

Boco's Hide Tanning Instructions



I'm tanning a couple small beaver, thought I would post a bit of info for anyone wanting to try.



Soak dried skins in cold water for a few hours.



Wring out skins.



De-grease with dish soap and a stiff bristle brush.



Rinse well in clear water several times so no soap left in skin or hair.



Mix pickle solution, 3oz citric acid, 1/2lb salt for each gallon of water. ph should read between 1-2. You will need ph test paper strips to check acidity of the pickle as well as the tanning solution later.



Soak the skins in the pickle for 3 days.

OK, now for the tanning solution.

Take 1lb of aluminum sulfate and dissolve it in 1 gal of water.

In another container mix 1 cup of salt and 4 oz of sodium carbonate (washing soda) in a half gallon of water.

Slowly add the salt carbonate solution to the aluminum sulfate solution (not the other way around) - do it slowly as it will fizz up.

Mix it as you add.

Check the ph, it should be around 4-4.5

Adding the carbonate raises the ph of the aluminum sulfate solution making it a tanning solution - otherwise it would just be a pickle.

Wring out skins and submerge them for 4 days in the tanning solution, mixing a couple times a day.



Will add the finishing later.

It works fine JP.

In the pickle you can leave it as long as you want. Just keep checking that the ph doesn't rise.

4 days in that tan solution is fine, I would not be concerned letting it in longer for a thick hide as long as it was pickled sufficiently.

I should add that I do not neutralize the skins between the pickle and the tan. Just wring them out. You can give them a quick rinse in plain water too but I don't find it necessary. As long as the tan stays around 4 you are good

You can re use the pickle many times as long as you don't put dirty skins in it. Just make sure that the ph remains correct between 1 and 2.

A lot of times I will do larger skins in a new pickle and smaller skins in an older pre used pickle.

I do the same with the tan solution.

So after 4 days I take the skins out of the tanning solution and wring them out in a towel so they are just damp.

Then I slather the tanning oil(any commercial tanning oil will do), on the leather side, then roll them up for a day, then unroll but leave them folded leather to leather and let the fur side dry.

Once the fur is dry, I open them up and let the leather start to dry.

Once the leather starts to dry I pull and scrunch them once in a while until the leather is dry. I keep a bottle of tanning oil thinned with water 50-50 and spray a bit on the leather once in a while while it is drying if thicker parts of the skin are not soft. Dont overoil the thin parts of the skin.

The fur looks all ratty at this point, but that's OK we will remedy that.

Once the leather is dry I give the entire skin a wash in dish soap and water, making sure I wash the tanning oil out of the fur. Then rinse well and wring the skin out in a towel.

At this point I will repair any holes in the skin and block it out-that is stretch and pin it just enough to take out the wrinkles.

Now since the skin was washed I will spray a little thinned tanning oil on the thicker parts of the blocked out skin, being careful not to get any on the fur. If a bit gets on the fur edges it can be trimmed off by cutting 1/16 all around the perimeter after.

Now I leave the skin to dry for a day, then take it off the board.



Now when it is dry I pull the pins and take it off the board. It will be done at this point, and the leather will be softened by scrunching just a little. I also take some coarse sandpaper and sand off any bloom on the leather at this point, also sand the edges from center outwards, you don't have to overdo this and be very careful on thin skins and around any sewed repairs. You can take the finishing to another step, which I do. It polishes the fur and further softens the leather. First I will spray the fur side with a bit of mineral spirits, then rub it in with a shop towel. Then I will put the skins in a bag with cob grit, sawdust or crushed walnut hulls(dampened with a bit of water)(the walnut hulls can discolour white fur),tie off the bag and tumble it in the dryer with the heat turned off for 20 minutes. Take the skins out and blow them with a shop vac or just give them a good shake and they are done.





