

The pocket book of small animal tips for vets

COMPILED BY

Jade Statt BVMS MRCVS



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Published 2014



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Disclaimer

This is not a textbook, it's a tips book. The tips have been collected as part of a charitable project from practising vets. Each tip is not intended to cover the subject comprehensively. As a result, the tips should be used at the reader's own discretion, and with care and consideration. No responsibility can be taken by the VBF, Bayer Animal Health, or the author for any issue arising from the use of the tips.

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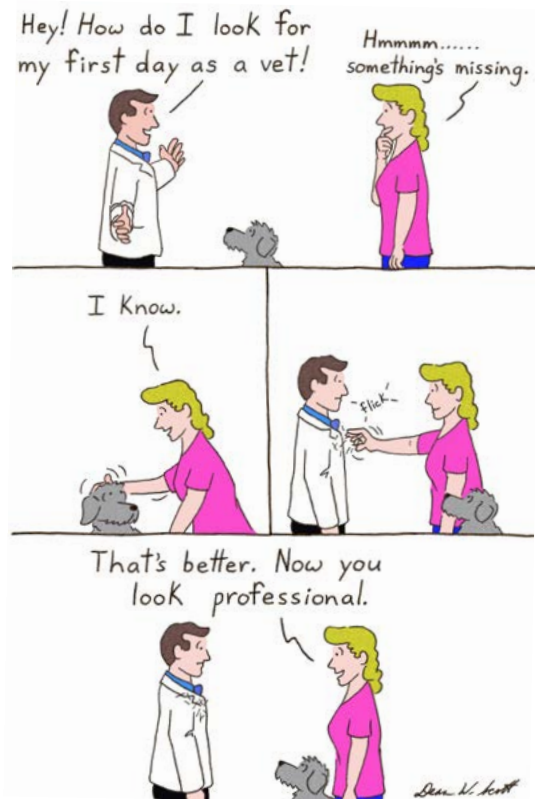
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**Dean Scott**

Dr Dean Scott, founder of FunnyVet.com, kindly donated all of the amazing cartoons in this book. His talent and generosity is greatly appreciated.



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**VNs
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1. If Cerenia (maropitant) is kept in the fridge, it stings less when given by subcutaneous injection.
2. When injecting puppies or kittens, if you use an orange 25-gauge needle (also known as the “hamster needle”) for vaccination, they are less likely to react. Distracting them with treats can also help.
3. When resuscitating puppies after a cesarean section the following can be useful;

Use an orange needle and stimulate breathing by placing gently on an acupuncture point on the nasal planum.

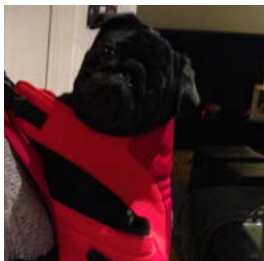
Get a small syringe, remove the plunger and place gently in the puppy's mouth and blow — the carbon dioxide from your breath can help stimulate breathing. Use a fine cat urinary catheter and place gently to the back of the throat and suction with a syringe on the end — this can help to remove mucus and help breathing.

4. Human nail cutters can be useful for accessing and cutting cats' nails when they are overgrown and embedded.
5. If you have a cold patient you can make simple warmers by putting hot tap water into disposable rubber gloves and knotting the top on itself = hot hands. Ensure the water is not scalding and wrap the hot hands in a towel to ensure you do not burn the patient. Similarly you can make "cold hands" if required.
6. Old drip bags make good covers for foot dressings.
7. If trying to achieve a count of respiration rate, it is best to do this before you start the rest of your examination, as this can be altered especially in stressed cats.
8. If dealing with a case that may end up involving the RSPCA or VDS etc. it is imperative to make detailed notes and take photos where appropriate.

9. If you have a dog that experiences lameness that is worse on hard ground compared to soft, always consider the presence of corns (especially in greyhounds).
10. When doing a lameness examination, always examine the good leg first.
11. When looking at bloods, do not just look for what is outside the reference range. Look for what you would expect to be there and isn't. For example; a stressed ill animal should have a neutrophilia, if it doesn't this is not normal — think ADDISONS. In a profile with a low albumin the total calcium should be low, if it isn't then consider the calcium could be high — check the ionised calcium.
12. If potassium is elevated on your blood results and it does not fit with the clinical picture, repeat this on a fresh sample — it may be a sampling error.
13. Have the ability to take photos at the practice. This can be useful to document progress of a wound for example, collect evidence for an RSPCA case or as a way of educating clients via social media (as long as permission is sought).
14. Asking owners to take a video on their mobile phone of their pet displaying any intermittent sign of concern — for example, seizure, collapse or reverse sneezing — can prove very helpful diagnostically.

