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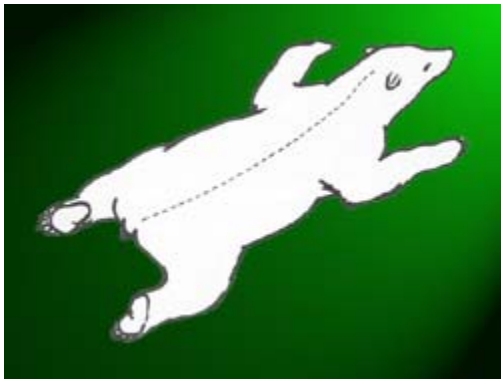
Skinning Your Trophy

Before You Cut

First off you need to know how you want your trophy mounted. Is it going to be a shoulder mount, life-size or a rug. Go visit a couple different Taxidermists, talk to them, they will be glad you are interested in a good mount and are concerned in properly handling your future trophy.

Most outfitters you book a hunt with know the many methods of skinning a trophy for proper mounting. Most though like all of us want the easy way out. Remember this is your trophy. If you have to tip a bit extra to get it done right it is worth it. Don't let them tell you that it is the taxidermist's problem. Proper care starts when you harvested your trophy, not when your taxidermist receives it. If your trophy is not skinned properly from the get go, it will affect the way your mount looks for a lifetime.

Dorsal Incision



For all life-size mounts I prefer the DORSAL INCISION. You should always make a V notch every 6"-8" when doing this cut. On large animals this helps guide your taxidermist in putting the skin back where it belongs. This incision starts at the base of the neck to the tail bone. Cut through the tail bone leaving the tail with the hide. Now just start pulling up on the hide and cut

between the meat and the hide, working each side. Cut off the neck at the shoulder area and continue down the legs. Go as far down as you can to the

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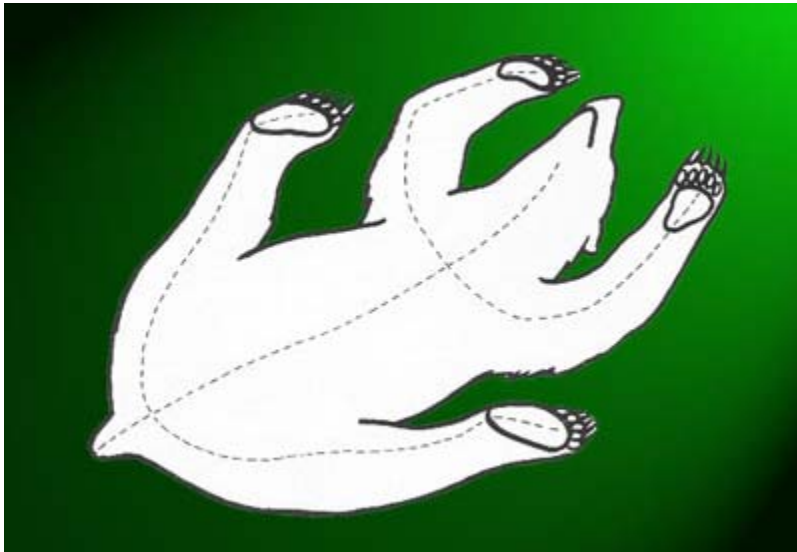
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paw or hoof and cut it off at the joint or ankle. We call this tubing the feet. Tubing the legs is very important. Some animals are thinned hair in this area. It is not easy to hide stitching. There is no reason to cut open the legs of an animal. It is also important to be careful in cutting around their organs. Leave them intact, they are part of the animal. Also there is no reason to gut your animal prior to this procedure.

Ventral Incision



The second way is a VENTRAL INCISION. This is mostly used for rug mounts. Lay the animal on their back and start the incision between its front legs and the center of its chest and go toward the anal opening. Keep your knife under the skin and pull upwards so as not to cut any hair. Go to either side of their

organ and down to the anal opening. Now from where you first started go up the inside of each leg staying in the center of paw or hoof. Do the same on the rear legs. Now just start pulling up on the hide and cut between the meat and hide. Cut off the neck and wrist leaving the head and paws with the hide. Wrap the hide up in burlap or paper bag, freeze it or keep it cool until you can get it to your taxidermist.

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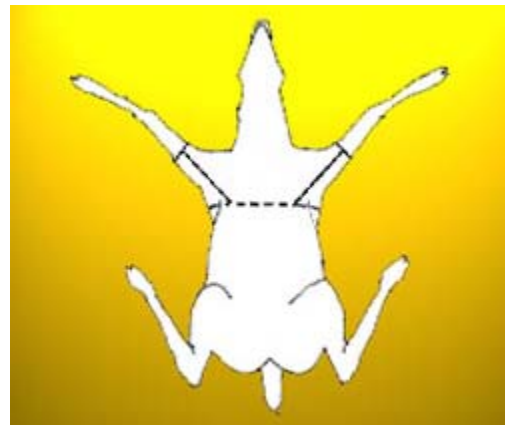
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Shoulder and Bear $\frac{3}{4}$ Mounts



If you are going to do a shoulder mount start about 8"-10" behind the shoulders and go all the way around the body. Now cut around the legs about 6" down from the brisket area. Then make a cut on the back side of the legs toward the chest area. The cuts from both legs to the chest will make a V appearance. Then proceed to skin the hide away from the meat towards the neck area. Cut off the neck (leaving enough for your taxidermist to get measurements-about 8") and place cape and head in burlap or paper bag

and freeze or keep cool till you get it to your taxidermist. For Bear $\frac{3}{4}$ mounts, follow the same instructions but make your first cut down around the stomach area and tube the front feet to the paws. Cut off at the wrist bone and bag it in burlap or a paper bag and freeze.



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