



Choose your trail

# Field Dressing

**The fun begins! The first thing that you should do is position the deer uphill if possible. This will simplify the removal of all the internal organs. The way that lyme disease is spreading today we recommend that you wear rubber gloves when field dressing your trophy. Another thing to remember is that you don't know the history of this whitetail so be careful. You never know what you could find in the body cavity.**

**Position your trophy on its back with the head uphill.**

**Use your knife and cut around the anal opening to free the end of the intestine.**

**Use your fingers to locate the end of the sternum or breast bone and with your knife cut carefully towards the pelvic area of your trophy. The best way is to cut a small slit just past the sternum. This cut should be completely through the hide and into the body cavity. You'll know when you're inside. Insert your knife and use your fingers as a guide. Your fingers should be underneath your knife blade to prevent you from cutting the intestines.**

**Position your deer on its side after making the cut to the pelvic area. All the internal organs in the stomach area should slide out for the most part. If not use your knife to carefully cut anything that may be connected to the back bone. You should be able to pull the end of the intestine free from the pelvic area if the cut around the anal area was done properly.**

**Next you have to remove the heart and the lungs. Reach forward into the front end of the rib cage area and cut through the windpipe and the esophagus. You'll notice that the windpipe looks like a grunt call. Now pull out the heart and the lungs.**

**Position the deer on his belly and let him drain. Now is a great time to get some good pictures of you and your trophy.**

**Clean up your mess as much as possible, cover up the remains and pack out anything that you may have used in this process. The animals will finish the job for you.**

**Rinse out your deer as soon as possible to remove dirt, blood, and hair.**

Pictures and text below of an in-depth procedure from The Hunting & Fishing Library by Gary Clancy and Larry R. Nelson.

**How To Field Dress a Deer (directions for a right-handed hunter)**



**1. RUN your finger along the breastbone until you can feel the end of it. Pinch the skin away from the body so you don't puncture the intestines, and then make a shallow cut just long enough to insert the first two fingers of your left hand.**

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**2. FORM a V with your first two fingers, maintaining upward pressure. Guide the blade between your fingers with the cutting edge up; this way, you won't cut into the intestines. Cut through the abdominal wall back to the pelvic area.**

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**3. SEPARATE** the external reproductive organs of a buck from the abdominal wall, but do not cut them off completely. Remove the udder of a doe if she was still nursing. The milk sours rapidly, and could give the meat an unpleasant flavor.

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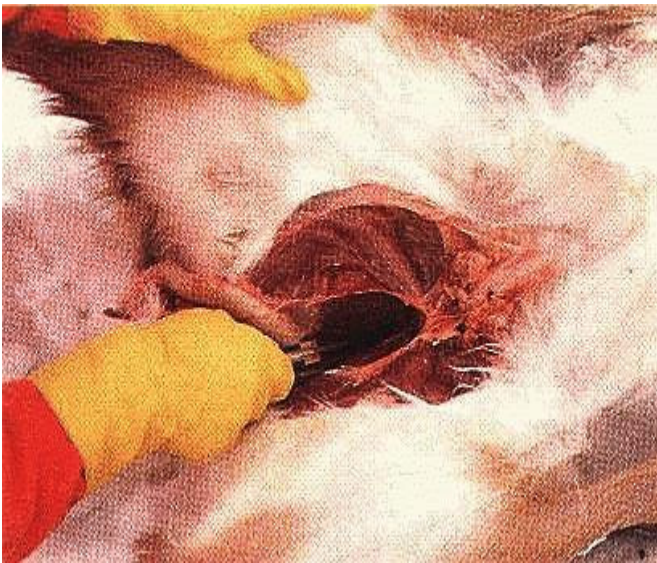
**4. STRADDLE** the animal, facing its head. Unless you plan to mount the head, cut the skin from the base of the breastbone to the jaw, with the cutting edge of the knife up. If you plan to mount the head, skip this step and the next.

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**5. BRACE** your elbows against your legs, with your left hand supporting your right. Cut through the center of the breastbone, using your knees to provide leverage. If the animal is old or very large, you may need to use a game saw or small axe.

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**6. SLICE** between the hams to free a buck's urethra, or if you elect to split the pelvic bone on either a buck or doe. Make careful cuts around the urethra until it is freed to a point just above the anus. Be careful not to sever the urethra.

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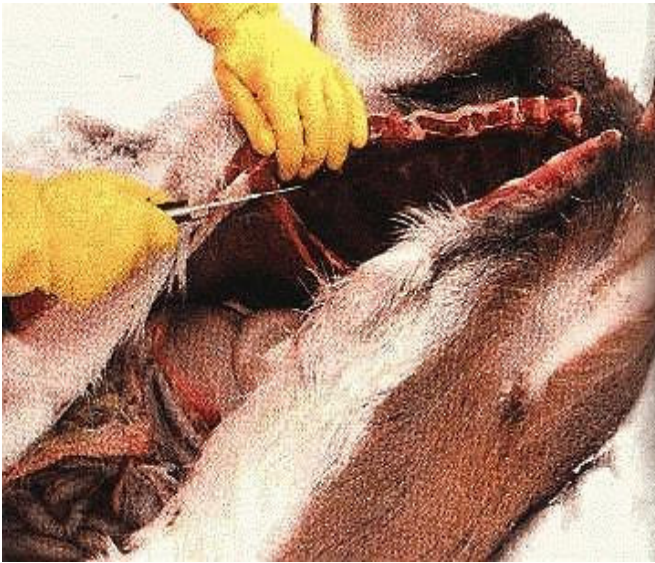
**7. CUT** around the anus; on a doe, the cut should also include the reproductive opening (above the anus). Free the rectum and the urethra by loosening the connective tissue with your knife. Tie off the rectum and urethra with kitchen string (inset).

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**8. FREE** the windpipe and esophagus by cutting the connective tissue; sever them at the jaw. Grasp them firmly and pull down, continuing to cut where necessary, until they're freed to the point where the windpipe branches out into the lungs.

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**9. HOLD** the rib cage open on one side with your left hand. Cut the diaphragm from the rib opening down to the backbone. Stay as close to the rib cage as possible; do not puncture the stomach. Repeat on the other side so the cuts meet over the backbone.

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**10. PULL** the tied off rectum and urethra underneath the pelvic bone and into the body cavity, unless you have split the pelvic bone. If so, this is unnecessary. Roll the animal on it's side so the entrails begin to spill out of the body cavity.

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**11. GRASP the windpipe and esophagus; pull down and away from the body. If the organs do not pull freely away, the diaphragm may still be attached. Scoop from both ends toward the middle to finish rolling out the entrails. Detach the heart and liver.**

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**12. PROP the body cavity open with a stick after sponging the cavity clean. If the urinary tract or intestines have been severed, wash the meat with snow or clean water. Hang the carcass from a tree to speed cooling , or drape it over brush or logs with the body cavity down.**

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