15. If you are looking for a foreign body, for example a piece of glass in a dog's pad, use an orange needle to try and locate it. This is a less traumatic way to dig it out.

16. If you diagnose or suspect an animal has a hiatal hernia/ signs of a megaesophagus and is small enough — a baby harness can be used after eating to keep the animal vertical.



17. After drawing up injectable medication, ensure you change your needle before injecting the animal as the initial needle may be blunted.

18. After performing a euthanasia and the clients have left the room, lock the consulting room door to the waiting room to allow privacy.

19. Even if you do not agree with another vet's actions, always maintain professional etiquette in front of clients.

20. A way to temporarily stop a cat purring whilst you are auscultating its chest — distract them by turning on the tap.

21. Don't forget double dew claws on the hind legs of certain breeds, for example, briards, is normal — *part of the breed standard*.
22. If a cat is staying in the practice for hospitalisation on pain relief, placing an IV catheter and administering buprenorphine IV can help as they prefer this to repeated s/c or i/m injections. This can also be administered orally onto the mucous membranes.
23. If an animal is on opioids for a period of time, lubricate their eyes. Sometimes the dysphoric effects of the opioids reduce their tendency to blink and they are more susceptible to corneal ulcers.
24. Do not write anything on an animal's record that you would not want the owner or the RCVS to read (acronyms included!).
25. Remove sharps after surgery — this will help keep your nurses safe and happy!
26. It is important to label your patients and their belongings clearly.
27. When assessing a corneal ulcer always flush fluorescein thoroughly (with sterile saline/hartmanns) — this prevents pooling which can disguise the depth of deep ulcers or reveal a stromal defect has actually fully re-epithelialised. The only exception is a suspected corneal

perforation — then look carefully for a trickle of dark aqueous secretion in the path of the fluorescein (called a positive Seidel test).

28. Brachycephalics and small dogs are often prone to medial lower eyelid entropion, which gives a medial canthal tear stain. This can be due to trichiasis but also malpositioning of the inferior canaliculus (of the nasolacrimal duct system). Surgical correction may be warranted to treat the epiphora.

29. Pugs need fast referral for their ulcers! Their brachycephalic, compromised corneas suffer exposure keratitis and need intensive medical management if not surgical grafting in many.

This is Ralphie #17!



- 30.** Pugs get corneal melanosis, often noted medially first, due to exposure keratitis. Medial canthoplasty is the treatment of choice to prevent progression and this reduces ulcer risk too.
- 31.** Always ask the owner when their pet was last normal.
- 32.** Make judgements on heart murmurs with the animal standing not sitting down.
- 33.** Using Intubeeze as a local anaesthetic, for example on a broken nail, can help your examination and reduce the patient's discomfort.
- 34.** Holding an animal's scruff for a few seconds prior to injecting seems to desensitise the area and they react less.
- 35.** Always have a tube of arnicare available to put on patients if evidence of bruising after venupuncture.
- 36.** Always check a sick entire female dog for a pyometra regardless of presenting signs.
- 37.** If you see a lame animal check for signs of muscle atrophy to indicate chronicity.
- 38.** Cat vaccination stoppers are useful for capping syringes containing oral medication for home dispensing.

39. *All* dogs and cats coming into the surgery should be scanned for a microchip. This is the only way ensure lost or stolen animals are located.
40. Help your receptionists by providing them with a list of potential emergencies that you would want to come to the surgery as soon as possible, for example, a cat that is unable to urinate, or a large-breed dog with unproductive retching!
41. To clean an animal's foot easily — fill a glove with hibiscrub and lukewarm water and place inside.
42. Do not have cups of tea in your consulting room when clients come in — it looks unprofessional and gives the impression that the clients are interrupting your tea break! Similarly keep the consulting room tidy and clean the consulting table between patients — this helps to create a good impression to clients.
43. Have a routine for clinical examinations — for example, ears, eyes, teeth, submandibular lymph nodes, prescapular lymph nodes etc. — you must know what is normal to recognise abnormal. Owners like to see you being thorough.

He's had a lump for several months.

It's on his right shoulder.

Maybe it's his left shoulder.

Later

I know I just felt it last night.

Maybe it's over here.....

Still Later

No, it's not that deep. If you rub, just like this.....

Even Still Later

Maybe it was my other dog.

Hmmmmmm.....

