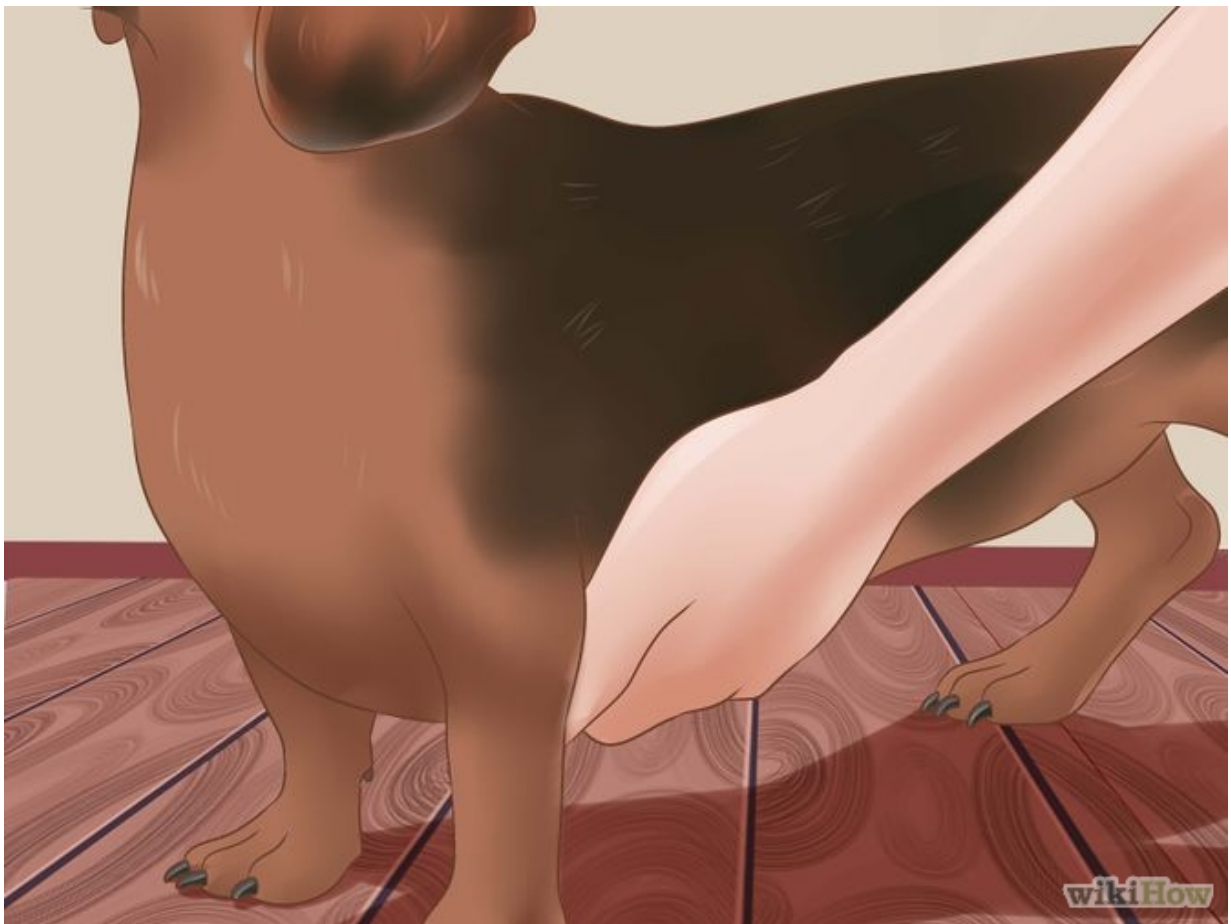


HOW TO HOLD A DACHSHUND PROPERLY

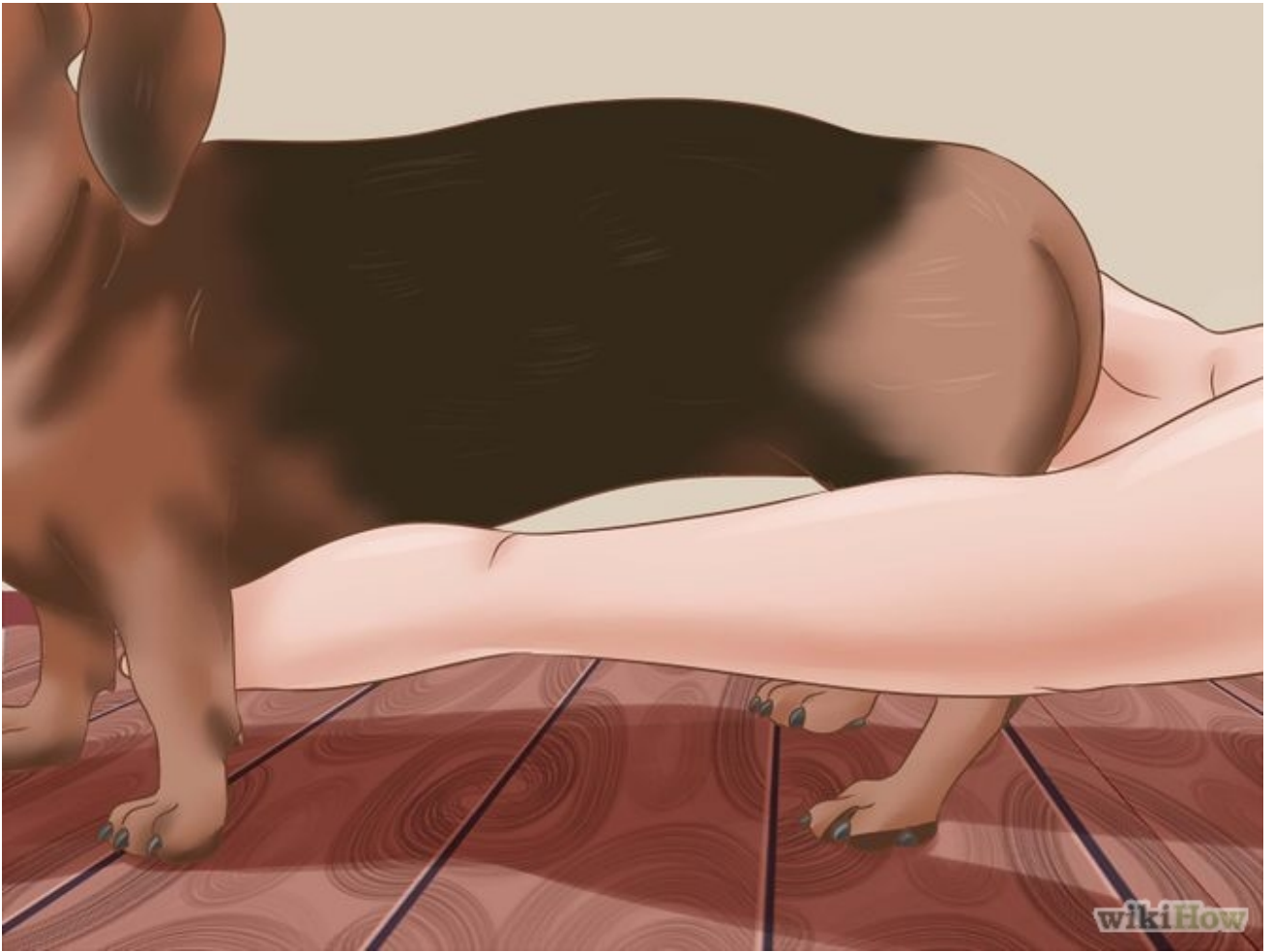
Holding a Dachshund Safely

1. Place one hand under the chest. Picking up a dachshund is different than the way you'd pick up other breeds, but it's not especially hard once you learn the right method. Start by slipping a hand under the dog's upper body to support his chest and ribcage. *Don't lift up yet.*

Spread your fingers out so that you support as much of the dog's upper body as possible. The wider the area you can spread his weight over, the gentler it will be on his spine.



2. Place your other hand under the dog's rump. Gently slip your free hand under the dog's rump — either directly behind it or just in front of the dog's rear legs to support its lower body. Get ready to lift up. Here, again, it is best to spread your hand to give the widest base of support possible.



3. Slowly lift the dachshund, keeping its body level. Now, simply lift the dog up. As you go, try to keep the dog's lower body from hanging or drooping beneath its lower body. A little bending is fine, but you'll want to keep the dog's back as flat as possible to keep from putting stress on it.



4. Continue to support the dog's back as you hold it. As you move around or play with your dachshund, make sure its lower back is well-supported at all times. Dachshunds aren't like other dogs — letting their lower bodies dangle is uncomfortable to them and can contribute to painful back problems (like slipped and ruptured discs) over time. Luckily, with a little practice, this should become second nature after a while. Eventually, it will feel "wrong" to pick the dachshund up in the incorrect way.



5. Transition to a "cradle" hold if you wish. As long as the dachshund's back is well-supported and its body is fairly straight, it doesn't really matter how you choose to hold it. If you'd like the convenience of being able to hold your dachshund with one arm, try shifting to this alternate hold once you've picked it up correctly by following the steps above:

- Gently shift the dog's weight so that it comes to rest on the forearm of the arm that you were using to support its rump. Use your full forearm to support its weight.
