

How to Tan a Deer Hide



by eHow Hobbies, Games & Toys Editor

Introduction

Many deer hunters mount the antlers, and many more take the deer to a taxidermist to have the deer's head mounted as a hunting trophy. With a bit of extra time, you can tan a deer hide and have it for a trophy as well.

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

Things You'll Need

- Deerskin
- Sawhorse
- Large plastic garbage can
- 1 gallon of hardwood ashes
- 2 lbs. of slaked lime
- 5 gallons of warm water
- 2 quarts vinegar
- Small plastic bucket
- 1 lb. of alum
- 1 gallon of warm water
- 2½ lbs. of salt
- Sheet of plywood or other large flat surface
- Tacks
- Hammer
- Neatfoot oil, warmed
- Clean, soft rag
- Fine grit sandpaper

Steps

- Step One**

Skin the deer as quickly as possible after your hunting experience. Keep the hide all in one piece. Place the hide on a sawhorse with the fleshy part up. Scrape the flesh with a sharp, long-bladed knife. Remove all the tissue that remains attached to the hide.
- Step Two**

Mix the hardwood ashes, the lime and the water in the large plastic garbage can. Stir until dissolved. Settle the deerskin into the water. Rearrange the deer hide in the mixture twice a day. Leave the deer hide in the brine for 2 to 3 days until the hair loosens.
- Step Three**

Rinse the deerskin well with clean water. Put the deer hide over the sawhorse again, this time with the hair side up. Use the long-bladed sharp knife to scrape off any hair that has not already fallen off. Rinse the hide well.
- Step Four**

Put 10 gallons of water and 2 quarts of vinegar in the plastic garbage can. Place the deer hide into this mixture and allow it to soak for 24 hours. Remember to stir this mixture frequently. At the end of the 24-hour period, drain the garbage can and fill it again with clean water. Put the hide back in the clean water for at least eight hours or overnight.
- Step Five**

Dissolve the alum in 1 gallon of warm water in a small bucket. Use four gallons of water to dissolve the salt in the plastic garbage can. Stir in the alum mixture. Soak the deer hide in this mixture for 6 to 8 days. Remember to stir the liquid at least twice a day.
- Step Six**

Remove the skin. Rinse it with running water for at least fifteen minutes. Stretch the hide onto a piece of plywood or other large flat surface. Tack the edges down.
- Step Seven**

Lay the deerskin on a flat surface. Gently rub the entire deer hide with fine grit sandpaper. Proceed to finish your deerskin hunting trophy into a rug or wall hanging.

Tips & Warnings

When the skin is almost dry, gently rub it with warmed neat's foot oil. Remove the tacks, turn the hide over and repeat the process.

Use a soft, clean rag to wipe up any extra oil.

Roll the hide in your hands or over a board to soften it up. Apply more warmed neat's foot oil, if necessary, to make the hide supple.

Let the skin air dry, but don't place it in the sun.

Member Comments



by [JazHaz](#) on 6/13/2008



My profile now has a picture of me wearing it.

[Flag This Comment](#)



by [JazHaz](#) on 6/13/2008



I have a 60+ year old African impala skin that I wear on ceremonial occasions with my marching band.

Its edged with cloth and also with cloth at the back.

However it is quite stiff. Have you got any tips on caring for it?

[Flag This Comment](#)

Find this article at: http://www.ehow.com/how_2092233_tan-deer-hide.html