



## Horrible Science Downloadable Experiments - 3 HOW TO SHRINK A HUMAN HEAD

### HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN SHRUNKEN HEAD

Here's how to make your own shrunken head *without* doing anything that you might be sent to prison for. YOU CAN FIND THIS AND MANY MORE HORRIBLE BODY EXPERIMENTS IN **BEASTLY BODY EXPERIMENTS** published by Scholastic in 2008.



#### WHAT YOU NEED:

One apple (try not to eat it *before* the experiment)  
200 ml lemon juice  
Vegetable peeler  
Apple corer  
Tablespoon  
Salt  
Tape measure  
Notebook and pencil  
Plate or baking tray  
Bowl  
Table knife  
Raisins, wool and rice for decoration

#### WHAT YOU DO:

1. Start off by measuring the circumference (distance around) your head - er, I mean apple. Write this figure in your notebook.
2. Remove the core of the apple using the corer and then use the peeler to take off the skin (younger readers should order their adult assistant to do this boring job).
3. Add the lemon juice to the bowl and mix in one tablespoon of salt. Roll the apple around in the salty juice until it's completely covered.



3. Set the oven on a cool setting (about 100° C). Younger readers should *definitely* order their adult assistant to do this.

**HORRIBLE DANGER WARNING!**

Cutting, ovens and heat = bloodshed and burns ...

4. Use your knife to carve two eyes, a nose and a mouth for your shrunken head.

**TERRIBLE TIP**

You need to make these features a little larger than life because the head will shrink (but of course!)

5. Place the head on the baking tray and place the tray in the oven. Leave it for about six hours until the apple has almost dried out.

6. Place raisins in the eyeholes and if you're feeling disgustingly creative you might like to add some strands of wool for hair and rice grains for the teeth.

**EVIL IDEA**

You're far too nice to scare your little sister with your revolting shrunken head ... **AREN'T YOU?**

**WHAT HAPPENS:**

The circumference of your shrunken head has shrunk by about 20%. You can check this with your tape measure and note the figure in your notebook. Did you see the photo of my shrunken head? He used to be a Head Teacher, ha ha!

**THIS IS BECAUSE:**

Apples contain more than 80% water - that's a bit more than your head. The salt helped to draw water from the apple. With less water inside it, the apple shrank. The brown colour is made when oxygen in the air combines with molecules in the apple to make new molecules. The reaction was slowed by the lemon juice.

What's that? You wanted a REAL shrunken head? Well, just for you - here's a method used by the Jivaro people of the Amazon Rainforest. It's sure to give you a head start ...

*How to shrink a human head*

- 1. You will need a human head.*
- 2. Peel off the flesh and turn it inside-out.*
- 3. Feel free to put the skull on display to impress your friends.*
- 4. Scrape the flesh clean of fat. Turn it the head the right way out and sew up the mouth and eyeholes so the ghost can't escape and haunt you.*
- 5. Simmer the head in a pot of water and wild berries for two hours. The flesh will shrink by about a third.*
- 6. Heat some pebbles and place them inside the head to shrink the flesh some more.*
- 7. Carry on heating the head between two fires and fill it with hot sand until it shrinks to the exact size you want. By now your head will be a black.*
- 8. Rub your head with berries and charcoal to stop the skin from cracking. Don't forget to give it a nice haircut.*
- 9. Hang it from your neck for a special celebration.*