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## Social Interaction Test

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We use this protocol and it's working

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## Abstract

This test assesses exploration/interaction between conspecifics and social behaviors.

## Materials

Social interaction arena x2  
Wire cups x4  
Metal paperweights x4  
Duplo blocks x2, Tape  
70% ethanol for cleaning  
Ethovision Software: <https://noldus.com/ethovision-xt>

## Set Up

- 1 **LIGHT SETTINGS:** The room should be set to 50% animal day lighting and both floor lamps should be on full power facing directly up. The camera aperture should be slightly closed (so less light comes in).
- 2 Place both arenas underneath the camera and reassemble the walls. Use tape to secure the corners.
- 3 Open the social interaction Ethovision template and save as a new experiment with a name of your choosing. Fill in the Trial Setup page with mouse SIDs and trial info (Habituation→ Preference→ Recognition (optional)).
- 4 Check the position of the arenas in acquisition mode.
- 5 Clean the entire arena with 70% ethanol.
- 6 Place the 4 wire cups on the marked positions in Chambers 1 and 3 of each arena. Place the paperweight on top, making sure it doesn't block the perimeter of the cup on the camera view
- 7 **Chamber doors should be left outside of the arena to start.**

## Testing

- 8 Habituate mice to room for 1 hr prior to start of testing.
- 9 When ready to start, make sure the camera is not detecting any background noise.
- 10 Start acquisition and gently place each mouse into chamber 2 of each arena against the wall closest to you. Be careful not to stick your body into the camera's field of view
- 11 Let the mice explore for 10 minutes and take notes for any off behavior. When the trial finishes, press okay.



- 12 Gently lead each mouse into the center chamber and close them in with the doors. While the mouse is held inside Chamber 2, place a stimulus mouse in Cup 1 in Chamber 1. If in the experiment plan, place a Duplo block under Cup 2 in Chamber 3.
- 13 Double check that the cups and paperweights are in position.
- 14 Remove the doors, **AND THEN** quickly start acquisition for the next trial. (If you start acquisition before removing the doors, Ethovision will track your hands and you will have to edit the tracks after).
- 15 Repeat step 10
- 16 If performing Social Recognition test, lead the test mouse into the center chamber and again trap with the doors. Replace the Duplo block with a second stimulus mouse. Then double check the positions of the cups and paperweights. Remove the doors, and quickly start the next trial
- 17 After the last trial, place all mice back into their home cages and thoroughly clean the arena, wire cups, and blocks with ethanol.
- 18 Repeat steps 8-16 as needed to test all mice.