

## Common Ingredients

### Shea Butter – anti-inflammatory, antioxidant

Shea butter comes from the fat of the nut of the African Shea tree. Traditionally, it's used to reduce the appearance of fine lines, scars and stretch marks, and to ease a variety of skin irritations, such as psoriasis, eczema, and sunburn. Shea butter is ideal for the topical application of cosmetic and medicinal formulas, because it melts on contact and is readily absorbed into the skin, without leaving a greasy residue. Shea butter contains vitamins A and E, as well as catechins, plant antioxidants also found in green tea. Shea butter has a melting point of approximately 85-90 degrees F.

### Cocoa Butter - antioxidant

In the last decade, cocoa butter has become widely accepted as a beneficial skin care ingredient. Cocoa butter penetrates the top layer of the skin called the epidermis. The cocoa butter can also reach the dermis, the middle layer. The butter is extracted directly from cocoa beans as a yellowish fatty acid. It has naturally high levels of vitamin E, which is proven to help with skin renewal and repair. Cocoa butter is also an antioxidant. Antioxidants protect the skin from free radicals or toxins that damage tissues at the cellular level. The antioxidant property also provides a natural preservative so cocoa butter lasts for a long time. Cocoa butter has a melting point of approximately 85-90 degrees F.

*Warning: Cocoa butter is made from the same plant as chocolate. If you have a chocolate allergy, you should avoid cocoa butter as a topical ingredient in products until and unless you have used a patch test to confirm no reaction.*

### Coconut Oil – antibacterial, antimicrobial, antifungal, antiviral, antioxidant

Coconut provides a very unique type of oil, made of several ingredients including medium chain fatty acids, lauric acid, and saturated fat. It is semi-solid at room temperature (68-72 degrees) as a soft, almost waxy substance, but melts on contact, absorbs quickly, and most often doesn't leave any "greasy" feeling behind. Coconut oil has a melting point of approximately 74-76 degrees F.

### Natural Beeswax

Beeswax contains compounds called "wax esters" that exist in both beeswax and human skin. Beeswax is a hydrating ingredient that increases skins essential moisture and works in retaining natural skin moisture.

The melting point for Beeswax is approximately 140 to 150 Degrees F. Beeswax should only be melted in an approved electric wax melter, crock pot, microwave oven (60 seconds at a time in defrost mode), or using double boiler. The double boiler will give you the most control.

*Warning: If you have a bee allergy, you should not use beeswax, until and unless you have used a patch test to confirm no reaction. Do not melt beeswax in a pan directly on a stove over direct heat or in a microwave at full power. Beeswax is mildly flammable and will ignite if the wax comes in direct contact with a flame. This includes microwaving in a paper cup and exceeding the ignition temperature of paper.*

### Aloe Vera Gel

Historically, aloe was used topically to heal wounds and for various skin conditions, and orally as a laxative. Today, in addition to these uses, aloe is used as a folk or traditional remedy for a variety of conditions, including diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, and osteoarthritis. It is also used topically for osteoarthritis, burns, sunburns, and psoriasis. Aloe vera gel can be found in hundreds of skin products, including lotions and sunblocks. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved aloe vera as a natural food flavoring.

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Aloe leaves contain a clear gel that is often used topically as a remedy for skin conditions including burns, sunburn, frostbite, psoriasis, and cold sores. There is some science supporting these uses. Some chemicals in aloe gel seem to be able to increase circulation in the tiny blood vessels in the skin, as well as kill bacteria.

*Warning: Many commonly-available aloe vera gel products contain colorants, fragrances, and preservatives, including some formaldehyde-donor or formaldehyde-releasing ingredients (including Fruit of the Earth brand). See later note. If you would prefer to avoid this class of preservatives, two other brands of aloe gel without colorants, fragrances, or FD preservatives are Lilly of the Valley 99% Aloe Vera Gelly and Mountain Rose Herbs Aloe Vera Gel.*

#### Baking Soda

Baking soda neutralizes the production of acid and also acts as an antiseptic to help prevent the growth of bacteria.

