

Instructions for Preparing a Lambskin for Tanning

Skin Selection

Not all lambskins are suitable for tanning. Lambskins need to be well butchered and have wool suitable for making a nice finished product.

Butchering

Tell your butcher you intend to tan the lambskins. Lambskins that have been badly butchered with cuts, holes or off shape often become more damaged throughout the process.

Wool

Long tangled wools are difficult to process and usually turn out matted or flat. If wool is painted with marker paint it usually does not wash out.

Skin Preparation

Lambskins need to be salted immediately after butchering (within a few hours). Salt tightens the skin around the wool keeping the wool from falling out. The salt should be a fine white salt such as table salt or fine feed salt. It takes approximately 5 – 6 lbs. per skin. **Rock salt is not acceptable.**

The following steps will ensure a good product:

1. Trim off any excess skin that will not be a part of the finished product (e.g. long legs or tails)
2. Do not rinse off the lambskin. All washing will be done during the tanning process.
3. All excess fat needs to be pulled or scraped off the lambskin as the salt cannot penetrate fat.
4. Lay lambskin skin side up on a dry floor or non-metal surface. Lambskin should be kept indoors out of the rain and sun.
5. Spread salt evenly on entire lambskin right to all the edges. Any part of the skin that is not salted will result in the wool falling out.
6. Check lambskins daily. If salt appears to be dissolving as it draws the moisture out of the skin then add more salt. There should always be a thin layer of salt on the skin.
7. After about 10 days the salt and air should have most of the moisture out of the skin and it is ready to be sent to the tannery. Dry skins will also reduce the cost of freight when shipping.
8. During the summer months (May – Sept.) lambskins will spoil quickly and need more attention. It is necessary to get the lambskin extra dry. After the 10 – day curing period, lambskins can be dried outside in the sun. They only need to be out for one day. Pick a day that is sunny with no chance of rain. Spread lambskin on a dry surface such as the laneway (cement or pavement is ideal but dry gravel is ok) Dry lambskin half the day on the skin side and half the day on the wool side. At the end of the day lambskin should be put inside. Never leave skins outside overnight.
9. The sooner lambskins can be brought or shipped to the tannery is best.

If shipping by courier or mail please enclose your full name, address, phone number, and tanning instructions (washable or non-washable)

SHIP TO:

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