



Ageing

Hang the animal from it's hind legs. This will allow blood to flow to the head. Also, it will aid in stretching the leg muscles. In the picture, it would have been better to use gambrels to hang these deer. With the legs together, moisture can get trapped providing a source for bacterial growth. It is **far** preferable to age a deer with the hide. This helps to moderate the body temperature, and keeps the meat from drying out. Although it is difficult to over-age the meat, keep a close eye on things.

Daily, smell the inside of the carcass for odor. It should smell like deer, but not sour or pungent. **DO NOT AGE A GUT-SHOT DEER.**



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November temperatures in South Dakota typically range from the mid 20's to the mid 40's. For an unheated garage, this keeps the body cavity temperature around 35F. At this temperature, I age the meat for 7-14 days. If it's too warm, age the meat for less time. This neat little deal is the outside temperature/humidity probe for my wireless weather station. It makes for a convenient way to monitor the carcass temperature. No, the max temp was not 125 deg. That's a glitch. For days when the temperature gets too high, I keep the garage doors closed during the day. Then, at night, I open them about a foot. This keeps the garage temperature lower.



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Sometimes when the temperature is marginally too warm, I cheat a little with ice or cold packs. These packs are applied during the day, then refroze in my freezer at night. There are also cold packs in the chest cavity. If the proper temperature is maintained throughout the aging process, you can age the animal for up to two weeks. Don't worry if some mold forms of the outer surfaces of the meat. This happens to country-aged hams all the time. Just cut it away when deboning the meat.

See

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/ham.