Don V. Scott

- 44. Keep good records — the vet who sees the animal next time should have a good idea what you saw and felt from your previous notes — describe masses well, for example, “3 x 2 x 1cm smooth”. rubbery mass attached to abdominal wall, mid-left lateral abdomen. This allows comparisons to be made each year in reference to the growth of the mass.
- 45. Histopathologists benefit from getting histories and descriptions. Never leave a blank form — write the request yourself and give as much information as possible.
- 46. Know what emergency drugs are in the practice and have a chart for weight ranges with the drugs in millilitres. When stressed you don't want to make mathematical errors.
- 47. Always check the BSAVA poisons manual — you need to be confident about common things like chocolate poisoning.
- 48. When you need a tiny blood sample, for example, for a blood glucose, pricking an ear vein is quick and easy with an orange needle.
- 49. When microchipping a puppy or kitten, always warn the owner that the site may bleed

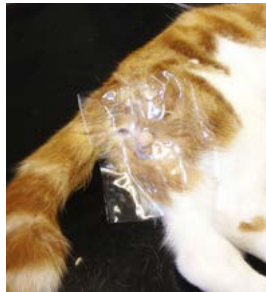


1. Using local anaesthetic along your suture line prior to bitch speys or within the scrotum for castrates works well as an adjunctive pain relief.
2. If doing a thyroidectomy and you panic that you can't feel the enlarged thyroid, place a sandbag under the cat's neck, extend the neck and then shave the surgical site — it will usually appear!
3. If drawing ketamine into a syringe in combination with other drugs, draw the ketamine up first as it stings when given by intramuscular injection. Inverting the syringe to mix the contents can help.



4. If a dog has a recurring aural haematoma despite drainage, another way of treating these with either light sedation or local anaesthetic, is to make an incision and insert a teat cannula — the haematoma can then be drained and the cannula sutured in place. This can be left in place for up to three weeks. This allows drainage at the same time as closing down the space to prevent recurrence. A buster collar should be worn to prevent the dog from scratching.
5. If trying to diagnose a nasal tumour, another method of achieving a sample that may work involves packing the back of the throat and flushing saline in each nostril under pressure. Sometimes a piece of the mass is dislodged and can be retrieved from the swab packing the throat.
6. If removing a canine, always do a surgical extraction — it makes life easier!

7. Always check your cats to ensure they are female before embarking on a spey — it is very frustrating trying to spey a tom cat!
8. Adrenaline soaked on a cotton bud and applied topically can be very useful to stop bleeding.
9. In some cases using a baby grow or t-shirt on an animal can help to protect a wound from patient interference.
10. A tip to keep hair away from a cat castration site, especially in a long-haired cat, is to cut a small hole in an empty drip bag and pull the testicles through.
11. When using triple (medetomidine, butorphanol and ketamine) on a non aggressive cat — giving the medetomidine/butorphanol first then waiting five to ten minutes before giving the ketamine is less stressful on the patient as it postpones the part that stings until the cat is quite sedated.
12. Once you have tied the first throw in a surgical knot, keep the ends down low, don't bring them up vertically to do the next throw, otherwise it loosens the initial throw.



13. When doing a deep-chested bitch spey, placing some sandbags under the animal midabdomen to tilt it, can help with visualisation.
14. A tampon (various sizes depending on the patient) can make a very good throat pack for use in dental procedures.
15. Tear duct cannulas can be useful to help unblock male cats!
16. If flushing a sizeable wound, attach a giving set and a three-way tap to a bag of fluids. Attach a syringe to the three-way tap, flush and repeat.
17. Using Intubeaze spray +/- EMLA cream around a cat's penis prior to unblocking can help to reduce discomfort.
18. Some find using their fingers to evert the skin when placing intradermal sutures is easier and less traumatic to the skin.
19. Using a Vetrap tube in the mouth of a dog with suspected bloat can allow an attempt at passing a stomach tube in a conscious dog.
20. A sealed tin with cotton wool soaked in spirit is helpful — saves time searching for the ever-wandering spirit bottle!
21. It can be helpful to try and create a collection of normal radiographs of the less common pets, for example, rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets,

chinchillas and reptiles. This can allow comparisons to be made between normal and abnormal and help with future diagnoses.

