



TIPS SHEET

The following is our attempt to make the mounting process go as smoothly as possible, it is extremely important to us that your experience mounting with a liqua-tanned cape is a good one. So I will take you through our mounting process step by step and hopefully answer any questions you may have.

Remove your cape from the freezer and thaw. Then wash in a solution of kemal-4 (about 3 capfuls per 4 gal. of water). Wash and let soak for about 30 to 45 min. then rinse thoroughly to get the suds out of the hair. This is a critical part of the process, since the kemal-4 relaxes the skin and cleans the tanning oil from the hair. Don't skip this part. Let the skin drip to get most of the water out. Then we place the skin in the washing machine and spin the water out.

Next, take the cape to the workbench and invert the face (hair side in). With a scalpel, go over the eyes and tear ducts to make sure everything is properly thinned and trimmed. Then move to the ears. We use ear liners. Remove the cartilage by folding the ear in half (top of the ear down to the bottom, cartilage side out), then LIGHTLY make a straight cut from left to right cutting through the cartilage only. Start at one end of your cut and gently remove the top half of the cartilage first. If you come to an area where it looks as if the hair is coming through, stop and go to the other side working to that spot from a different angle. Remove the bottom half in the same manner. After the cartilage is removed, it is important that the remaining moisture be removed. The best way we have found is to use a hair dryer to dry the hair side of the ear. After the hair is dry, invert the skin. Rub sawdust into the ear vigorously until the skin side feels dry. The sawdust we use is nothing special, just excess we collect from a table saw. It will dry the ear skin very well, providing an excellent surface for adhesion.

Speaking of adhesion, we use *Adheres*, a product **Research Mannikins** carries, or you can buy it directly from the manufacturer. Another great item to use for adhesion is five-minute epoxy available at Wal-Mart. The idea is to use something that is going to allow the glue to bond the ear skin to the liner before the ear skin dries. That is what prevents drumming. The skin is already locked to the liner so it can't go anywhere as it dries. So getting the ear skin dry first, using the sawdust, is an important step.

When it's time to sew, use the smallest needle you can, depending on what part of the skin you are sewing. **Buckeye Mannikins** from Ohio seems to carry the best selection of good quality small needles. I would suggest you order an assortment of different needles to see what works best for you. Thread is the other important ingredient. The only thread we use anymore isn't even really thread, it is fire line that we get at Wal-Mart in the fishing department. We use the smallest line we can find for facial or brisket area fixes - usually 8 lb. test and 2 lb. diameter. To sew the seam down the back of the neck, we use 20lb. test and 12 lb. diameter. Make sure you purchase braided line not monofilament.

Before sewing, it is important that you trim the edge of the skin up to the hairline, so when the edges of the skin come together the hair does, too. After sewing is complete, take a small

hammer and tap the seam flat from the skin side. It prevents a lump from showing when the skin is placed on the form. Please understand we make every effort NOT to cut any holes in your capes as we are fleshing them. We do not rush through anything, but we do cut holes on occasion. Unlike most commercial tanneries we shave the whole face, nose pad, nostrils and up to the eyelids. On salted skins that you send us, we flesh the whole skin except areas that you have not turned completely. Cartilage and red meat must be removed from nostrils and nose pad. That is the reason for the two-tiered price structure.

With the eyes set, it is now time to place the skin on the form. First, before attaching the antlers, trim the edge of the seam so it is straight and clean, and the hair from both sides comes together naturally.

After attaching the antlers to the form, place a roll of clay around each pedicle below the burr. Mount the head, then go back and press the clay up towards the burr, which will force the skin to stay up against the burr until dry. Keep an eye on it during the drying process, occasionally going back and pressing on it until dry.

Trim the lips and nostrils before tucking them. Also, try trimming the papillae off the outer part of the lips (this makes them much easier to tuck and taxi). Before tucking the lips, place a very small layer of clay on the nose pad area of the form. Usually, by the next day you can come back with a very small tool and go around each one of the nodules on the nose pad to give it some depth. After tucking the lips, scrub the lip line with water on a toothbrush to clean off any hide paste. This procedure also shows any lip skin that was not completely tucked which will show up as dry skin on the finished piece.

After the eyes are tucked and the seam is sewn, look over the whole mount for anything you may have missed.

Our capes will dry fast if you let them. If I have a cape that I think will dry more than needed overnight, I place a damp rag over the face and sometimes a garbage bag over that. After mounting a head, I go back to the tear duct and insert a modeling tool in the crease to pry the clay forward. Then I insert a dab of super glue and press the tear duct closed again. That will keep the tear duct from pulling open.

If there was any damage to the nose pad area of your cape, the following procedure will not only prove to be easy, but also will be unnoticeable once completed. Mount the deer as usual, then when it is dry and ready for finish work, scrape or dig any hide paste or clay out of the hole in the nose pad. Mix up some epoxy, sculpt and place it into the hole. Clean any excess material from around the filled area, and with a little water on your finger work back and forth across the epoxy sculpt so it is flush with the rest of the nose pad. Now you can take a small tool or wire and add any lines to match the rest of the nose pad. After it has set up, paint as normal.

To finish the job we use mod podge and apply to each nodule with a small artist brush. Sometimes an extra coat or two is needed on the filled in area. Take your time when applying the mod podge, making sure the material does not run off one nodule onto another. Allow the material to pool rather than brush it on flat. It will give the nose pad depth. After the mod podge

has dried, clear coat with life-tone gloss. We use the mod podge on every deer, with or without nose pad damage, so the little extra time to fill the damaged area really goes unnoticed.

This method of tanning and mounting has worked well for us, and I'm sure it will for you, too. What your hard earned money buys you is not only a well-tanned cape, but also answers and advice on how to use it. We don't stop with delivering the capes to your door. Our job goes farther than that. If for some reason you think a certain part of the job takes too long, or if you have a question that we have not addressed, feel free to e-mail or call. It is very important to us that our products work well for you.

Thanks for choosing Micro-Tan,
Alan Easter