPIG



A VISUAL GUIDE TO RESEARCH TECHNIQUES



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR LABORATORY ANIMAL SCIENCE

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# — Introduction —

This book was created for trainers and trainees as a pictorial, step-by-step guide to perform basic techniques in laboratory minipigs, as well as guidance for basic husbandry. It is not intended to replace a formal training program or guidance by trainers.

Please refer to your institution's standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines for anesthesia and analgesia requirements, dosing volumes, route of blood collection, and needle size, etc.

There are other acceptable variations to the techniques presented in this book that may be used by your institution. Where appropriate, adaptations or alternative methods are mentioned. All procedures performed for photography conformed to an IACUC-approved animal care and use policy.

**Before attempting the procedures illustrated here, please ensure that they comply with your institution's SOPs and policies and are part of an approved protocol.**

## Acclimation Tips

Throughout the text are "Acclimation Tips." A minimum of a two-week acclimation period is recommended for minipigs prior to initiation of study protocols. During this time, however, it is recommended you provide as much socialization as possible, as well as acclimation to study equipment, restraint procedures, and dosing methods. While describing various techniques, tips for the acclimation process associated with the technique are included. The underlying principle for acclimating minipigs to any new environment, person, or procedure is to create a positive experience and to emphasize relaxed and calm behavior. This can easily be achieved during the acclimation period with lots of food rewards and positive handling by staff.

Minipigs are very intelligent and learn quickly. However, this also means they will remember negative experiences quite well. It is very important that as many positive associations are created during acclimation as possible; this will help to create calmer minipigs during study procedures. Continuing positive socialization and positive handling throughout the study can help to maintain calm pigs, even if the study includes some stressful procedures.

Minipigs that are nervous or scared may not accept treats or food-based rewards initially. It also may take time for minipigs to adjust to new food-based rewards, such as certified lab animal treats, fresh fruits or vegetables, or other items they might not have eaten before. Give them a chance to taste each treat and decide if they like it before you attempt to use it as a reward. When using positive reinforcement training, the reward must be something the animal likes enough so that the reward will motivate the animal and facilitate learning.

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