- 22.** Clingfilm can be used as a bandage to offer protection after a chest injury prior to surgery.
- 23.** Timers can be very useful in practice and can be set to alarm for different reminders — for example, ‘blood sample due’, ‘post-op checks’ etc.
- 24.** If a dog presents with a ball stuck in its throat a corkscrew can be used to grip the ball and aid removal.
- 25.** Owners can only see the skin wounds so learn to do them well. The edges should oppose accurately at the end of surgery, puckered wounds have been sutured too tightly and are therefore more uncomfortable for the animal.
- 26.** Glue is not a compensation for poor skin stitching. Glue “attracts” cotton wool and fur and can prove itchy to the patient — try to keep glue quantity to a minimum.
- 27.** When castrating dogs push the testicles well forward to make the skin incision. If the wound extends into the scrotum, it is more likely to result in wound swelling and irritation.
- 28.** Foot-pad wounds do not hold sutures well. It may be better to just manage the wound with dressings rather than suture. If you do opt to

suture always warn the owner that there may be wound breakdown due to location and associated tension.

- 29. When unblocking obstructed cat bladders, reducing the size of the bladder by initial cystocentesis can relieve some pressure and help make catheter placement easier. This must be done carefully as the bladder wall may be compromised.
- 30. A way to improve your in house cytology skills is to look at slides in the practice but also send the same sample to an external laboratory. This allows you to confirm your diagnosis and increases confidence.
- 31. Always place a ligature on a cat's cervix first before clamping as the cervix can sometimes be very friable, especially if the cat is in season.
- 32. If an IV catheter is under a bandage, place a distinctive colour on the dressing so everyone knows there is a catheter there to be removed before discharge.
- 33. Diluted peroxide is the easiest way to get blood stains off fur or flushing with saline.

Client communication

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1. When discussing pruritus with owners, it can be helpful for you to get the owners to grade their pet's pruritus out of ten as this allows you to document any improvement to treatment.
2. Having a book in the surgery to help children cope with the loss of a pet can be really helpful. (*The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* and *Saying Goodbye to Lulu*).
3. It is helpful to create a drug chart for chemotherapy patients so that owners have it in writing what drugs are due when etc. A replica chart should be kept in the practice for your reference.

4. It is helpful to ask owners of respiratory/ cardiac cases to monitor the animal's respiration rate when at rest at home. This gives a better insight into how the animal is coping in its own environment.
5. Encourage owners to record the date of their bitch's first season as this can help to work out dates for neutering etc.
6. If you sense an owner is unhappy or confused on the phone, offer to see them at the surgery. This can help to diffuse a situation as it shows you are taking the time to address their concerns and gives you a chance to converse face-to-face.
7. Direct new owners of puppies or kittens to The Dogs Trust or International Cat Care website for a comprehensive list of toxic plants.
8. When discussing possible outcomes and options with owners, always mention what sequelae to expect if **no action** is taken.
9. Accompany your client from the consulting room and present them to reception. This impresses clients and alerts reception to their presence. It also allows you to advise your receptionist when to make the next appt etc.
10. Always be honest with owners. If you are not familiar with a species or a condition be truthful

but advise them that although you are not an expert, you will endeavour to speak to someone who is and research as appropriate. Owners will respect your honesty.

11. When discussing with the owner of an elderly animal when “the right time” for euthanasia might be, suggest making a “quality of life” diary for that pet. This allows the owner to document the animal’s normal behaviour and log the number of “good” days versus the number of “bad” days. This can help some owners to come to terms with deciding on euthanasia.
12. Familiarise yourself with your practice’s cremation company. Owners feel reassured if someone from the practice has maybe visited the premises. Be aware of the options available and prices. A leaflet for owners can be a great help.
13. *Always* listen to owners — they know their pet. If they believe that their pet is unwell and you do not detect any abnormalities on your clinical examination, *do not dismiss their concerns*. Reassure them that your initial exam was normal, further tests could be done i.e. bloods etc. or opt to monitor the animal closely and recheck if still concerned.
14. It is important to keep owners updated on their pet’s progress so calling an owner once their pet is awake from surgery is appreciated.

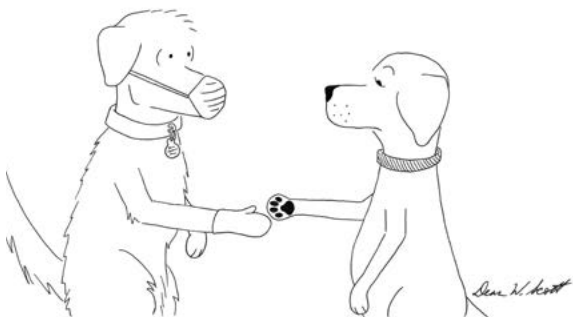


15. Please write a referral letter to accompany your patient!
16. When making referrals always warn the specialists of any quirks of the owner or pet!
17. Giving cat owners a 5ml syringe to syringe water after giving a tablet can help to encourage compliance.
18. Do not extract teeth without telling the owner. Dental extractions can upset owners as they assume pain for the animal and worry about them having eating difficulties. Keep the owner informed and reassured.

