

SKIN PREP PRIOR TO TANNING

1. Remove the skin to be tanned from the carcass of the animal, ASAP, and freeze, or prepare for salting. When skinning, try to remove the skin only, and leave most of the muscle tissue and fat, left on the carcass. To insure best results, this whole process **NEEDS** to take place in a cool environment, to retard bacteria growth. If you are not able to skin the animal shortly after harvesting, freeze the entire carcass, then skin the animal while it is defrosting or immediately after defrosting.



DO NOT place skins or carcass directly on ice to keep cool. Place in a plastic bag, then place down in ice to avoid the skin or carcass sitting in water.

2. **Quickly remove as much meat and fat from the skin to be tanned.**

You don't have to get it all! Split tails, remove bones, etc.

3. **Salting:** Lay skin out on a flat surface, and cover with a heavy layer of salt. Purchase salt from a feed store (non-iodized). **COVER ALL AREAS OF THE SKIN SIDE WITH SALT.**

Salt will start removing water from the skin. Hang the skin to drain, within 30 minutes of first salting, in an area with good air circulation, and preferably a cool environment. After skin hangs for 8-12 hours. Take down, shake off old salt and cover with a fresh layer of salt. Re-hang skin to drain and dry for 24-48 hours. Best to have skin under a fan to provide air circulation. After a total of 48-72 hours. After initial salting, we are ready to move on to the tanning process. (Skin can also be fully dried hard, and stored in a cool dry place, for later tanning.)

TANNING

STEP ONE: Rehydration Bath

1. To every 2 gallons of warm water (Comfortable to the touch, from the tap), add the following:
 - ✓ 1/4 cup of Lipa-Solve 55
 - ✓ 1/2 lb. salt
2. Place salted skin into this bath for 1-6 hours, depending on skin stiffness. The object here is to make the skin soft and pliable again. If the skin gets limp and soft fairly rapidly, 1-2 hours is sufficient. You shouldn't need more than 6 hours, for a skin that has only been salted for 2-3 days. (The longer a skin stays salted, the longer it takes to rehydrate.) Gently agitate skin during this rehydration step, every 15 minutes or so. After fully dehydrated, pull skin from this bath, and let drain for 15 minutes, then to step 2.

During this rehydration step, continue on to mixing a pickle bath, then to step 2.

STEP TWO: Pickle Bath

To every 2 gallons of warm water, add the following:

- ✓ 2/3 cup citric acid (slightly rounded)
- ✓ 2 lb. salt
- ✓ Add drained skins to this bath, and leave in for 72 hours.
- ✓ Stir 2-3 times a day.

After 72 hours (up to 6 days) pull skin and drain. All fat, meat, and most of the connective tissue needs to be removed at this point. This can be done with a shaving machine, or a wire wheel. Thick areas of the skin, such as the neck on a raccoon, need to be thinned. Not too thin, or the hair will fall out. Using a wire wheel, requires a gentle hand. Skin can be tacked out on plywood, and wire wheeled with a drill, or held in hand, and gently applied to the wire wheel on a bench grinder (use extreme caution). Try not to remain in one area of the skin too long, or you will generate heat, and you don't want that! After skin is cleaned, place back in your pickle solution overnight. Next am, pull and drain, then to step 3.

STEP THREE: Degrease

(Most small game needs to be degreased – deer hides do not.)

To every 2 gallons of warm water add the following:

- ✓ ¼ cup of Lipa-Solve 77
- ✓ 1 lb. salt
- ✓ Place drained skin in this solution, for 3-6 hours, depending on how greasy it is. Gently agitate often.
- ✓ Pull and drain, then to step 4.

STEP FOUR: Neutralization

To every 2 gallons of warm water, add the following:

- ✓ 1/2 lb. salt
- ✓ 2/3 cup baking soda
- ✓ Place drained skin in this bath, for 1 hour, stirring often. Pull and drain. Let hang for 3 hours.

Ready for step 5.

STEP FIVE: Tanning

After shaking well, apply a liberal layer of Trubond 1000B to the skin, covering all areas. For thicker areas, apply a second light coat, after 2 hours has passed from the first coat. Hang skin to dry in a well-ventilated area to dry overnight.



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