



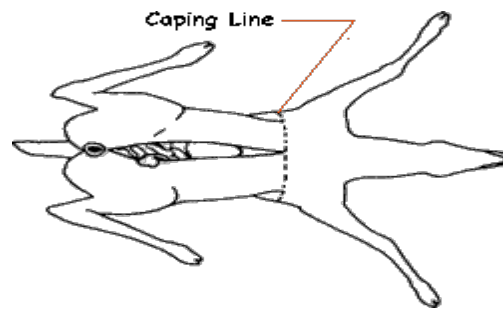
Preparing Your Trophy

How to take care of your trophy

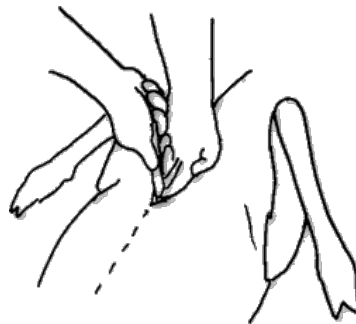
Always wear latex gloves when handling the carcass. Wild game can transmit various diseases to humans via small cuts or scratches in human hands, arms or wrists.

Field dressing Deer, Elk, Antelope or similar big game critters

With the deer or elk on its back make a shallow cut through the skin just below the breast bone. Make sure you start your cut well below the brisket, allowing ample amount of uncut hide for your shoulder mount. Insert two fingers of your free hand, cradling the blade, to hold the skin up and away from the entrails.



Cut straight down the belly and around the genitals, separating but not severing them from the abdominal wall. Split the belly skin all the way to the pelvic bone. Start the incision below the caping line.



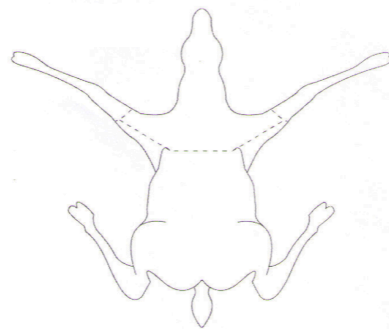
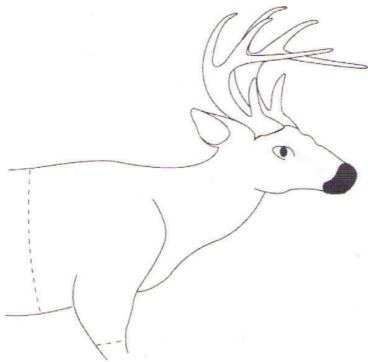
Cut deeply around the rectum, being careful not to cut off or puncture the intestine. Pull to make sure the rectum is separated from tissue connecting it to the pelvic canal. Pull the rectum and tie string tightly around it to prevent droppings from touching the meat. Lift the animals back quarter a bit, reach into the front of the pelvic canal, and pull the intestine and connected rectum into the stomach area. If you want to make a full shoulder mount, do not cut open the chest cavity. Cut the diaphragm away from the ribs all the way to the back bone. Reach into the forward chest cavity, find the esophagus and wind pipe, cut them off as far up as possible and pull them down through the chest.



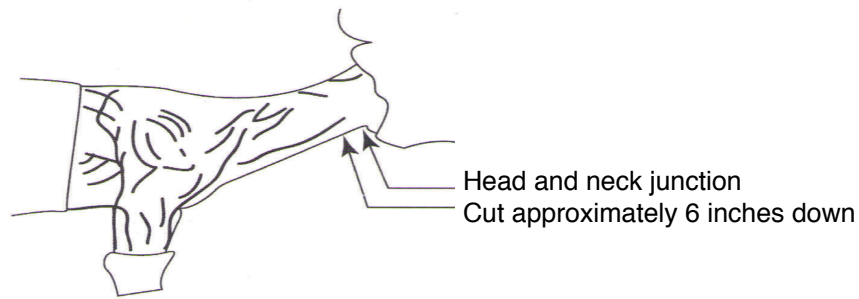
Next roll the deer on its side, grab the esophagus with one hand and the rectum/intestine with the other hand. Pull hard. The deer's internal organs will come out in one big package with a minimum mess.

Complete Full Caping or skinning out a trophy animal should be left for your taxidermist. However in warm climates in remote areas where it is impossible to get your trophy cooled out, it will be necessary. Prior to your hunt you should get detailed instruction from your taxidermist. In many cases professional guides are capable of assisting in a complete full cape. In all other situations perform the field cape and get your trophy to a cooler, freezer, or on dry ice as soon as possible.

Field Caping for a shoulder mount should be performed as follows. With a sharp knife slit the hide circling the body behind the shoulder at approximately the midway point of the rib cage behind the front legs. Slit the skin around the legs just above the knees. An additional slit will be needed from the back of the leg, joining the body cut behind the legs.

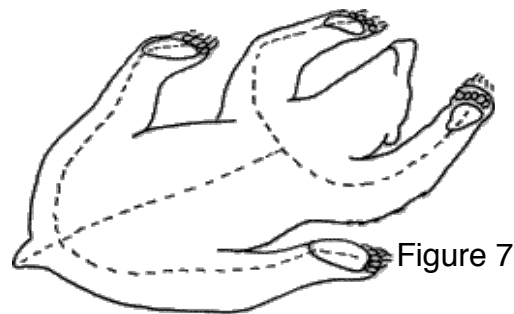


Skin the hide forward up to the ears and jaw exposing the head and head/neck junction.



Circle the neck cutting down to the spinal column. Never cut into the brisket (chest) or neck area. If blood gets on the hide to be mounted was it off with snow or water as soon as possible. After this cut is complete, grasp the antler base and twist the head off the neck. This will allow the hide to be rolled up and put in a freezer until it can be transported to your taxidermist. These cuts will allow ample hide for the taxidermist to work with. Remember, the taxidermist can cut off excess hide but he can't add what he doesn't have. Avoid dragging your animal out of the field with a rope. Place it on a sled, four wheeler or pack animal. The rope, rocks, and broken branches can easily damage the fur or puncture the hide. If you do need to drag it out with a rope, attach the rope to the antler base and drag your trophy carefully.

Field skinning for a large life size mount such as deer, elk, and bear are performed as follows. We prefer the flat incision method as shown in figure 7.



Make the slits as shown, cutting the feet free of the carcass remaining with the hide. The head is detached the same as field capping a shoulder mount described earlier.

Small Mammals Animals, coyote sized or smaller, should not be skinned unless by a professional. Do not gut the animal. Small mammal, especially carnivores, will spoil quickly because of their thin hide and bacteria. If you can't take the small game immediately to a taxidermist, as soon as the carcass cools completely, put it in a plastic bag and freeze it. With the epidemic of rabies evident in many areas of the country, take every precaution necessary when handling your game.

Birds (including Turkey)

Do not gut the bird. Rinse any blood from the feathers with water. Take the bird immediately to your taxidermist or freeze it. Wrap the bird in a very wet towel and put in a sealed plastic bag for freezing, being careful not to damage the feathers, including the tail. If the birds tail feathers do not fit in the bag, don't bend them. Get a larger bag.

Fish

Do not gut your fish. If at all possible take a digital picture of you fish immediately after the catch. If it is a catch and release weigh and take measurements. Take the fish to your taxidermist immediately or freeze it. If you are freezing it, wrap in a very wet towel and put in a plastic bag. Make sure all the fins are flat against the fish body and freeze it.