#### Bentonite Clay

Bentonite clay comes from naturally occurring volcanic ash sediments. It has been traditionally used to help bind toxins making them more soluble. Because of its naturally soft nature, and very fine texture, it also makes an invigorating skin and face mask and is commonly found as a medium in body powders.

*Warning: Do not let the clay come in to contact with anything metal, as this will reduce the effectiveness.*

#### Jojoba Oil – moisturizing, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant

Since it is composed of wax esters, jojoba oil is an extremely stable substance and does not easily deteriorate. Its molecular structure closely resembles that of your own skin sebum, making it an excellent moisturizer and ideal for all skin types. When used as a massage medium, it acts as an emulsifier with the skin's natural sebum and gently unclogs the pores and lifts grime and imbedded impurities. It has anti-inflammatory properties, quickly absorbs, and is excellent for dry, mature, and acne-prone skin. It is a popular choice as a carrier oil. Because of its antioxidant properties, it does not become rancid and can prevent rancidity in other oils.

Camphor Oil - analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, anti-itch, antifungal, and is considered to be pain relieving and an antidepressant.

Camphor has been used topically to increase local blood flow and as a “counterirritant,” which reduces pain and swelling by causing irritation. Camphor seems to stimulate nerve endings that relieve symptoms such as pain and itching when applied to the skin. Camphor is considered “likely safe” for most adults when inhaled as vapor in small amounts as a part of aromatherapy. Don't use more than 1 tablespoon camphor solution per quart of water. Camphor is considered “likely safe” for most adults when applied to the skin in a cream or lotion in low concentrations.

*Warning: Camphor oil is powerful and should be used with care. Do NOT apply camphor to broken skin. It can enter the body quickly and reach concentrations that are high enough to cause poisoning. Overdosing can cause convulsions and vomiting and pregnant women as well as people suffering from epilepsy and asthma should not use it. Camphor can cause some minor side effects such as skin redness and irritation. Do NOT use undiluted camphor products or products containing more than 11% camphor.*

Eucalyptus Oil - antifungal, analgesic, antimicrobial, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and is known to work as a decongestant and gentle expectorant

Eucalyptus oil can be helpful when used for headaches, fevers, ailments of the respiratory tract, muscular aches and pains, and in skin care. It seems to be effective against bacteria - especially staphylococci, and seems to have a refreshing and stimulating action on the mind, helping to improve concentration. Apart from giving pain relief to

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muscular spasms and rheumatism, eucalyptus oil in creams and lotions may help speed up the healing of slow healing wounds and ulcers, calm skin eruptions, and clear congested skin. It is also used as an insect repellent.

*Warning: Eucalyptus oil should not be taken by mouth or applied to the skin full-strength. It must be diluted for safety.*

Grapefruit Oil - antidepressant, antiseptic, disinfectant

Used in a base cream, lotion or as a wash, grapefruit oil can help to clear a greasy, congested and acne-prone skin. Grapefruit oil is non-toxic, non-irritant, and non-sensitizing.

*Warning: Although listed as non-phototoxic, it can irritate the skin if exposed to strong sunlight after treatment.*

Lavender Oil - analgesic, anti-itch, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antibacterial, and is considered to be an antidepressant

Lavender oil is generally considered one of the safest essential oils, and is one of the few essential oils that can be used neat on the skin. When it is used in a cream or lotion, it seems most helpful with relieving burns as it helps the skin heal faster with less scarring. The soothing and anti-inflammatory action of lavender oil will also have a balancing action on the skin and has been often used for dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis, and acne.

*Warning: When employing the anti-inflammatory action of this oil, use in concentrations of less than 1%. Applying products to the skin that contain lavender oil might not be safe for young boys who have not yet reached puberty. Lavender oil seems to have hormone effects that could disrupt the normal hormones in a boy's body. In some cases, this has resulted in boys developing abnormal breast growth called gynecomastia. The safety of these products when used by young girls is not known. Stop using lavender at least 2 weeks before a scheduled surgery, as lavender might slow down the central nervous system.*

Lemon Oil - anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antibacterial, antimicrobial

Lemon oil can be used in a cream or lotion to clear congested skin. The astringent properties are great for oily skin conditions. The antiseptic effect of lemon oil on the other hand, helps to treat any cuts, boils and minor wounds.