19. Never send an animal out of the building after expressing anal glands without a good clean and air freshening spray.
20. When admitting cats for a dematt always make the owner aware that the practice is not a professional groomers and obtain their permission to shave if necessary.
21. Placing clindamycin capsules in the fridge is useful as it reduces the smell and makes them more palatable.
22. After emptying anal glands or removing a smelly dressing put the waste in a bin out the back of the surgery so as to prevent the smell lingering for the rest of your consulting session.
23. Clean flea combs and otoscope nozzles in front of the owner before every use.
24. If you have a noisy inpatient it is best to offer an explanation or acknowledgement to the clients in the waiting room. Clients can be reassured that the animal is not in distress.
25. Always send out surgical cases and blood sampled patients clean.
26. Owners should be warned if you are going to clip off a lot of their pet's fur when operating. For example, some owners may make more fuss about a shaved rump than, an amputated tail wound.

27. Always tell owners how long to expect to wait for blood/histology results.
28. Have a box of tissues in your consult room for clients.
29. Elderly clients will often appreciate you bringing them in a chair without asking. Consider they may need help to hold/lift the animal. Sometimes having a nurse available to assist avoids them having to struggle to try and do it themselves.
30. Always get the reception team to offer an explanation and apologise to clients in the waiting room if you are running late.
31. At the end of your consultation, it can be helpful to ask owners if they have any questions — owners seem to like this and it gives them an opportunity to clear up any confusion and helps to conclude the consult.
32. If you have a vet student in a consultation with you — always introduce them to your clients — aside from being polite it helps to engage the student in the consultation.
33. If you have a student shadowing you in a consult, always seek an owner's permission prior to their interaction with the animal, i.e., abdominal palpation, chest auscultation.

Max became a bit paranoid after he found out his vaccines were overdue.



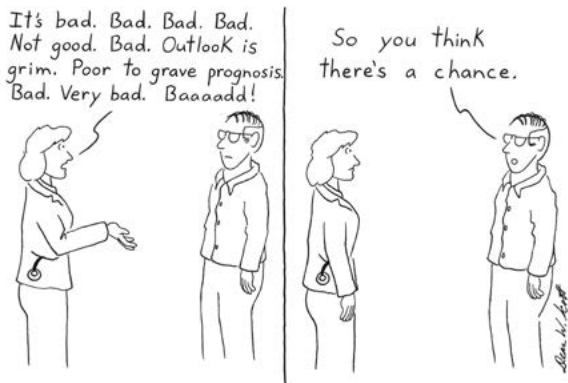
1. Remember some animals are better when minimum restraint techniques are used.
2. If you are dealing with a fractious, dyspnoeic cat where it is not possible to achieve an intramuscular injection — you can spray ketamine into its mouth.
3. If a patient needs to have a blood sample and an IV catheter placed for fluids, it is best to get the blood sample first as if the animal struggles for venupuncture after the IV line is placed, they might pull it out!

4. Small nervous dogs are sometimes better for examination if the owner sits on a chair with the dog on their lap.
5. When clipping dogs nails, they tolerate it better if you can do it whilst leaving their feet on the floor. Starting with the back feet can help.
6. If you have a pet that is proving difficult to handle or examine, ask the owners to wait in reception. Some animals are better behaved when their owners are absent!
7. If you have an aggressive or nervous dog to examine, it is best to avoid eye contact. Sometimes covering their eyes with a towel can also help to reduce anxiety.
8. Anorexic cats will sometimes start eating if dry food is scattered around the cage (as they have a sense of seeking it out). Spending time with cats, showing them affection, stroking them can also act as a trigger to eating.
9. Using a polystyrene party cup with the bottom removed can work well as a cat muzzle — tie with bandage around the back of the ears.
10. A tip for getting cats out of their basket — gently hold the cat around its shoulders and ask the owner to ***remove the basket from the cat***. There will be very little resistance from the cat trying to stay in the basket as the basket disappears around it!



The Masochist Dog

11. If you have a cat that is reluctant to go back into its carrier — putting the cat in backwards can be helpful. Another tip is to place the carrier upright and lower the cat in.
12. When putting a dog in a kennel always consider it may cage guard. Use non-slip leads.
13. A metal ring on the wall can aid control of an aggressive dog. Using the ring to pull the dog's slip lead through offers restraint so that an injection can be given.
14. Using clothes pegs on the scruff of puppies, kittens and some cats can sometimes immobilise them long enough to take a conscious radiograph.



