

Transverse craniotomy

Equipment required

1. A hard hat, particularly if working in an abattoir or knackery
2. Safety eye glasses, particularly if using hammers and axes
3. Strong gloves to protect against sharp bone fragments
4. Overalls
5. Rubber boots (gumboots)
6. One meat saw with at least 12 cm between the blade and support bar
7. One sharp boning knife
8. One spatula
9. One sharpening steel or screwdriver (or similar) for levering open the head once cut
10. One plastic 2 litre jar with a secure screw top lid half filled with 10% buffered formalin for the brain
11. One smaller jar to hold the fresh spinal cord sample
12. Knee pads to make working in the kneeling position cleaner and more comfortable (optional)
13. A piece of carpet to serve as a good working surface for this method (optional).

Step-by-step instructions to perform the transverse craniotomy method

1. Using a knife, remove the ears to expose the external auditory meatus (opening).
2. Using a saw, make cuts perpendicular (vertical) to the front surface of the skull and pass just in front of the ear opening by about 1-2 cm.
3. Lever the head open with the sharpening steel or screwdriver (or similar tool).
4. Lever out the cerebral segments (the cerebellum and brain stem) with a spatula making sure to cut away the dura mater (the thin sheath covering the brain) and any nerve attachments.
5. Cut the pituitary stalk and the tentorium cerebelli (an extension of the dura mater which separates the cerebrum from the cerebellum).
6. Collect a 2-3 cm length of spinal cord and place in the smaller plastic screw top jar. **Freeze this sample.**
7. Place the brain into the jar of 10% buffered formalin. **Do not freeze.**
8. Submit the spinal cord, the fixed brain and any other specimens to the accredited laboratory in your state or territory, where they will be permanently stored.