*Warning: Lemon oil is non-toxic, but can cause skin irritation and sensitizing in some individuals. Since it is a photo-toxic oil, it should not be used (even in low dilution) before being exposed to the sun.*

Lime Oil - antiseptic, antiviral, astringent, antibacterial, and disinfectant

Lime oil is non-toxic, non-irritant and non-sensitizing if the oil is obtained by steam extraction. Your oil should list its extraction technique on the label.

*Warning: Lime oil obtained from cold expression can cause photosensitivity in strong sunshine and can irritate the skin.*

Peppermint Oil - antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antimicrobial, antiseptic, astringent

Peppermint oil is non-toxic and non-irritant in low dilutions, but sensitization may be a problem due to the menthol content. The botanical name of peppermint is mentha piperita. Extracted from the herb by steam distillation, the oil of peppermint is clear with a slight tinge of yellow. Its main constituent is menthol, which imparts the famously heady, minty aroma and the remarkable "cooling sensation," when tasted or touched.

Peppermint oil comprises vitamins A and C, omega-3 fatty acids, and minerals including potassium, manganese, iron, magnesium, calcium, and copper. Peppermint oil benefits the respiratory system as the menthol in peppermint oil can

help to clear the respiratory tract. It acts as a mild expectorant and can provide relief during a regular bout of cold and cough, and, for some, the more serious sinusitis, asthma, and bronchitis.

*Warning: It is important to note that peppermint essential oil is intense and far more concentrated than other essential oils. The topical application of peppermint oil is generally safe, although it is necessary to dilute with a carrier oil like almond or jojoba oil and should be kept well away from the eyes. It is advised that some people may experience a burning sensation or allergic rash, especially with sensitive skin. It should be avoided during pregnancy and should not be used on children under seven.*

#### Tea Tree Oil - antimicrobial, antiseptic, antiviral, anti-bacterial

Most experts consider tea tree oil to be safe as a topical treatment. Today, tea tree oil is often used externally as a folk or traditional remedy for a number of conditions including athlete's foot, nail fungus, wounds, and infections; or for lice, oral candidiasis (thrush), cold sores, dandruff, and skin lesions. Tea tree oil may be effective for acne. One clinical trial compared a 5% tea tree oil gel to a 5% benzoyl peroxide product for the treatment of acne and found that the benzoyl peroxide worked slightly better, but that the tea tree oil had fewer side effects.

*Warning: When applied to the skin neat (in its pure 100% oil form), tea tree oil is non-toxic and non-irritant, but some individuals do show sensitizing to this oil. It should not be used on deep wounds or near the eyes, ears, nose, or taken internally. Tea tree oil should not be swallowed. Poisonings, mainly in children, have caused drowsiness, confusion, disorientation, rash, and ataxia—a loss of muscle control in the arms and legs causing a lack of balance and coordination.*

#### Things You Should Know About Essential Oils

**Essential oils are not really oils.** They do not contain the fatty acids that constitute what we would consider an actual oil. Most essential oils are high in antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral properties. This makes them an excellent addition to your homemade cleaning preparations. Oils that are best for cleaning are: lemon, grapefruit, eucalyptus, peppermint, tea tree, lavender, and rosemary.

**Fragrance oils and essential oils are NOT the same thing.** As a rule of thumb, if you see the word “fragrance” or “fragrance oil” or even “perfume” on anything, you can assume this is synthetic and NOT natural. (Even if it says natural fragrance.)

**Enormous amounts of plants are needed to produce essential oil.** In fact, on the extreme end, it takes 4000 pounds of Bulgarian roses to produce 1 pound of essential oil. Other plants like lavender only take 100 pounds of plant material to produce a pound of essential oil.