15. When placing an intravenous catheter in cats, your nurse will extend the leg via the elbow but holding the paw securely can be of benefit — in fractious cats use a swab or towel to hold the paw to avoid being scratched!
16. In sick and unsedated patients you can obtain lots of useful information if you perform an ultrasound with minimal restraint — sometimes with the patient standing. You may be able to determine whether a large mass, a significant effusion or obvious rupture of the urinary bladder, for instance, is present.
17. When trying to achieve a conscious X-ray, placing X-ray gloves onto the animal's head may be of benefit. This will give the impression that they are still being restrained, whilst keeping them calm in the dark.

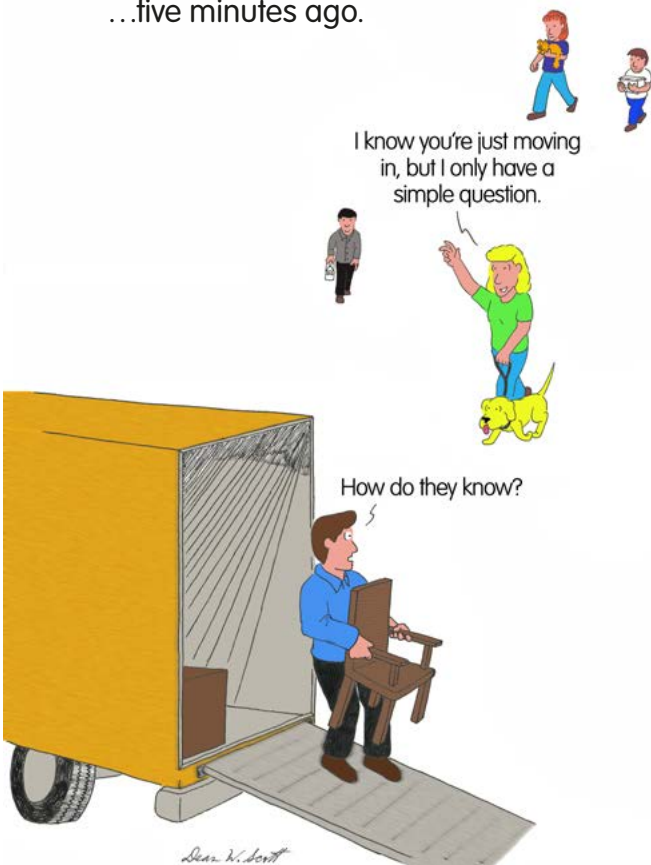
18. Using rolled up towels longitudinally anchored with sandbags is an alternative method of restraining animals for x-rays when sedated.
19. When taking hip score x-rays, wrap the Vetrap first around the right-hand leg, then diagonally across to the left — perfect positioning every time.
20. When trying for venous access in breeds with short twisted legs and large ears, for example Bassett Hounds, ear veins can be used for quick access.

Personal development

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New vet. Just moved. Arrived...

...five minutes ago.



1. Develop a good working relationship with your external laboratory and referral centres so if you need advice you know who to ask for.
2. Keep all your thank you cards as well as any complaint letters. Owners' gratitude for your work will generally outweigh the complaint pile and give you some faith in yourself on a day of doubt.
3. Encourage your colleagues attending CPD days to write down the top ten things they learnt and make time for them to share these with the rest of the practice.
4. Having regular clinical meetings to discuss practice protocols, new drugs etc. can be very useful. Just having all vets in a room at one time can improve communication and team building.
5. Keep a notebook in your pocket (or your iPhone!) as a new graduate and try to write down references to cases you want to follow the progress on or discuss with a colleague.
6. When on call keep a notebook handy to document which clients you see, clients you give advice to and at what time. This can act as a record if ever required (this list can also help you if you get an OOH bonus!).

7. Do not forget your on call mobile and charger when it's your night on call!
8. Ensure an emergency chocolate stash is always available!!
9. If you have health concerns about a colleague please do not ignore them. If you are unsure how best to handle the situation please contact the VBF for help — www.vetlife.org.uk
10. If ever you are dealing with difficult clients or a case that has not quite gone according to plan — the Veterinary Defence Society are very approachable and very helpful. They can give reassurance and invaluable advice.

But the sign says you see exotics!



1. O'Tom tick removers make an excellent tortoise mouth gag. Blunt the ends slightly with a flame before use — place the bevelled end into the mouth and then rotate.
2. If the mouth is too small to open with a tick remover, the blunt end of a curved scalpel blade can be used to open a tortoise's mouth.
3. Most oral speculums are designed to engage the incisors — for rabbits that no longer have their incisors the speculum can be wrapped with gauze to provide the necessary friction.

