

### How to Trick a Tick

I recently learned a fabulous new trick from Jessica, a nurse at my hospital. I was in our treatment room preparing to remove a tick from the base of my dog's ear. Lucky dogs, Nellie and Quinn got to tag along with my husband and me on a recent horse camping trip. Quinnie, the more adventurous of the two returned home with a tick. When nurse Jessica observed me in the treatment room with thumb forceps in hand (my tick removal instrument of choice), she asked, "Would you like me to show you how to spin a tick?" I'd never heard of such a thing, but I offered forth the mighty Quinn and invited her to demonstrate.

Here is what Jessica did. She placed her index finger on the tick and then rotated her finger counter clockwise in small steady circles. I liken it to using your index finger to perform light pressure circles on the end of your nose. Low and behold, within approximately 20 seconds the tick, completely intact, detached itself from Quinn (my boy thought he was receiving a massage). After performing this magic, Jessica assured me with utter confidence that it "works every time."

I was thrilled by what I saw. Not only had this "old dog" learned a new trick, I was delighted by the prospect of employing a tick removal technique that is comfortable for the patient and avoids leaving tick mouthparts behind (a source of chronic irritation for the patient). The next time you discover a tick on your dog or cat, I encourage you to don a plastic glove (prevents tick-borne infectious diseases from entering your body via a skin crack or abrasion) and try this "spin the tick" method. Please let me know if it works for you. By the way, spinning clockwise or counter clockwise should do the trick!

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