**Most essential oils should never be used undiluted on the skin.** Instead, they should be combined with “real” oils (called carrier oils), waxes, butters, alcohols, or other diluting measures. Avoid the following essential oils while pregnant or nursing (and skip EOs completely in your first trimester): Aniseed, cedarwood, chamomile, cinnamon, clary sage, clove, ginger, jasmine, lemon, nutmeg, rosemary, sage (this is only a partial list of some of the more common essential oils).

**Some people are very sensitive to essential oils, to the point of a contact allergy.** Contact sensitivity is a type of allergic reaction. This can happen any time after the first exposure to an essential oil, and usually presents as an itchy rash or hives. This is caused by the immune system's response to one or more of the chemicals in the essential oil. The extent of the reaction may seem out of proportion to the amount of exposure. Again, old or altered essential oils are more likely to produce skin reactions. If you are someone who is taking a lot of prescription medication and/or has a lot

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of allergies, you should do a patch test by following the instructions below to check for skin irritation and sensitivity before using each essential oil.

To do a patch test:

- Mix a very small amount of essential oil/carrier at twice the concentration you plan to use. For example, if you plan to use a 3% mixture of the essential oil, mix it at 6% (six drops in a teaspoon of carrier oil, or three drops in ½ teaspoon of carrier oil).
- Using the inside of the forearm, apply a couple drops of your double concentration mix to the pad of a bandaid and keep the bandage on the skin. After 48 hours remove the bandage and check for irritation.
- You may repeat to check for allergic sensitivity. Remember, however, that allergies can develop any time after the first exposure; thus absence of a reaction does not necessarily mean that an allergy will not develop with later exposures.
- If the skin under or around the bandage becomes red, swollen, itchy, or develops blisters, that is a reaction and you should avoid skin exposure to the essential oil you tested.

**Phototoxicity can occur after you apply an essential oil topically and then go out into the sun.** This happens most often with certain citrus oils, such as bergamot, lemon, lime, orange, and angelica. For example, if you spray yourself with a solution of orange essential oil and then lie out in the sun or in a tanning bed, you will most likely get a sunburn or even deeper burns.

**Keep all essential oils out of the reach of children – and avoid contact with your eyes.** This is just standard safety precautions, but must be mentioned.

**Do not take essential oils internally,** especially oils like wintergreen and eucalyptus. While some essential oils may be used well-diluted in something like toothpaste with safety, it's generally recognized that there's no need to take essential oils internally. In fact, there are several toxic essential oils that should be avoided even through skin contact. Luckily, these are NOT common essential oils, and most of them you'll never find in the store.

**Essential oils will last for at least 5 years (if not 10), so one bottle could last you a decade.** Hopefully that thought will help mitigate the cost involved in purchasing some essential oils. Because they are SO concentrated and only a tiny amount is needed in anything you do, they'll last you a very, very long time. The only exception to this rule is citrus oils, which will see a reduction in potency after a year or two.

**Store your essential oils in dark glass bottles** (which they were probably packaged in) **and out of direct sunlight.** This is simply to help preserve their potency.

**Remember that what you're allergic to in food, you will be allergic to in essential oils.** So if, for some reason, you can't eat sage without breaking out in a rash, steer clear of sage essential oil (or any product containing it).

**The recommended usage of many essential oils is hotly contested throughout the aromatherapy profession.** The majority of oils you find in the supermarket are absolutely safe (though you should research them before using them); however, once you start digging into the world of essential oils, you'll find that professionals – even within the same organization – debate extensively over the use of certain oils. If you're ever unsure about an oil or its use, do the research you can, and if you still cannot make up your mind as to its safety – avoid it. But, by all means, do NOT be afraid of essential oils. Just use them with care and respect.

