

Quick & Easy Homemade Sugar Scrubs
An Albion District Library Workshop
November 10, 2017

Common Ingredients

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.

Baking Soda

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

Jojoba Oil – moisturizing, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant

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.

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 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.

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.

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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.

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.

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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 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.

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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.

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

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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.

Sources

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Definitions

“Dry Ingredient” - white cane sugar, light brown sugar, fine sugar, OR baking soda

The finer the texture, the less abrasive the scrub will be. Baking soda, which is very fine, may be best for facial scrubs and those with sensitive skin. However, if you use baking soda, please note that it is less chemically inert than sugar. It will react to acid.

“Oil” - coconut, olive, sweet almond, jojoba, canola, or baby oil

Look for oils with thinner viscosity (thickness) for this application. For example, you may find that extra virgin olive oil and regular olive oil have different viscosities. If you use coconut oil, do not melt it. Use solid, but soft, coconut oil and whip it with a hand mixer to add air and make it fluffy. Coconut oil melts above about 74 degrees.

“Essential Oil” - popular oils include peppermint, lavender, sweet orange, bitter orange, eucalyptus, lemongrass, tea tree, ginger, cinnamon, rosemary, clary sage, cedarwood, patchouli, among many others.

Seek out therapeutic grade essential oils, rather than aromatherapy grade oils. Therapeutic grade oils are best suited for use in direct contact with skin.

General Guidelines/Things to Consider

Some extracts, such as vanilla, do not translate well to this medium, as they are meant to be baked with other ingredients. You may find that a candy flavoring, such as Lorann’s Vanilla Butternut candy flavoring, is a richer, more nuanced addition.

“Sweet” variations (chocolate or cookie-themed) may be more appealing if made with brown sugar.

Some oils, including ginger, cinnamon, citrus, eucalyptus, and peppermint, are skin irritants and may cause redness or a hot/burning sensation for some people. They are also very strong and can cause eye irritation. Because of that reason, they should not be used on the face or neck - limit these to body scrub recipes. Please use these in small amounts, increase with extreme caution, and test them in a small patch area, usually the inside of your wrist.

Don’t worry that if it doesn’t smell strongly in the bowl or jar. When it warms in contact with the skin or in the presence of hot water, it will become much stronger.

When using in the shower, be sure not to let water drip into the jar. Water, when mixed with the sugar, will encourage mold or rot.

Recipes

Base Recipe for Scrub

2 parts dry ingredient

1 part oil

Look for the consistency of damp sand or frosting with no standing oil. Thicken or thin the mixture in very small increments. If you use fine sugar or baking soda, it will separate faster, so expect that you will need to stir it before use.

Apply a generous amount of sugar scrub to wet skin. Massage sugar scrub into skin using a circular motion to help exfoliate and remove dead skin cells. Rinse well, using gentle soap, if needed.

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Chocolate Base Recipe

- 1 ½-2 parts dry ingredient
- ½ part cocoa powder
- 1 part oil

Thicken this base recipe with cocoa powder until you've reached the desired consistency.

General Directions

- 1/2 cup base recipe
- 4-6 drops essential oil or flavoring of choice

Common Combinations to Consider

- Peppermint and Orange
- Peppermint and Eucalyptus
- Peppermint and Tea Tree
- Peppermint and Lavender
- Chocolate and Peppermint ("Mint Cookie")
- Chocolate and Orange
- Lemongrass and Ginger

"Rich Chocolate"

- 1/2 cup base recipe
- 1 Tbsp cocoa powder
- 1-2 drops vanilla

"Warm Citrus"

- 1/2 cup base recipe
- 2 drops grapefruit oil
- 2 drops bitter orange or sweet orange oil
- 3 drops lemon oil
- 1 drop ginger oil

"Warm Vanilla"

- 1/2 cup base recipe
- 3 drops vanilla
- 1 drop cinnamon OR ginger oil

"Snickerdoodle"

- 1/2 cup base recipe
- 4 drops vanilla
- 1 drop cinnamon oil

"Mulled Cider"

- 1/2 cup base recipe
- 2 drops orange oil
- 1 drop cinnamon oil
- 1 drop ginger oil

"Autumn Breeze"

- 1/2 cup base recipe
- 4 drops sweet orange oil
- 4 drops patchouli oil
- 1 drops clove oil

Just remember, the best part about making these products at home is that you can experiment with ratios and types of oils and essential oil combinations 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!