

## THE RE-HYDRATION OF AFRICAN SKINS – Question from Dennis Bragg

First off, Dennis talked to the outfitter in Africa, and was informed that HIS skins were pickled as part of their skin prep. If you have a back skin Dennis, you need to rehydrate it by itself first, to test the skins for acid rot. Preferably, a smaller thinner skin, like an Impala, or Springbok. You will have a hard time trying to explain to your customer, why his skins fell apart, if you attempt the re-hydration of the whole safari at once. If you don't have a back skin, attempt a small thin cape first. The thinner skins will be the first to show any signs of acid rot, especially the ears, brisket, etc.

You should always explain the risks of tanning African skins, to your customer. You never know what you are going to get!

Eland, Bush-buck, Bongo, Nyala, **SHOULD NOT** be re-hydrated with the method I am going to describe first. They lose epidermis **VERY** easily!

I don't like to see most skins put in water without salt, but you will find it necessary when statically re-hydrating African.

To every gallon of 90 deg water, add 1oz **Lipa-Solve 55**. Add skins, and leave in this solution, for 8 hrs. Pull skins, and drain.

Second part: To every gallon of 90 deg water, add 1/3lb of salt, 1oz **Lipa-Solve 55**, and 1oz of **Citric Acid** Add drained skins from previous bath, and leave in overnight.

There will be a **WHOLE LOT** more to this series of posts. There are **MANY** variables, and skin types, that will have to be individually addressed. The above instructions are **VERY** general. I'm going to try to add a little more every day, until I think I have covered everything.

## THICK SKIN RE-HYDRATION

**My first tanning tip:** Don't put off tanning thick skins. After salting, and once the skin has reached the 5 day mark of drying, **GO AHEAD** and tan those skins you normally like to put off till later.

The longer they dry, the harder they are to rehydrate! You will spend 1/2 the time pickling, shaving and tanning an axis cape, that has only been salted a week, versus an axis cape that has been salted for 6 weeks or more. Try your best to work in some of thicker skins like Boar. This includes Nyala, Bushbuck, Kudu, Lesser Kudu, Eland, Bongo, Sitatunga, and Mtn. Nyala.


Per 5 (five) gallons of 90 deg water, add 1lb salt, 3oz **Citric Acid**, and 3oz **Lipa-Solve 55**. Add skins to this bath, for 8 hours. Pull and drain.

To 5 (five) gallons of 90deg water, add 2.5lbs of salt, 5oz **Citric Acid**, and 5oz **Lipa-Solve 55**. After draining from the previous bath, place these skins in this bath, leave in overnight, and pull and drain next AM, ASAP.

**MOST** skins will be re-hydrated at this point, **BUT NOT ALL**. You have to be able to identify a skin that is not fully re-hydrated, and then act accordingly. Your goal is 80-90% re-hydration, before **ANY** African skins hit the pickle, or they will be difficult to shave. Warthogs, etc, will present their own unique re-hydration problems.

Next, I will cover African small game. Baboon, Suni, Duiker, Klipspringer, Dik Dik, Springhare, Oribi, Jackle, Serval etc. These are not much different from the above skins, but with a twist. Then, African Big Cats.

Thanks **MUCH** folks! I love talking about tanning, to anybody that will listen!



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**Lipa-Solve 55**

**Rehydration Application:** (Basic Instructions)

1. For best results warm water not exceeding 90 degrees should be used.
2. Per gallon of water add 1/4 lb. of salt, 1 oz. of Lipa-Solve 55. For a natural bactericide use 1 oz. Citric Acid per gallon. Commercial bactericides can be used per manufacturer's instruction.
3. Skin(s) should remain submerged in solution only as long as necessary to rehydrate. Time will vary depending on how long skin has been dry. 4-8 hours for an average deer but as long as 12 hours or overnight for a skin dried hard.
4. Rehydration complete the skin needs to go into the pickle solution.

Avoid eye and skin contact. May be harmful or fatal if swallowed. Keep container closed and store in a cool place away from open flames. Handle with care using good industrial practices.

