

How to Turn a Sheep



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Year Group: BVSc1+

Clinical Skills: Turning a Sheep



To catch a sheep it is easiest to be in a small space and push the sheep into a corner. Approach the sheep quietly and calmly.

NEVER grab the wool; it is painful to the sheep and can bruise the carcass.



To restrain the sheep once it is caught: cup your hand under the lower jaw and elevate the head slightly whilst using your other hand to steady the back end. It may be easiest to hold the sheep against a wall or in a corner.



To turn a sheep: stand to the side of the sheep; you may want to use your dominant hand to turn the head and therefore adjust your (or the sheep's) position accordingly. In this example the approach is from the right side (usually easier for a right-hander), the same technique will apply from the left side.



Hold the sheep's head with your right hand under the jaw. Ensure there is enough space behind you to turn the sheep i.e. to avoid getting stuck in a corner.



Place your right knee just behind the sheep's shoulder and your left leg against the sheep's side in the region of its upper hind leg.



Place your left hand on the sheep's back over the hip region.

Clinical Skills: Turning a Sheep



Turn the sheep's head away from you towards its left shoulder. You should feel the sheep beginning to lean against your legs.



Put downward pressure on the hips of the sheep with your left hand and take a step back.

The hind legs of the sheep should begin to drop to the floor.

Continue to turn the head and use a rotating action on the sheep's body.



Continue the turning and rotating action until the sheep is sitting on the floor with its back against your legs.



Continue to keep hold of the sheep. Place one hand on the brisket and/or hold the front legs with the other hand. Move the sheep until it is sitting comfortably on its rump, usually slightly to one side (off centre).



While the sheep is in this position, examine the feet. Check each claw: the hoof, coronary band and sole, and in between the claws (the interdigital space). Look for evidence of damage or disease e.g. underrun horn, overgrown horn, ulcerated skin, redness, smelliness, waxy/moist exudate, hair loss, abnormal tissue.



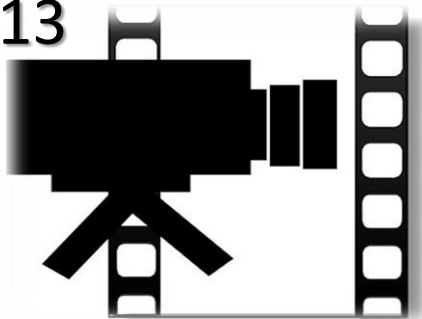
Also examine the udder and feel for any abnormal lumps or heat, especially in lactating ewes.

Visible changes include teat damage, redness, ulcerated skin, necrotic skin, distortion and swelling of the udder.

Palpable changes include heat, lumps and hardness of the udder.

In some cases the udder may become black, cold and clammy.

13



Look at the sheep handling video on Blackboard. It can be found in: Year 1-Animal Management-eLearning-Sheep Videos.

This video will also show other methods for turning a sheep.

Practise the technique using the model sheep

There are life-sized model sheep available to practise turning.

Practise:

- Standing in the correct position
- Placing your hands on the sheep in the correct positions (under the jaw and over the rump)
- Turning the sheep's head away from your body
- Rotating the sheep's body until it is sitting on its rump, with its back against your legs.

