

## Smoke and Brain Tanning a Moose Skin

Courtesy of Tom Huntington

*Best used in conjunction with his 12/17/2020 presentation which will be archived at <https://www.morristhompsoncenter.org/live> and the Morris Thompson Center YouTube page*

1. Flesh the hide, either on a beam, pole, or while stretched on the frame
2. Dehair the hide, either soak for 6 days then flesh the hair, while it's over a post, or while its stretched on the frame
3. Once the hide is fleshed, dehaired, and stretched on the frame, let it dry or freeze depending upon the season
4. Scrape the hair side until the epidermis is gone, scrape the flesh to thoroughly clean up the fleshing. Then go back to the hair side and scrap it a lot to thin the hide to an even thickness.
5. Remove the hide and smoke the hair side for a half day.
6. Soak the hide for one or two days then lightly wring it and scrape most of the water out. It's still moist and neither wet nor dry.
7. Apply the brain tanning mix solution (brains, soap, lecithin, and oil) to the hair side, really work the mixture into the hide. Then let sit it for a couple of hours then fold it up and store it for 2 days in a cool place.
8. Soak the hide in the brain tanning solution (brains, soap, lecithin, oil, and water) for 3 days
9. Repeat for 2 days, then use wring cycle to break the hide. Wring cycle is 4 directions (right, left, and from different sides.) Hold each wrung position for about 45 minutes, soak for 1 hr., wring cycle it again in each of the 4 directions. After each wringing, attach the holes on one side of the skin and pull on the remaining holes one at a time all the way around
10. Lightly wring the hide then stretch it on the frame again, scrape it and let it dry, buff both sides
11. Smoke the hide on both sides for about half a day on each side
12. Soak the hide in a washing/tanning solution (downy, soap, lecithin, oil, and water) for 2 days
13. Repeat for 2 days, the work cycle to tan the skin. Work the hide over a horizontal pole (both sides and different directions) and then stretch the skin by hand (hooking the holes along one side of the skin on a vertical pole or peg and pulling the skin (total of 4 pulls), soak for 1 hr., repeat 3 more times, soak it each night
14. Wring it lightly, stretch it on the frame, work it until its dry, cut it off the frame
15. Work and inspect the skin over the horizontal pole for quality. Repeat part of step 12 if necessary
16. Sew the hide into a bag for the final smoke on the hair side for color and waterproofing

Note: To stretch the hide onto the stretching frame, cut holes along the edge every 6 inches. Then use rope to lace it onto the frame. Either let it dry or freeze, depending upon the season. I prefer to freeze it as it seems to be easier to shave it like ice instead of scraping it while it's dry.