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**Do NOT let pets (cats, dogs, birds, ferrets, horses, etc.) come into contact with or ingest essential oils or potpourri, as many are highly toxic.**

Essential oils have become popular for their use in aromatherapy and alternative medicine; they are also used in cleaning products, food and drink flavorings, herbal remedies, perfumes, personal care products, and liquid potpourris. Liquid potpourris are often used as home air fresheners and fragrances. Many liquid potpourri products and essential oils, including oil of cinnamon, citrus, pennyroyal, peppermint, pine, sweet birch, tea tree (melaleuca), wintergreen, and ylang ylang, are poisonous to pets.

Keep essential oils and liquid potpourri products out of reach of pets at all times. Curious animals may want to investigate the sweet-smelling liquids, so never leave opened essential oils or simmering potpourri unattended. In addition, consult a veterinarian before using any essential oils or other herbal products on your pet. Never apply a concentrated essential oil on your pet!

Both ingestion and skin exposure can be toxic. Essential oils and liquid potpourris contain chemicals that are rapidly absorbed orally or through the skin. Many of these chemicals are metabolized through the liver. In addition, cats lack some of the enzymes necessary to effectively metabolize these chemicals. Therefore, cats, newborns, and animals with liver disease are more sensitive to their effects. Liquid potpourri and some essential oils can also irritate or burn the skin and mouth.

Only a couple of licks or a small amount on the skin could be harmful to a dog or cat, depending on the ingredients in a specific product and how the pet is exposed. Cats can be exposed by tasting liquid potpourri as it simmers or by coming in contact with liquid from leaking or overturned containers. Cats in particular are prolific self-groomers, so if these products get on their skin, they will often ingest them.

Symptoms may include: Fragrance or scent on hair coat; skin, or breath or in vomit; Changes in breathing; Difficulty walking or uncoordinated gait; Drooling; Lethargy or weakness; Muscle tremors; Pawing at the mouth or face; Redness or burns on the lips, gums, tongue, or skin; and Vomiting.

Rapid diagnosis and treatment are imperative. **If you believe that your pet has ingested or come in contact with essential oils or liquid potpourri, call your veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline (800-213-6680) immediately.** The sooner you seek treatment, the better the prognosis and outcome for your pet. In addition, do not induce vomiting or give activated charcoal to your dog or cat, unless your veterinarian specifically directs you to do so. Put the product packaging in a sealed plastic bag, and take it with you to the veterinary clinic. If any product is on the skin or fur, quickly wash it off using a mild hand dishwashing detergent.

#### **A Note on Formaldehyde-Donor or Formaldehyde-Releasing Preservatives**

Because all microorganisms require water for growth, most water-based, multi-use products require preservation to protect against spoilage from bacteria, yeast, and fungi. Preservatives play an important role in controlling a range of microorganisms that may be introduced into cosmetics and other personal care products during normal use by consumers. Growth of microbes in these products can adversely affect consumer health and the aesthetic or functional qualities of products. Formaldehyde-donor (FD) preservatives are one family of ingredients whose chemistry, safety, efficacy, benefits and limitations have been widely studied for the control of microbial growth in personal care products.

FD preservatives contain a carrier molecule (a formaldehyde donor) that is chemically bound to formaldehyde and is designed to release small amounts of formaldehyde into the water base of the product over time rather than all at once,

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which helps maintain product integrity during use. At the concentrations used in personal care products, FD preservatives have been deemed as safe (non-toxic, non-carcinogenic, non-mutagenic and not a concern for systemic toxicity). They also show a low incidence of eye and skin irritation, and contact dermatitis.

Formaldehyde is a naturally occurring substance that is present in most life forms, including humans. All normally functioning cells in humans, animals and plants produce and use formaldehyde, but concentrations are so low that adverse health effects do not occur; for instance, human blood normally contains 2–3 ppm. Also, up to 100 ppm formaldehyde is reported to occur naturally in some types of foods, including pears. Formaldehyde does not accumulate in the body because it is metabolized quickly to sodium formate and is rapidly excreted. Similarly, it does not accumulate in the environment. When present in air, formaldehyde is broken down within a few hours by sunlight; in soil or water, bacteria initiate the breakdown.

