

# Positioning a patient for accurate VLAS measurement

**Positioning is critical to accurately measure a patient's vertebral left atrial size (VLAS).**

## Guidelines

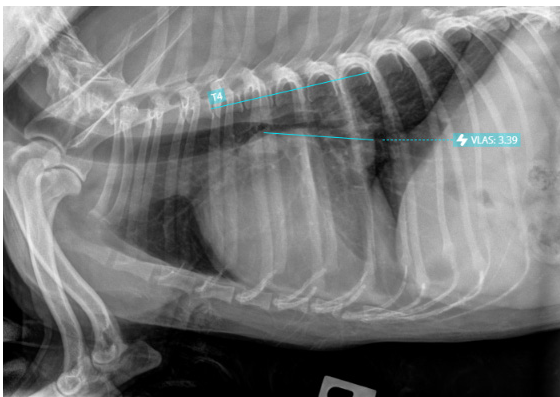
- + Place the patient in **right or left lateral recumbency** with **no axial rotation**
- + Extend the **forelimbs forward**.
- + Place the **head in a neutral position**.
- + Take the radiograph as close to **peak inspiration** as possible.

Use weighted sandbags, foam wedges, and other positioning aids, as needed, to ensure correct positioning.

## Why patient positioning matters

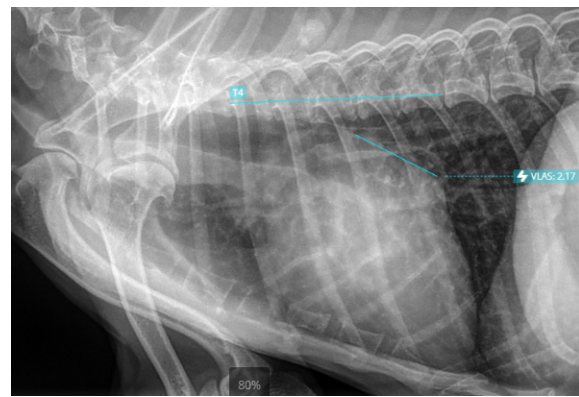
- + Improper positioning can make the heart appear larger or smaller, depending on degree of rotation, and can cause cardiac chambers to appear abnormal and exaggerated in size.
- + Failure to extend the forelimbs can cause poor visualization of the cranial cardiac border and cranial lung fields.
- + Expiratory radiographs can mimic a diffuse pulmonary interstitial pattern.
- + Improper positioning can generate misleading VLAS values.

## ✓ Well positioned



No axial rotation; forelimbs are extended  
VLAS: **3.39**

## ✗ Poorly positioned



Thorax is rotated; forelimbs not extended  
VLAS: **2.17**

**TIP:** Find the VLAS tool under **Advanced Measurements**  in the IDEXX Web PACS\* Advanced Viewer.

Correct positioning helps to ensure an accurate clinical picture and meaningful VLAS values. Visit the [IDEXX Learning Center](#) for additional training on radiographic positioning.