CALCULATE YOUR PATIENT’S VERTEBRAL HEART SCORE (VHS) \(^1\)

**FOLLOW THESE STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Using a lateral thoracic radiograph, ensure the thoracic vertebrae T4 to T12 are clearly delineated.

2. Using **calipers**, measure the longest axis of the cardiac silhouette from the carina of the mainstem bronchus to the apex (designated “L”).

3. Transfer this long axis measurement to the vertebrae, starting at the cranial edge of T4, and count the number of vertebrae that fall within the caliper points.

4. Using **calipers**, measure the short axis at the widest part of the cardiac silhouette, perpendicular to the long axis measurement (designated “S”).

5. Transfer this short axis measurement to the vertebrae, starting at the cranial edge of T4, and count the number of vertebrae that fall within the caliper points.

6. Sum the 2 measurements. 
   \[ \text{VHS} = L + S \]

**SAMPLE VHS CALCULATIONS FROM RADIOGRAPH ABOVE**

This example: **Long axis line** = 5.2, **Short axis line** = 4.4

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{VHS} &= L + S \\
&= 5.2 + 4.4 \\
&= 9.6
\end{align*}
\]

= in normal range

You can use VHS calculations to help identify dogs with advanced preclinical mitral valve disease. For more information, visit [www.epictrial.com](http://www.epictrial.com).