

## Preparing Your Trophy for the Taxidermist

After the deer is down, preparing the trophy must be done immediately, in warm weather. The hunter needs a good sharp knife, and if alone, the hunter may need a rope to help move or hang the deer. When hunting with a partner, the rope is not needed. Turning the deer onto his back is the first step. Getting your partner to hold the back legs open is the second step. With your knife, cut into the stomach area (close to the genitals), so that you can slip two fingers under the skin, but not into any internal organs. With your two fingers between the hide and stomach cavity, direct the knife to cut the hide from the inside out, from the genitals to the first rib. This will be far enough

After the hide is off the main part of the carcass, you are ready to start removing the cape for mouting. First, cut the skin around at the knuckles of the front legs, and then cut the hide well back of the last rib, (where the stomach cut was finished) around the brisket. Then, skin the hide from the meat with a sharp knife, using the backbone as your guide for a straight cut, right to the base of the skull, (Look at Diagrams # 1 & 2). Make sure that you do not make any stray cuts into the hide. It is better to leave a bit of meat on the cape than to spoil the perfect skinning job. A taxidermist can take care of this for you.

The whole idea is to get your trophy to your taxidermist, without bringing the whole carcass along.

Now, that you have cut the skin to the base of the antlers in the back, you are now ready to skin the hide around the face, (eyes, ears, & lips). Check pictures (# 1 & 2) for a better understanding what the cape will look like.

Now make two equal cuts from the base of the original cut to the first spot behind the antlers to the inside of the antlers. See Diagram on next page for a better understanding. You will have a Y looking cut effect when you look at the back of the skull plate. Remember that you should make the two cuts in the back of the Deer's head so that the cuts are not visible when looking directly into the deer's face (check pictures #3 and 4, to show you what to do). Now taking your knife cut the hide as close as possible around the antler bases, to separate the hide from the antlers. The closer you are to where the hair and antlers join, the better job the taxidermist will be able to do on the final product, a perfect trophy mount.

**Diagram 1**

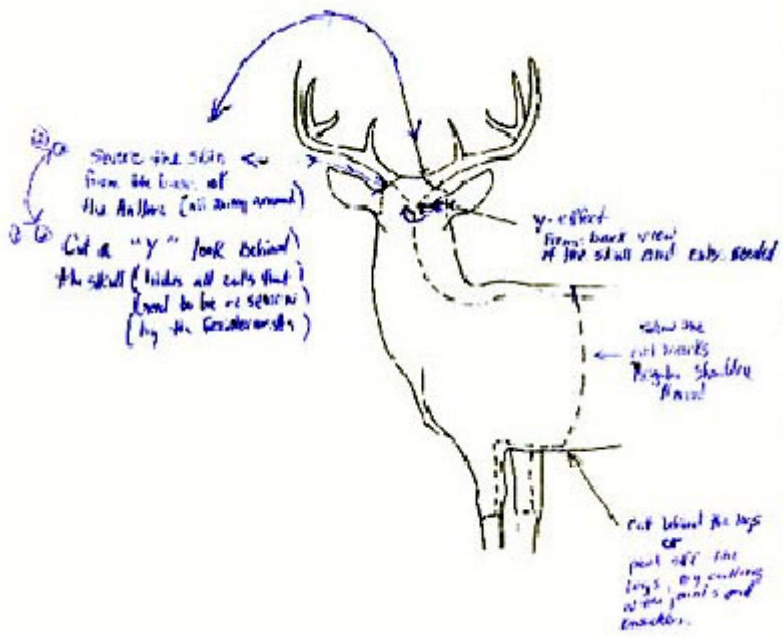
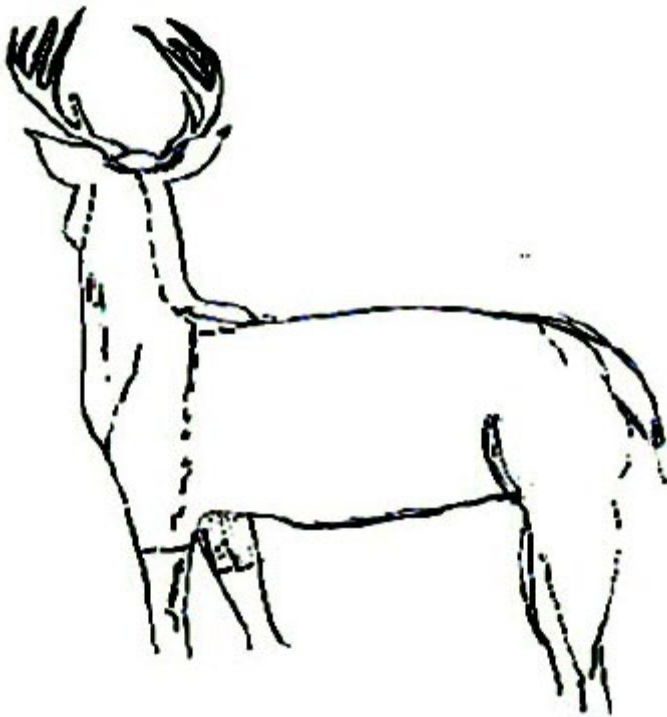


Diagram 2



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4

