

Tan-a-BuckskinTM

FULL AT-HOME TANNING METHOD FOR BUCKSKIN LEATHER



Developed by the industry pioneer
& Taxidermy Hall-of-Famer
DALE KNOBLOCH

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This guide was created by *Advanced Tanning Solutions* for use with our **Tan-A-Buckskin Kit**.



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Developed by the industry pioneer, Dale Knobloch, who was the first to formulate the original self-tan for the taxidermy and fur dressing industry. **Tan-a-Buckskin** is an all-inclusive deluxe tanning kit containing products and tools to tan buckskin leather from start to finish.

These products are used by professional tanneries and will produce a soft, supple, stretchy leather.

Tan-a-Buckskin kit contains enough product to tan 2-3 large elk buckskin or 5-6 medium size deer buckskin hides.

See our **Tan-a-Fur Skin** kit for tanning hair-on smaller mammal fur skins and our **Tan-a-Hide** kit for tanning hair-on large mammal hides.

For tanning birds, fish or snakeskins, see our **Bird & Fish Tan** and **Tan-a-Snake** products.

For videos and additional information on this process visit: advancedtanningsolutions.com

Package contents include:

- Fleshing/Shaving Tool
- Hide Hair Removal
- Pickle Tan A-21
- Buckskin Oil
- Softening Stone
- Water Repellent
- Dust Mask
- Non-latex disposable gloves

What you will need - the amount will depend upon the size of the hide(s):

- Table Salt
- Household Bleach
- Baking Soda
- Large Plastic Bucket/Container
- Hot Water

Directions: *To understand the full process, read the complete directions prior to starting.* Plan for a multi-step process requiring 4-6 days.

For the best results, it is important that this full process be done at room temperature, 65°F or warmer. When needed, wear dust mask, splash proof goggles/safety glasses and rubber gloves to avoid inhalation of dust, and any eye or skin irritation.

Step 1 - Prepare the Hide



The hide needs to be taken care of as soon as it is removed from the animal. You will have the best results with a properly taken care of hide from the start. If the hide can't be fleshed and salted right away, it should be folded hair side to hair side, placed in a plastic bag and frozen.

Use the enclosed **Fleshing/Shaving Tool** to remove the excess flesh, fat and membrane. Work away from you with the tool at an angle using a back-and-forth "slicing" motion. Carefully pull the meat and membrane while cutting it.

Step 2 - Salting

Salting the hide is important to help remove the residual blood and body fluids. Lay the hide flesh side up on cardboard or a tarp (to catch drainage) and apply a heavy layer ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick) of fine table or canning salt - do NOT use rock salt as this is too coarse to breakdown. Thoroughly rub into all areas of the flesh. Leave the salted hide lying flesh side up for 24 hours.

The next day, if the salt is moist, shake off, discard and reapply a layer of new salt. Let this sit again for another 24 hours then shake off the excess.



Step 3 - Hair Removal

Bath: In a plastic or rubber container (not metal) large enough to hold the hide, add the following amounts for EACH gallon of WARM water:

2 tablespoons **Hide Hair Remover**
½ cup of salt

Make enough solution to completely cover the hide allowing it to move freely. Stir to dissolve.



Place the hide in the warm solution flesh side down – this will prevent it from drying out if the hide floats up. Soak 1 day, stirring and agitating several times. After 1-2 days, you will see the hair start to loosen and pull out. If it pulls off easily in all areas, remove from the bath and drain until damp.

If not, mix a fresh bath and soak the hide for an additional 1-2 days.



Note: It is important not to soak the hide in the same bath for longer than 3 days, as this will promote rapid bacteria growth and can damage the hide.



Scrape: Lay the damp hide hair side up on a fleshing beam or other hard surface. Using a dull edged scraper, scrape in the opposite direction of the hair growth - the hair comes off easier this way. Work your way down the hide from the rump towards the neck area.



Note: To avoid cutting holes in the hide, do not use a sharp tool.

Tip: Gently scraping the thin outer layer of the epidermis will remove any pigmented (darker) areas. This will help the hide have a cleaner, whiter look.

Step 4 - Cleaning Bath

Once all the hair is removed, mix a bath of 1 tablespoon household bleach and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of salt per gallon of water. Stir to dissolve the salt and soak the hide for 2 hours.



Note: The dehaired hide will not require as large of a bath.

The hide is now ready for pickling.

Step 5 - Pickling Bath

Wearing the enclosed dust mask, discard the cleaning bath and in the same container, mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of **Pickle Tan A-21** to EACH gallon of HOT water. Stir to dissolve the tan and then mix in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of salt for EACH gallon and dissolve. Again, mix just enough bath to completely cover the dehaired hide.