4. A luer tip syringe can be modified by cutting the luer tip at an angle with nail trimmers. The cut end can be smoothed by softening with heat from a match or lighter. This modification makes it easier to pry open the mouth and orally dose hard to medicate species.
5. Mikki muzzles can be used to help anchor anaesthetic masks to your patients. Placing a rabbit anaesthetic mask inside a Mikki muzzle can help to hold the mask firmly in place. This also helps to reduce visual stimulation.
6. Zip-lock bags can be used to achieve short anaesthetics in small lizards or snakes.



7. Sterile lubricant jelly works well to control fine hairs and keep them away from your surgical site.
8. Mixing oral medication for tortoises with carrot or sweet potato baby food and placing the mixture on leaves or another favourite food can help with palatability and compliance.

9. Rubber bath mats with suction caps on the bottom can help provide traction and increase security for nervous patients, such as rabbits, during examinations and dentals.
10. Preheparinising a 1ml syringe prior to blood collecting in tortoises can aid venupuncture as it prevents clotting during slow blood collection. This involves drawing heparin up into a 1ml syringe then squirting the majority out so that only a tiny amount is left in the hub of the needle.



11. Fortum, once made up can keep for up to six months if frozen.
12. Any fizzy drink can be useful to help unblock feeding tubes.
13. The lateral saphenous vein in rabbits is a great site for venupuncture.

14. Diurnal birds, for example, raptors, have poor vision in the dark or red light so placing them in either environment calms them and can aid handling for examination.
15. When trying to achieve a small volume blood sample from a reptile or small furry, using a 1ml syringe helps to prevent the vein from collapsing and turning the needle bevel around can help to encourage blood flow.



16. Using the medial metatarsal vein to inject euthatal in chickens is an easy route for PTS.
17. When treating chameleons always warn owners that sites where injections, blood sampling or surgery have been done may turn black permanently.
18. If a ferret is retching or scratching at its face — these are signs of nausea and a common presenting sign of an insulinoma.

19. Reusing feeding syringes will perish the rubber after a time, but adding a water-based lubricant around the rubber will extend the life of the syringe.
20. Chameleons will “buzz/vibrate” when injected — this is a normal behaviour response.
21. A trick for trying to encourage Chinchillas to eat post surgery is to make up Oxbow critical care and roll it into balls for chins to hold and eat.
22. When treating reptiles that eat live prey, remember you can load their prey with necessary medication — that is, tablets, liquids or injectable medications.
23. Sick snakes can be encouraged to eat by exposing the brain of their prey.
24. Royal pythons are difficult feeders — placing them in a pillowcase with their prey can help. They eat gerbils *not* white mice.
25. To minimise the risk of being bitten when examining hamsters, place your index fingers either side of the hamster's head from above and turn it over to allow inspection in the palm of your hand!



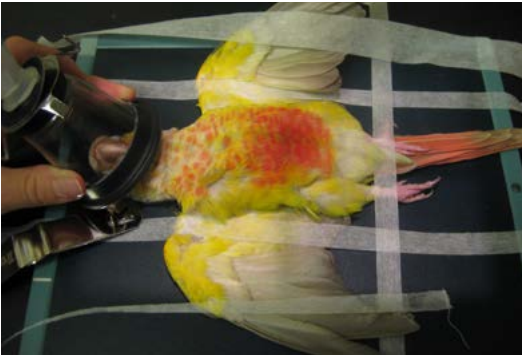


- 26.** Cut off the top of an empty squash bottle — this makes an excellent GA mask for ducks/birds with long beaks.
- 27.** A latex glove can be placed over the end of a home made GA mask and a hole is then cut in the glove to allow access. This creates a good seal. Vetrap could be used in a similar way and its use would also reduce visual stimulation.



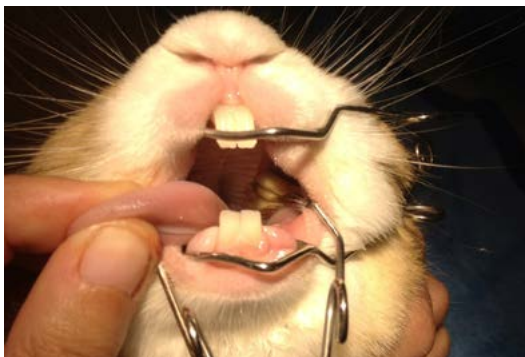


- 28.** When achieving x-rays of birds the following views and positioning are helpful.



- 29.** Offer owners to remove the ring from birds' legs if going under GA for another reason. The presence of the ring is only of value to the breeder and in some birds can cause pain/irritation. Offer to put a microchip in as an alternative means of identification.

