



Sika Country Taxidermy Ltd.

984 Poihipi Road, RD1, Taupo 3377, New Zealand

p: +64 7 378 4908

e: info@sikacountrytaxidermy.co.nz

Head skinning instructions for shoulder & pedestal mounts

Opening cuts – cut around the body behind the front legs, next cut around the front legs just above the knee then up the back of the leg (not the inside) and out to the cut around the body.

Another method is to simply sleeve skin the legs with no cuts. From a point 5 cm behind the base of the antlers/horns cut down the top of the neck following the dorsal line to the cut around the body. Next cut from the base of each antler/horn to the centre cut forming a 'Y'.

If head skinning a Chamois: make a U-shape at the back of the horns cutting around behind the glands, so the glands are complete on the piece of skin behind the horns. Another way to do the chamois around the glands is to cut across between the back of the horns and then down one side of the glands and then on down the dorsal line at the back of the neck.

Carefully skin off the shoulders and neck and remove head with the cape attached. It's generally easier to complete the head skinning back at camp or at home. Always allow the skin and head time to cool before packing.

To remove the skin from the head: skin down the sides of the head, cutting off the ears close to the skull. Don't cut around the base of the antlers, instead cut up under the skin and pry off the skin around the coronet. A large screwdriver can be helpful here. With horned animals hold the hair down away from the horn and carefully cut around the base. Next is the eye, insert your index finger into the back corner of the eye and lift the skin, cutting at the same time as close as possible to the bone. Be careful not to cut through

the skin at the front of the eye. All of our deer species have a gland in front of the eye (pre-orbital gland), which recesses into the skull. Carefully pry the skin out of the recess with the tip of your knife or a screwdriver.

Next we come to the mouth – insert your finger into the corner of the mouth and pull the lip away while cutting close to the bone. Leave as much lip skin as possible. Cut through the nostril cartilage leaving about 15mm of the nostril tubes on the skin.



The skin is off – if you are at home roll up skin to skin, seal in a plastic bag, label and freeze it. If you are freezing the skin: DON'T salt it (as salt lowers the freezing point). If you remain in the field for more than a couple of days you will have to split the lips and nostrils, turn the ears and salt the head skin: Hold the lips between the thumb and forefinger and open up with your knife. This is done to enable the salt to penetrate to the hair roots. You will also have to split the nose cartilage down the middle between the nostril openings. Salt will only

penetrate about 5mm of flesh, so anything thicker has to be thinned down.

To turn the ears, cut between the ear cartilage and the skin at the back of the ear until the ear cartilage is clearly seen. Then with a spoon handle or steel etc, carefully push up between the skin and the cartilage to the tip and edges of the ear. Turn inside out and remove the flesh from the ear butt. Don't remove the ear cartilage.

Spread the skin out and liberally cover with PLAIN salt and rub in and out to the edges ensuring it is completely covered. Make sure there is plenty of salt around the bullet hole and face. Roll up skin to skin and place in a muslin type bag to drain in a cool shady place – DON'T PUT IT IN A PLASTIC BAG. Leave for 24 hours and resalt. The average head skin will require between 1 and 2 kg of plain salt depending on size.

The head can be cut vertically down through the centre of the eye sockets and horizontally back through the centre of the eye sockets to the base of the skull, as this is the only part of the skull required for a mount. Boil the skull cap - adding a table spoon of washing powder to your boiling water can help remove the oils and break down the flesh quicker. Take care to keep the stained up antlers or horns out of the boiling water. Only boil until the meat falls off the skull. Soak in cold water and scrape the meat off.

REMEMBER IT IS BETTER TO HAVE TOO MUCH SKIN THAN NOT ENOUGH - WHAT WE DON'T HAVE WE CAN'T MOUNT!

