



#### NEUTRALISING:

The object of neutralising is to stop the action of the tannage. Wearing an apron, a pair of rubber gloves and a face mask, mix the contents of **the neutralising powder (bag with yellow tab) into Two pints (1.14 Litres) of hot water**. Brush on the skins as before. Fold flesh sides together and pile away for 24 hours. This is an essential part of the tannage and should not be omitted.

#### OILING:

Take the skin, place on a table as previously, wipe away any surplus moisture with a cloth. Wearing an apron, and a pair of rubber gloves mix the **jar of Oil into two pints (1.14 Litres) of boiling water**, stirring well in a shallow bowl. The oil should be applied hot and brushed well into the leather side with a bristle brush. Take care not to get the oil on wool or hair. Fold flesh side together and pile away for 24 hours. We also strongly advise the use of CP84 Supa-Soft oil to enhance the suppleness of the finished skin and to reduce the amount of the work involved in softening. ([www.snowdoniasupplies.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniasupplies.co.uk)) All the above solutions can be stored in screw top polythene containers for further use. Always re-heat the solutions in a pan or by placing the container in boiling water before re-use. The lid should always be removed from the storage container first of course. Now all that remains to be done is the finishing of the skin.

#### DRYING:

The skin now has to be hung up to dry. The best method is to construct a frame as shown in Fig 2. And either lace or nail the skin to it. By this means the air can circulate freely all around the skin, so drying the hair and leather side together. Alternatively the skins may be hung from beams in an airy loft or building. If hung this way they should be pulled across the hind legs, being held by a nail at each end, a couple in the middle. Another alternative is to tack the skins to boards, this method will be found satisfactory for small skins. If this method is used the fur should be kept on the outside.

When framing or nailing never pull the skins or stretch until very tight, just take up the slack, working from the hind legs uppermost. Lace or nail downwards and outwards removing or levelling as many folds as possible. Try to make the work as even as possible so that the finished skin when trimmed and finished will lie evenly.

Keep the framed skin out of direct sunlight and keep regular check on the drying process. When the skin feels dry on both hair and skin side take down so that softening may commence. The stage at which the drying is finished is best judged by experience. It should not be hurried. At the stage where the skin is a pale blue/green and feels dry but not brittle is the best time to begin softening.

**SOFTENING:** This stage is important particularly if the skin is to have a nice feel and finish. If taken down from the frame at the right time the skin may be softened by pulling in all directions and twisting between the hands until quite soft and thoroughly dry. A valuable aid which can be made from an edging spade or similar round blade is known as the Knee Stake, see Fig 3. The blade is mounted upon a block or otherwise suitably fixed. The skin is draped across, being held firmly with one hand. The knee is placed on the taut skin and using the weight of the body is pushed towards the ground, drawing the skin close to the blade. This softens the skin rapidly and is vital on larger skins. The more work that is done at this stage the softer the skins will be. For rugs, the skins need not be so supple as skins required for clothing. In the event of a skin drying too much before softening; it should be dampened overnight by laying on a table, leather side up - wet an old blanket and lay it on top of the skin. Next day remove blanket and soften as directed. Air dry until completely dry before buffing.

**BUFFING:** Sanding can be done by hand or power tool using a sanding disc. In either case coarse grade sandpaper should be used. Care should be taken when using a sanding disc not to go too close to the edge of long haired skins, due to the danger of being tangled in the hair or wool. Care should also be taken not to use too much pressure on the thin parts. Small skins are best finished by hand.

**TRIMMING:** Trimming should be done finally with a sharp trimming knife such as a craft knife or scalpel. Take as little off the edge as necessary so as not to reduce the skin area too much. If an even finish is required, as on skins requiring a cloth backing for rugs, etc., then the skins should be folded down the centre and the exposed area on either side trimmed off to achieve a symmetrical shape to the skin.

**FINISHING:** Brush and comb your skin to give it back its original appearance.

#### ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS

To improve the results of the tanning process, additional products can be used as required. These additional products though not essential can improve the finished skin.

Washing Agent/Degreasant CP26, Super Soft Oil CP84,

All the above products can be viewed and purchased at [www.snowdoniasupplies.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniasupplies.co.uk)