- Tuck the dog against your body for added support and comfort. This should feel a little like how you would cradle a baby or hold a football.

Use your free arm when needed to help the dog balance and keep it from squirming or wriggling free.



6. To set the dachshund down, slowly lower it to the floor. If you've had experience with other dog breeds, you may be used to "dropping" or gently heaving them back to the ground when you're done holding them. With dachshunds, instead, you'll want to lower the dog all the way to the ground before letting go. As always, keep its back well-supported as you lower it down. Ideally, you'll want its feet to be touching the ground before you let go. As you'll read below, even a drop of a few inches can put stress on the dachshund's back and joints.



7. Never drop the dachshund back onto the ground. As noted above, dogs should be *set down gently*, not *dropped*. A dachshund's legs are very short compared to other dog breeds'. This means that they can't bend very far to absorb the shock of hitting the ground, which puts most of the impact stress on the leg joints and back. Getting rid of the dog's "fall" eliminates this danger.

Don't trust your dog's body language here. Dachshunds don't *know* that their skeleton can't support falls, so they may be perfectly willing to jump out of your hands. Even if this doesn't cause them immediate pain, it can lead to painful problems if continued in the long term.



8. Show family and friends how to hold dachshunds properly before letting them play. Nothing's more frustrating than when you take the time to learn how to hold your dachshund properly, only for well-meaning relatives to come over and treat it like an ordinary dog. To avoid problems, be sure to educate any visitors about the proper ways to hold your dog before they play with it. This is *especially* true for children, who can sometimes be too rough with dogs on accident. It's a wise idea to supervise children when they first interact with your dachshund until you're confident that they know how to play safely.

