**Background:**

**Lab Activity: There Is Only One Way To Skin A Cat!**

Today we are going to work on skinning our feline friends. These cats are a precious resource, and will not be replaced if you badly butcher the underling organs. With that in mind, please be careful to ensure that the rest of the year’s dissections are valuable to you and your lab group.

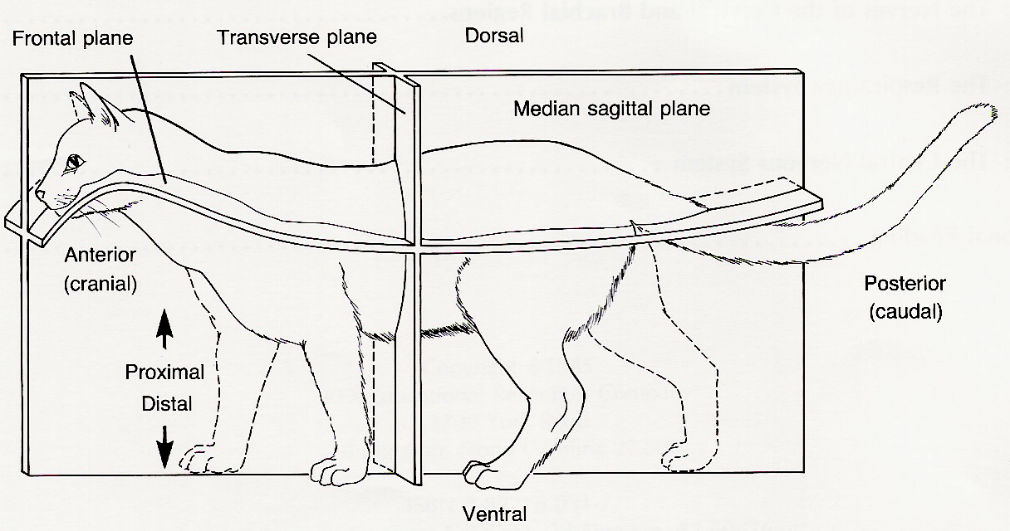
Ideally the skin should be taken off in one piece. This is because our cat will have to be wrapped in its own skin to help preserve it during its 8 months in our fridge. We will almost make a skin “jacket” that will help preserve the underlying organs from decay and desiccation (drying out).

**Materials:**

* Dissection Tray
* Dissection Kit
* Cat

**Procedure**

1. Find your cat, dissection kit and dissection tray. Bring all of these to your table. From this moment on, all of your dissection materials should stay inside of your tray.
2. Remove your cat from its inner bag. Now use your scissors to remove the top off the inner bag. Be sure not to remove too much from the inner bag. This will cause it to leak later!
3. With gloves on, pinch the skin dorsal to the hips. Make sure that your pinch has only skin and does not include underlying structures. Once you ensure that you have only skin, make a transverse cut in the pinched skin with your scissors that is roughly one inch in length.



1. Insert a probe into the cut and separate the skin from the underling muscle tissue. This can be done without poking and/or destroying the underlying muscle tissue. Just be certain to be careful with your probe.
2. Take your scissors and make a midsagittal cut up the spine, towards the cephalic region. Do not cut deeply with the scissors. Opening the scissors wide within the cat will cause the deep portion of the scissors to harm the underling muscle tissue. Continue cutting along the spine until your scissors are having trouble cutting through attached skin.
3. Now alternate using the probe and the scissors along the spine of the cat, and alternate cuts and probes until you have cut to the shoulders.
4. Use the probe to free the skin along the sides of the cat. This can be accomplished with the probe.
5. Now make a transverse cut along the shoulder blades. The cut should travel down the arm and to the wrist. Alternate probe and scissors to remove the skin along the arms until you hit the wrist. This is one of the more labor intensive steps
6. Take your scissors and cut the skin around the wrist. Be careful and make sure that the cuts are not destroying the underlying bone structures.
7. Repeat the previous step with the other arm.
8. Now make a transverse cut down the hips. This cut should travel down the legs and to the ankle. Alternate probe and scissors to remove the skin along the legs until you hit the ankle. This is one of the more labor intensive steps. These cuts should come down around the tail. The tail is the only section of the caudal region that should have skin.
9. Take your scissors and cut the skin around the ankle. Be careful and make sure that the cuts are not destroying the underling bone structures.
10. Repeat the previous step with the other leg.
11. Continue the cut that was along the spine. Take this cut all the way up the cranium and stop when it is between the ears.
12. Alternate probe and your hands to loosen the skin along the dorsal side of the head and neck.
13. Use your scissors and probe to remove as much skin off the head and neck as possible. Remember we want this skin to be in one piece!
14. Utilize a mixture of your hands and probes to remove the rest of the skin from the cat.
15. Clean up your work station. All instruments and the table should be cleaned.