FD preservatives used in personal care applications include DMDM hydantoin, imidazolidinyl urea, diazolidinyl urea, sodium hydroxymethylglycinate and quaternium-15, the first three of which are the most frequently used FD preservatives in the United States and Canada. The use of FD preservatives by the cosmetics and personal care industry has been established over several decades. In a 2010 frequency of use study on preservatives, formaldehyde donors were reported in approximately 15% of the 36,811 personal care product formulations submitted to the FDA's Voluntary Cosmetic Registration Program (VCRP). However, concerns about the adequacy of data on both dermal absorption and potential toxicity of quaternium-15 recently were raised by the SCCS in the European Union.

In preparing for this program, I had an opportunity to discuss my plans with a dermatologist. When asked for any suggestions on what I should mention, he used the opportunity to express concern about FD preservatives and their prevalence in consumer products. This may be his opinion, but I felt it to be an educated opinion and one worth mentioning.

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**Glossary**

- Butter: can be shea butter, cocoa butter, or a combination of both
- Oil: can be coconut oil or other liquid oil, including olive oil, sweet almond oil, sesame oil, etc.

**Containers**

- Wax-lined paper cups make a good container for solid products, as the wax allows the product to be popped out easily.
- Glass containers, including recycled food containers and half-pint mason jars, are good containers for less solid products as you can melt, mix, and store the product in the same container.

**Recipes**

**Homemade Vapor Rub**

(This yields a semi-solid bar. If you would prefer a softer, yet still solid product, you can substitute more oil for the butter. For a spreadable, viscous product, substitute petroleum jelly for the beeswax.)

Base: 2 parts butter  
2 parts oil  
1 part beeswax  
2 drops eucalyptus oil (increase proportionally as the “part” increases beyond 1 Tbsp)

For children ages 7 and under (see note under lavender concerning pre-pubescent boys)  
add: 1 drops lavender oil (increase proportionally as the “part” increases beyond 1 Tbsp)

For children over age 8 through adult  
add: 2 drops peppermint oil (increase proportionally as the “part” increases beyond 1 Tbsp)  
2 drops camphor oil (increase proportionally as the “part” increases beyond 1 Tbsp)

Melt the beeswax over a double boiler. Add the butter and oil and stir until completely melted. Remove from the heat. Pour into final vessel or into a waxed paper cup and place into refrigerator to completely solidify. Add the essential oils as it begins to solidify – the closer to solid, but still stir-able the better as some of the oils turn into vapor at body temperature.

**Homemade Hand Sanitizer**

This hand sanitizer is my new favorite because it is non-sticky, quick-absorbing, and I can control the scent.

½ cup aloe vera gel  
½ cup rubbing alcohol (70%) or witch hazel (14-16% alcohol)  
8-10 drops essential oils (peppermint, tea tree, citrus, etc.)

Pour into pump bottle and mix well (shake or stir). Dispense in very small amounts.

### **Semi-homemade Hair Detangler**

This is less a homemade recipe than it is a way to extend the usage of something you already buy.

1 part hair conditioner (your choice, I like Suave for this)  
2 parts water

Add to spray bottle. Shake well before each use.

### **Homemade Hair Spray**

This makes for a very flexible hold spray. It will not be my go-to hair spray, especially in humid conditions, but seems to work well during dryer and colder conditions.

½ cup white sugar  
¼ cup distilled water just off the boil  
¼ cup rubbing alcohol (70%)  
1-3 drops essential oils of your choice (optional)

Stir sugar and water together until the sugar is completely dissolved. Cool completely. Add to rubbing alcohol in a spray bottle. Shake well before each use.

### **Homemade Make-up Remover/Baby Wipes**

Many versions of this recipe online call for cutting a roll of paper towel in half, soaking in the solution, and then removing the inner cardboard roll and dispensing from the middle. You could also use a “select a size” roll, quickly tear off individual pieces and soak them in the solution. Some also soak cotton rounds in the solution and use that. Want a less disposable option? You may also use small (4”x4”) squares of terry cloth or fleece.

