

Rittel's

EWE-TAN-IT

SHEEPSKIN TANNING KIT

RITTEL'S EW-3000 Kit – Using EZ-100 – the newest and highest quality tanning agent available – and only from RITTEL'S and our Authorized Distributors! This is a powdered Syntan Tanning Agent that eliminates environmental and personal handling problems. It costs less – and you use less – to tan more! EZ-100 is your best environmental choice. It contains no metallic components. EZ-100 is a Sulphonic Acid agent synthetically manufactured.

EZ-100 tanned Sheepskins and Woolskins are white leathered, soft, durable, and stretchy! They look natural and clean! There is negligible shrinkage. EZ-100 tanned Sheepskins and Woolskins are an excellent choice for making garments or rugs. This kit will also tan all fur or hair-on skins or capes.

Basic Preparation

Preparing a Woolskin for tanning requires the same basic techniques regardless of which tanning agent you may want to use for the actual tanning process. To simplify the Preparation process – I like to use five basic steps.

1. Skin the animal. If it is still warm, open the skin and allow it to cool for several hours.
2. Flesh away all the meat, fat and membrane next to the flesh. For garment or Rugs – light thin skins can now be stretched and air dried, and then relaxed later for tanning. For best results – I recommend salting.
3. Apply a heavy layer of Non-Iodized Salt to the flesh side of the Woolskin. Fold it flesh side to flesh side, and Wool to Wool, and then place it on an inclined surface to drain for 1-2 days.
4. When drained – shake out the excess Salt and reapply another layer of clean Salt. Again, fold it, and allow the Salt to penetrate the skin for 24 hours – and then shake out the loose Salt, rinse the skin briefly and place it into the Pickling solution. Or – spread the Woolskin out, or hang it open, and allow it to dry salted, then store it, relax, and tan it later.
5. When you are ready to tan your Woolskins – place the skins in a strong Brine solution, or use RITTEL'S ULTRA-SOFT (US-609) Relaxing agent, and soak them for 24 hours or longer, until the skin is soft and completely relaxed. To mix the brining solution – use 2 Lbs. of Non-Iodized Salt to every 1 Gallon of cool Water used to completely submerge the skins and capes.

Salt dried Woolskins usually relax easily – but other types of skins, usually air dried, African sun dried, and air dried greasy skins, do not relax easily. For these types of skins, I highly recommend using RITTEL'S ULTRA-SOFT (US-609) Relaxing bath. Add 4 Tablespoons of US-609 to each Gallon of Water used to completely submerge the skins. For greasy skins – use 8 Tablespoons of US-609 to each Gallon of Water. Soak the Woolskins for 6-12 hours, or until they are fully relaxed. Then rinse them well, and place them directly into the Pickle bath. **Always** remove any blood stains prior to Pickling.

6. Saftee-Acid Pickling

EZ-100 is compatible with almost all Pickling methods, including Sulphuric, Oxalic, Formic, Citric, White Vinegar and even Alum Pickling. All of them do an excellent job, however I prefer using Saftee-Acid when you want to avoid environmental and personal handling problems.

Saftee-Acid Pickling Solution – Mix enough Pickling solution to completely submerge the Woolskins. For every 1 Gallon of solution needed, mix:

1 Gallon of Lukewarm Water
.1/2 fl. ozs. of Saftee-Acid
1 Lb. of Non-Iodized Salt – 1/2 Cupfuls = 1 Lb.

After mixing the solution – Test the Ph Level. It should read below a 2.0 Ph. Usually around 1.0 Ph. Measure the Salt content using a Salinometer. It should read 40% or higher. Place the Woolskins into the solution, and allow them to Pickle for a minimum of 3 days. When thoroughly Pickled – the Woolskins will appear translucent and milky-white colored.

7. Shaving/Degreasing/Washing/Rinsing

After at least 3 days in the Pickle – the Woolskins can now be safely pulled, drained for 1 hour, and then thoroughly fleshed or shaven on a Fleshing Machine. After fleshing or shaving all the skins in the Pickle – they should now be degreased, washed, and then thoroughly rinsed – and returned to the Pickle for at least another 24 hours or longer. ALWAYS return fleshed or shaven skins to the Pickle. This will allow it to penetrate areas now exposed. Use RITTEL'S Wool Degreaser (WD-608) for degreasing for the best results. Use a capful of WD-608 per each Gallon of Water used to wash and degrease the skins. Wash them for 30 minutes. The Woolskins can now be left safely in the Pickle for at least 2 weeks before Neutralizing and Tanning. The Pickle is a safe temporary preserving solution.

8. EZ-100 Tanning Method

Tanning agents are very Ph sensitive. Always check the Ph before placing the skins into the solution.

