

Small

Winner

HOMEMADE CAT BODYSUITS

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As vets working with cats there are two things we certainly know: cats do not cope well with Elizabethan collars and commercial bodysuit prices can be overwhelming for many owners.

So what can we do when a restriction for licking and scratching is needed but the owner cannot afford it?

How can we get a solution suitable for both patient and owner?

In reality I wasn't 100% concerned with the issue until my own cat O'Malley got a cut on his dorsum and needed stitches. After he was sutured, he got an Elizabethan collar, but it was so frustrating for him that I did what we tell all owners not to do—I removed it and of course, he licked the stitches out. After his second suturing, he had no other option than the e-collar—those were the most frustrating 10 days for him. After the incident, I decided to look for a solution for this predicament.

It took me a while but then I figured a cheap and easy solution: soccer socks!

Well there are many cheap ones, they are elastic, soft and long—all the requisites needed for making a handmade bodysuit.

So now every time a cat is going to have a procedure which will require stitches, I ask the owners to bring a pair of soccer socks. Then while the cat is still under anaesthesia, I simply put the sock over the cat, with the free end on the



Figure 1. Football sock/bodysuit

side of the head. Then with a pilot pen I mark the position of the four legs and the base of the tail and cut a simple straight cut for each leg and a wide cut covering all the width of the sock for the tail (because it is a wide cut the cats have space to urinate and defecate without difficulty). Then all that remains is to pass the cat into the bodysuit as if passing it into a tunnel: first the head, second the front legs, then the hind legs and finally the tail. It is a personal preference to leave a 'long neck', which I can wrap later as a turtleneck.

The result is a very comfortable cat able to live a normal life and a happy owner. I usually make both socks in case owner needs to change or wash one of the bodysuits.

I attach some pictures of one patient with her body suit and a photo of the suit after its purpose was achieved.

I hope this little tip can be helpful for a lot of vets and that in this issue at least, our profession can be a little easier.



Figure 2 and 3. Patient wearing bodysuit