2 cups warm distilled water  
1 Tbsp coconut oil  
4-5 drops tea tree oil (to inhibit mold growth)  
1 Tbsp baby wash, unscented castile soap, face wash (optional)

Mix well. Add to container with rounds or paper towel. Store in container with tight-fitting lid.

### **Homemade Face Cleansing Pads for Oily Skin**

You can use either cotton rounds, the “select a size” paper towel sections, or small (4”x4”) squares of terry cloth or fleece.

2 cups distilled water  
1 Tbsp gentle soap (unscented castile soap, face wash, baby wash)  
1 Tbsp witch hazel

Mix well. Add to container with rounds or paper towel. Store in container with tight-fitting lid.

### **Super Simple Facial Astringent for Oily Skin**

1 bottle witch hazel  
3-5 drops tea tree oil  
1-3 drops lavender oil (optional)

Add oil to bottle. Shake well before each use. Apply with cotton ball or round. Do not use on or around eyes.

### **Homemade Moisturizer for Oily Skin**

This is a new favorite of mine. It is non-greasy, quick-absorbing, and seems very gentle and healing for my very sensitive and acne-prone skin.

½ cup aloe vera gel  
10 drops jojoba oil  
4-5 drops tea tree oil  
1 drop lavender oil (optional)

Add to container with a tight-fitting lid. Mix well. Use approximately a pea-sized amount twice daily after cleansing.

### **Homemade Body Wash**

Please note that different types of soap respond differently to the added water. Bars with oatmeal seem to need a larger quantity to attain the desired consistency and then develop an “eggy,” undesirably viscous texture. I advise using a more oil-based soap such as Dove or Tone.

1 bar soap  
2 cups water

Heat the water to boiling on the stove, then decrease heat to medium. Grate the soap, or microwave the bar in a glass bowl or measuring cup for 90 seconds at full power then 30 seconds at a time until the soap has melted and begun to bubble up. Be careful not to let it overflow. (You will need to clean your microwave after this to remove the smell.) Pour the melted or grated soap into the water and stir until the soap has dissolved. Transfer to a glass jar or bowl and allow it to cool. It will thicken as it cools and for another 24 hours. Move to pump dispenser.

### **Homemade Shaving Cream**

Silky texture and very moisturizing.

½ cup oil  
1/3 cup butter  
10 drops essential oil of your choice (lavender, peppermint, tea tree, etc.)  
2 tsp baking soda

Melt the butter and oil together just until melted. Remove from heat and add essential oils. Stir to combine. Transfer to bowl or jar and refrigerate until solid. Remove from refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature. Add the baking soda and whip with hand beater or stand mixer until light and fluffy, approximately 3-5 minutes.

### **Homemade Shaving Gel**

Perfect for those who prefer a lighter shaving lubricant that still provides a smooth, even coating for shaving. If you have dry skin, you may find the shaving cream recipe above to be more moisturizing.

½ cup liquid soap (castile, baby, hand-friendly dish soap, etc.)  
¼ cup warm distilled water  
1/3 cup aloe vera gel  
½ tsp spoon  
1 Tbsp olive or coconut oil  
5-8 drops tea tree essential oil  
5-10 drops essential oil of your choice (lavender, peppermint, etc.)

Dissolve the salt in the warm water. Blend the remaining ingredients together. Put into pump bottle.

### **Homemade Deodorant for Sensitive Skin**

Please note that is a deodorant to control body odor, not an anti-perspirant. It may work well for you in cooler, dryer conditions, but may not be a good choice in the summer, or if you have a condition that causes you to sweat heavily.

2 parts beeswax  
6 parts butter  
6 parts oil  
3 parts baking soda  
2 parts bentonite clay  
2 parts arrowroot or corn starch  
1-3 drops tea tree oil (increase proportionally as the “part” increases beyond 1 Tbsp)  
1-3 drops peppermint oil (increase proportionally as the “part” increases beyond 1 Tbsp)  
1-3 drops lavender oil (increase proportionally as the “part” increases beyond 1 Tbsp)

Melt beeswax, butter, and oil in double boiler. Add baking soda, bentonite clay, and starch. Mix well. Remove from heat. Allow to cool and thicken slightly. Add essential oils. Mix well. Refrigerate to harden. To apply, remove approximately pea-sized amount of deodorant. Rub with fingers and apply over clean underarm. It should not be visible and should absorb quickly. Use slightly more, or more often throughout the day, if you notice body odor. Use less if you notice staining of your clothes.