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**Citric Acid**

**Pickling Instructions:** (Basic Instructions)

1. Per gallon of warm water (not exceeding 90 degrees) add 1 lb. of salt. 2.5 gallons of pickle is recommended per deer cape.
2. When using No-Harm Pickling Acid add 1/2 oz. per gallon of water.  
If using Citric Acid add 3 oz's. per gallon of water.
3. A pH of 1.5-2 is best.
4. Skins should remain in the pickle solution for 24-48 hours before shaving. Stir/agitate pickle daily. (Skins can remain in the pickle for an extended period of time as long as the pH is maintained.)
5. Once shaved, skins should be put back in pickle overnight. Adjust pH as needed.
6. Re-Shave skins as needed the next day.

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## AFRICAN RE-HYDRATION – One last bite at the apple, before the pickle!

You are going to find some African skins, that won't rehydrate well, no matter what we do. Warthog, some Blue Wildebeest, some Oryx/Gemsbok, and a few others. There is only so much time a skin can handle in ANY re-hydration bath, before the risks of hair and epidermal loss, will FAR outweigh the extra time you will spend shaving a problem skin out of the pickle. This is all STRICTLY MY OPINION, and any formulas I have given, or will give in the future, are ALL offered with a VERY HIGH degree of respect for the skin! I might do something a little different, if I had the skins being worked on, in front of me, and in my control, but I am trying to keep things simple, and the formulas safe. (Preventing hair and epidermal loss)

So far, in steps 1 and 2, you have kept skins in a re-hydration bath, 8 hrs, plus overnight. I would go one more additional day, or another 12 hours, before they need to go to pickle. Where would I go from here, on very bad skins?

In a new bath of 90deg water, I would add the following:

**PER GALLON:** 1/2lb salt, 1oz Citric Acid, and 1oz Lipa-Solve 55.

Through all these steps, you need to gently agitate skins as often as you can. **YES**, the initial water temps are VERY important!

If you are going to be doing **A LOT** of African, you need to invest in a small, low PSI pressure washer. Here is why. (Before I forget, Baboon, Jackal, African Porcupine, African Lion, Leopard, Servile, Genet, Ant Eater, Hyena, and a couple of others I cant remember now (ask me, if you don't know), need to be **DEGREASED** in the pickle, with **Lipa-Solve 77**.

Small skins, like Duiker, Suni, Dik Dik, Oribi, Baboon, etc., have **VERY** thin areas of the skin that are difficult to shave. A **LOW** PSI pressure washer, with a jet tip, will **EASILY** plump up those thin areas, like baboon legs, and make them **VERY EASY** to shave. **NO**, you won't blow holes in any of these skins, if you use a pressure washer, **BELOW 2000PSI. Around 1500 is BEST!**

African lions with long manes – turn the head and neck **FUR SIDE OUT, AS SOON** as the skin is soft enough to do so. Even light agitation, with hair on hair, will knot up the mane, and make it a mother to comb!

I am going to let y'all take over this with individual questions, from here on out. I can think of hundreds of tips, but don't have time to type them all! (Like split the dulap on an eland cape, before it hits pickle)

Bring em on! Thanks for reading. *Aubrey*

**Shake Well**

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**Lipa-Solve 77**

**Degrease Bath Application:** (Basic Instructions)

1. 1 oz. of Lipa-Solve 77, 1/2 lb. of salt, per gallon of water, at 90 degrees initially.
2. Depending on skin type, place in de-greasing bath for a minimum of 3-4 hours. Agitate frequently. For best results, de-greasing should be performed **AFTER** final shaving.
3. From pickle to de-greasing bath, back to pickle overnight, then to tanning steps.
4. Lipa-Solve 77 can also be used as a degreaser in the pickle (1 oz. per gallon).

**Avoid eye and skin contact.** May be harmful or fatal if swallowed. Keep container closed and store in a cool place away from open flames. Handle with care using good industrial practices.

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