

Safety & regulatory note: home meat processing involves food safety and hygiene considerations, and requirements vary by state and by whether meat is for personal use or sale. Check with your state's food safety authority before proceeding. See our [Terms of Use](#) for more.

HOLLY'S HOMESTEAD – MEAT PROCESSING & BUTCHERY

Butchering Lamb & Goat

DIFFICULTY Moderate–hard

TYPE One-off task per animal

TIME 1–2 hours per carcass

Break a carcass down into usable cuts



DIFFICULTY
Moderate–hard



TIME
1–2 hrs



COST
Low (knives)
once set up



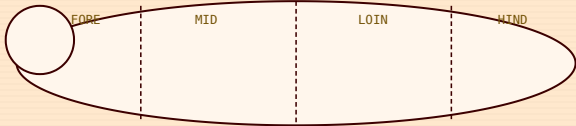
BEST SEASON
Any time, cooler
weather easier



FREQUENCY
As animals reach
processing age

01 Primal cuts first, then portion

Break the carcass down into primal sections — shoulder, rack/loin, leg, breast/flank — before cutting into smaller portions; working in this order keeps the process organised and makes consistent cuts much easier.



broken down into primal sections first

02 What you'll need

- A sharp boning knife and a butcher's saw for bone
- A stable, clean work surface, ideally at a comfortable height
- Meat-safe containers or wrap for the resulting cuts
- A hanging or support method for the carcass during initial breakdown

03 Method

1. Hang or support the carcass securely for the initial breakdown.
2. Separate into primal sections: shoulder, rack/loin, leg, and breast/flank.
3. Break each primal down further into your preferred retail cuts (chops, roasts, diced meat).
4. Trim excess fat and connective tissue as you go, setting trim aside for rendering if wanted.
5. Wrap or package cuts promptly and chill or freeze without delay.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Uneven or ragged cuts** — usually knife technique or an insufficiently sharp blade; keep knives properly sharpened throughout the process.
- **Difficulty finding joints when breaking down primals** — take time to feel for the joint rather than sawing through bone; most breakdown follows natural joints with a knife.
- **Meat warming up too much during a long session** — work in a cool environment, and chill cuts as you finish them rather than leaving everything out until the end.
- **Unsure of a specific cut's name or use** — reference a labelled cuts diagram for the species; naming conventions do vary somewhat by region.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Any time, though a cool work environment (or cooler weather) makes the process considerably easier and safer.
DURATION	1–2 hours per carcass once reasonably practised.
MAINTENANCE	Not applicable per event; ongoing knife maintenance supports every session.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	Clean, well-organised cuts, wrapped and chilled promptly, with minimal waste.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Home Slaughter — Process & Regulations

Curing & Smoking Meat

Tool Maintenance & Sharpening

COMMON MISTAKES

Working with dull knives, leading to ragged cuts and more effort

Leaving cuts sitting out at room temperature for too long during a long session

PRO TIP

A properly sharp knife makes far more difference to butchering ease than brute force — sharpen before you start, not partway through when you notice it dragging.