EZ-100 tans at a level of 4.0 Ph. Check this Ph level BEFORE placing the skins into it – and also 30 minutes later. If lower than 4.0 – add small amounts dissolved of Sodium Bicarbonate or Sodium Acetate. If higher – add small amounts of your Saftee-Acid or drops Pickle or drops of Saftee-Acid to adjust it. ALWAYS dissolve EZ-100 in Hot tap Water before adding it to the tanning solution. Do not add it directly to the solution as a powder. Use cool or lukewarm (Never Hot) Water to mix your Salt and Water solution, and then add the dissolved EZ-100. If mixing a solution for tanning 4 Woolskins. Add all 4 Woolskins to the solution – not one at a time 3-4 hours or more. EZ-100 is a fast tannage, and the initial capes or skins may deplete it before the last Woolskin is placed into the solution.

EZ-100 Tanning Formula based on Drained Weight – After Neutralizing the Woolskins and draining them for one hour --weigh them. This is their wet drained weight. Use it to calculate the amount of Tanning solution needed. For every 1 Lb. of drained weight, mix:

1 Gallon of Water
8 Ozs. of Non-Iodized Salt
0.5 Ozs. of EZ-100 – 4 1/2 Level Teaspoons = 0.5 Ozs.

EZ-100 Tanning Formula based on Water Volume – After Neutralizing the Woolskins and draining them for 1 hour – some Tanners prefer to simply mix enough solution to completely submerge the Woolskins. This formula is based on the amount of Water used. For every 1 Gallon of Water used, mix:

1 Gallon of Water
8 Ozs. of Non-Iodized Salt
1 Oz. of EZ-100 – 3 Level Tablespoons = 1 Oz.

It is extremely important not to overcrowd the Woolskins when using the Water Volume formula. For either solution – keep the solution at a comfortable room temperature between 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit. Leave the Woolskins in the Tanning solution for 16-20 hours. Almost all skins will thoroughly tan within 24 hours. NEVER OVER-TAN! After 24 hours or less – pull the skins from the tanning solution. Allow them to drain for only 2-4 hours – NO LONGER! Do not tumble Woolskins in dry sawdust like other furs and hair-on skins. The sawdust will become impossible to remove! If you have an old Washer available – use the Spin cycle to remove moisture. You want to remove surface moisture from the Wool and flesh side – but not dry it before oiling!

9. Oiling and Drying

When the Woolskins have been drained, lay them out flat, flesh side up. Now apply the hot Oil/Water mixture to the flesh side using a Paint Brush. For the best results, use 1 Part RITTEL's ProPlus Oil (PP-301) to 2 Parts Hot tap water. Apply the Oil/Water mixture while it's still hot. The skin should be at room temperature. Apply it carefully along the edges and around holes. When oiled – fold the Woolskin, flesh to flesh, Wool to Wool, and lay it aside to "sweat" in the Oil for 4-8 hours. Maximum take-up of the Oil will take place during this sweating period.

To dry and finish the Woolskin – after it has sweated in the Oil – open up the Woolskin and hang it to dry. I prefer to tack it out on a plywood board to dry. I use 2" or 3" nails, and after I'm through – I pull the flesh to the end of the nail, close to the head. This allows for air circulation through the Wool. Drying will depend on the thickness of the flesh and the humidity in your shop. Usually this will take 2-6 days. When it is almost dry – begin to work and stretch the fibers with your hands or a Staking tool. Work the fibers until it is completely dry. If it dries too fast – dampen the flesh side with a damp sponge, put it in a plastic bag, tie it off, keep it cool, and begin to work it again the next day.

All skins can be tanned using EZ-100, however the heavily fleshed skins, because of their thickness, unless shaven, will not allow you to produce the extreme softness, you may expect. In a Tannery, such skins are shaved thin for softness. Some Tanners compensate for shaving by double oiling and sweating the skins, and sanding them thin after drying. As a general rule most Sheepskins can easily be tanned without shaving and still produce excellent results!

10. Finishing

When the flesh side is completely dry – use sandpaper or a rasping sheet to clean up the flesh side and give it that professional touch. Trim away any ragged edges, and comb or brush out the Wool. If you find it difficult to comb out the Wool – you may consider using a Wool Shears to make it into a Shearling pelt for lining garments. Your Woolskins should now be fully tanned and ready to use.

Disposal

After using the Saffee Acid or EZ-100 solutions, they can be safely disposed by first raising the PH levels to a 6.5-7.0 PH. Use Sodium Carbonate or Baking Soda to economically raise the PH level. After neutralizing the acidity – the solution can be safely dumped in city sewage. In rural areas, where city sewage is not available – raise the PH level, and then dump the solution in an area where its Salt content will not affect plant growth.

RITTEL'S instructions are based upon our personal experiences using a particular product and technique. RITTELS offers these instructions as a guideline, and does not imply that they will guarantee success. RITTELS does not accept any liability for such claims, or for the misuse of our instructions or products; since we have no control over the use, application and

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