Soak the hide in the pickle solution for 24 hours or up to 48 hours for thicker hides such as elk, agitating every 4 - 6 hours. If the hide has a bluish color, it may not be thoroughly pickled, so soak for another 12 - 24 hours or until it looks white all the way through.

Remove from the bath and allow the hide to drain until just damp.



IMPORTANT: Do not discard the pickle bath as it will be used again to tan the hide in step 7.

Step 6 - Shaving

After pickling, the next step is to shave the hide. **This is an important step**, as having a thin hide will help the tan to penetrate better, provide more stretch and softness and reduce shrinkage.

To thin, lay the damp hide **flesh side** up on a fleshing beam or other hard surface. Do not shave the dehaired side. Using the **Fleshing/Shaving Tool**, start at one end and working away from yourself, shave the hide to create a uniform thickness throughout. Get it as thin as possible, being careful not to cut a hole. For best results, work slow and keep the tool sharp.



For extra thick hides such as elk, moose, bison and cow, a hand grinder with a coarse grit can be used. *Note: be sure the hide is semi-dry so the grinder does not slide across the wet flesh side.*



Tip: If the hide becomes too dry during shaving, it is more prone to cutting holes, so lightly mist it with water to rehydrate it.

Step 7 - Tanning Bath

To tan the shaved hide, first place it back into the pickle bath for an additional 24 hours. This will exhaust the rest of the tan (the hide will take it up).

Next, put a few cups of the bath into a mixing container and add 2 heaping Tablespoons of baking soda for **each** gallon of solution used in the bath and stir to dissolve. For example, for a 5 gallon bath, use 10 Tablespoons of baking soda.



Pour the baking soda mixture into the tan bath. *Note: the baking soda will foam, so be sure the soak tank is large enough that it doesn't overflow.* This raises the pH of the solution which allows the tan to bond to the hide.

Soak the dehaired hide in the tan bath for an additional 4 hours, agitating the bath every hour. Remove from the soak and drain for 12-24 hours, or until the hide is just damp.

Step 8 - Oiling



Lay the damp hide flesh side up on a piece of cardboard and pour a generous amount of **Buckskin Oil** into the center. Wearing rubber gloves, rub the oil into all areas of the flesh side. For best absorption, the oil and hide should both be at room temperature (65°F or above) when applying.

After the oil has completely penetrated (1-2 hours), fold the hide flesh side to flesh and apply a thin application of **Buckskin Oil** to the dehaired side. Fold the hide again and put in a plastic bag to let it sit overnight.



Step 9 - Drying & Finishing



DRYING

The next day, remove the hide from the plastic bag, open it up and hang it to dry in a cool area where air can get to both sides.



BREAKING

To prevent the hide from becoming stiff and to keep it flexible, **it is important to work it as it dries**. Start working the hide while it is still damp. There are several ways to break the fibers - pull it, stretch it and rub it over a table edge. You will see the hide start to whiten as it is worked.



TRIMMING (OPTIONAL)

If you would like a more polished look, now is a good time to trim the jagged edges off the hide. Since there is no hair to cut, a pair of sharp scissors will do a good job.



BUFFING

When it is mostly dry, buff the flesh side with the enclosed **Pumice Stone** working in a circular motion. This will also help to break the fibers and create a soft suede-like feel.

At this point, you can also dry shave the flesh side to remove loose material and keep it smooth. Using the fleshing tool, gently work downward in a slicing motion with the hide on a smooth, flat surface.

Tip: If the hide dries stiff, reapply a light mixture of 25% **Buckskin Oil** with 75% water. Fold it flesh to flesh until it is relaxed then open and repeat the drying and working process.



Step 10 - Water Repellent



If the buckskin will be made into a garment or another usable item, the **Water Repellent** will help to protect it from moisture. To apply, lay the leather flat and spray an even application of **Water Repellent** to the surface area. Let this dry overnight and if needed, apply a second coat.

The leather can be treated again later with **Water Repellent** as needed.

You did it!

Congratulations on completing the tanning of your buckskin leather!

Check out our website to share a photo of your finished leather and see photos of tanned hides and skins from other customers.



@tanning.your.hide



Disclaimer: Being that hides are natural materials, susceptible to varying degrees of putrefaction, natural defects, disease, mishandling, experience of the user, and are used under conditions beyond our control, as the seller, we make no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied as to the use of this product. All information contained here is accurate to the best of our knowledge in good faith and is based upon thorough testing.

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