### **Homemade Green Clay Face Mask**

Begin with a small amount, maybe ½ Tbsp. You may need less than you think.

1 part bentonite clay  
1 part distilled water or apple cider vinegar

Mix well. Apply to face with fingers or wet make-up brush. You can apply it thinly or up to 1/8 inch thick. Allow to dry completely. Your face may feel tight and/or tingly. However, if it feels hot or painful, remove the clay immediately. Apply a warm, wet washcloth to your face to soften the clay, then wipe and rinse until your face is clean. You will likely not need to otherwise clean your face that night. Use weekly (or monthly) as needed.

Note: Some women of color with natural hair find this mask useful to clean, soften, and strength their hair. Curly Nikki has a great page with details of her love affair (her words) with bentonite clay, that can be found here:  
<http://www.curlynikki.com/2009/01/nik-bentonite-clay-love-that-dare-not.html>

### **Solid Lotion Bars**

Solid lotion bars work better for some than for others, specifically due to the varying amounts of softeners (oils and butters) and strengthener (beeswax). When making these for yourself or others as gifts, I advise doing the following experiment with very small amounts (1 part=1 tsp) and picking the best one for (each of) you by applying it on the delicate skin of the inside arm or of the neck, if you’re looking for a facial lotion.

Recipe #1 – Solid, and melts very slightly with application

2 parts butter  
1 part beeswax

Recipe #2 – Solid, but melts quickly in the hand

1 part butter

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1 part oil  
1 part beeswax

Recipe #3 – Has a solid shape, but is soft and melts even more quickly in the hand

2 parts oil  
1 part beeswax

Recipe #4 – Barely solid at room temperature (72-76 degrees), no beeswax, best used whipped (see below)

2 parts butter  
1 part oil

With all recipes, melt the ingredients slowly in a double boiler or microwave in defrost mode until liquid. Take off heat and add any essential oils (begin with 1-5 drops, depending on amount and strength of scent desired). Pour into container and refrigerate to harden.

Take note of your circumstances. Are you looking for something that lasts or something that is easily absorbed and should be applied through the day? The higher the amount of beeswax, the less the lotion will easily wash off. Beeswax does not break down as the butter and oil will with soap and water. Beeswax will come off with scrubbing or 150 degree water, which may be not advisable.

#### **Whipped Body Butter**

Mix Recipe #4 at liquid temperature and any desired essential oils with a hand and stand mixer until white and fluffy. It should look like whipped cream. Apply in very small amounts (less than pea-sized) to begin and increase as needed.

#### **Pump-able Lotion**

1 part butter  
2 parts oil (including at least 1 tsp of oil that is liquid at room temperature, i.e. olive, sweet almond, jojoba, etc.)  
1-5 drops essential oil of your choice

Melt the ingredients slowly in a double boiler or microwave in defrost mode until liquid. Take off heat and add any essential oils (begin with 1-5 drops, depending on amount of lotion and strength of scent desired). Mix with a hand or stand mixer until soft and fluffy. Pour into pump container. If not soft enough, re-melt and add an additional 1 tsp of liquid oil. This will be easier to pump during summer's higher temperatures, as coconut oil melts at approximately 74 degrees and the butters at about 85 degrees. If you live in a very warm climate where the temperature (where the lotion is) is consistently above 85, you might consider adding a small amount (maybe 1 tsp) of beeswax to keep it semi-solid and not liquid.

**Just remember, the best part about making these products at home is that you can experiment with ratios and types of oils, butters, and beeswax to find what works best for you and your family.**

**Please, though, be cautious when increasing the amounts of essential oils.**

**Above all else, though, have fun with it! Enjoy!**