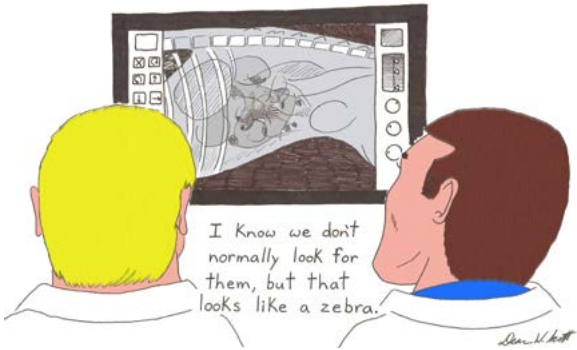
- 30.** Placing a towel between the legs of a raptor, covering its feet on recovery from GA, provides protection for the raptor as sometimes in their disorientation on recovery they can self-harm.
- 31.** When doing small furry dentals — placing the cheek dilators in first before the mouth gag can act as an anchor helping hold the cheek dilators in place, or indeed using two sets of cheek dilators to open the mouth works well.



- 32.** Some medications are available in soluble form and this can be very useful in exotic medicine — for example, tramadol, prednisolone or enrofloxacin. Paediatric solutions can also be utilised where no suitable veterinary licensed product exists.
- 33.** Licenced manufacturers of Veterinary Specials can produce a number of different medications in small sizes which are invaluable in exotic practice under the terms of prescribing cascade.

34. Mixing baby porridge with a fruit flavouring in with recovery syringe feed can improve palatability and compliance in rabbits and small furries.
35. When treating abscesses in small furries, the use of indwelling honey soaked swabs can be very useful.
36. Rabbits are very prone to adhesion formation — *avoid* using cat gut for rabbit surgery.
37. A good place to give fluids to birds is in the precrural skin fold.
38. Putting rabbits or guinea pigs in higher kennels can be dangerous, as if they are flighty/nervous to handle, they are at risk of falling and injuring themselves. Always place small furries in kennels at ground level.
39. Always have a source of vitamin C in the practice for guinea pigs — dissolving vitamin C from the chemist can be used if diluted properly.
40. Sugar gliders self-traumatise after surgery, therefore, placing bandages over their feet is advised to offer some protection. Providing them with something sweet to eat (honey on a blueberry) can distract them on recovery from inflicting injury.

41. When examining rabbits it is important to check the fur on the inside of the front paws as if the owners have not seen sneezing or any respiratory signs, sometimes evidence of nasal discharge can be found where the rabbit has wiped their nose with its paws.
42. If trying to get a ferret to cooperate use ferretone — it's like cat nip for ferrets!!
43. Before getting a rabbit out to examine, ask the owners if the rabbit is used to being handled. If not get someone to help you with restraint and bring a towel in case required.
44. Always warn owners that guinea pigs will squeal when you inject them (even if you use an orange needle!).
45. As cats and small furries are very nervous when travelling/sitting in the waiting room at the vets — placing a “tea cosy” like towel over their basket with a slit for the handle can offer them some security/privacy.
46. If you wrap a guinea pig or a rabbit in a towel thus reducing visual stimulation, this can sometimes help conscious x-rays to be taken. This is not advised in dyspnoeic patients as it may hinder their breathing.
47. Always apply lubricant to small furries' eyes before they are placed in an anaesthetic chamber as the gas can irritate their eyes.



- 48.** It is advisable to use a cotton bud to clean out a small furries mouth prior to a GA as many have food stored which can hinder their breathing.
- 49.** Wearing a head torch (yes, a head torch!) can be really useful to improve visualisation when doing small furry dentals.
- 50.** A subtle indication that a chinchilla has dental issues: fibre strands will be evident when you pull the faeces apart as there is reduced mastication/digestion.
- 51.** If a worried owner brings in their tortoise post hibernation and is unsure if it is hibernating or has passed away — do an ECG or use the Doppler probe from your blood pressure machine to auscultate the heart.

- 52.** If seeing exotics it can be a great help to coach your receptionists to find out the species when your clients register. This gives you forewarning and allows you to research that species' requirements, diet etc. prior to the consultation.
- 53.** Always recheck the sex of young rabbits at their first consultation. Often the owners have been misinformed and this can prevent accidental matings from occurring.
- 54.** Remember male rabbits remain fertile for two to three weeks after castration so always advise your clients that they still need to keep their male rabbit separate from any females for this period.
- 55.** To keep a small furrie's mask on during an anaesthetic, attach a bandage around the end of the circuit, then around the mask to the back of the head and tie.





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