

Herbal Muscle Rub

You may already have the **tools** needed to make a fresh herbal preparation:

- *Mortar and pestle*
- *Large sauce pan*
- *Double boiler*
- *A piece of clean, dry cheesecloth*
- *Six 3-ounce sterilized cosmetic jars*
- *Six 3-ounce cosmetic bottles*

Ingredients you'll need include:

- 1 cup fresh bay leaves
- 1 cup fresh eucalyptus leaves
- 1 cup fresh grated ginger root
- 1 pint pure oil (either extra virgin olive oil, sesame oil, almond oil or sunflower seed oil)
- 1 pound pure beeswax
- 1 ounce liquid citric acid OR 100 proof vodka.

1. Begin by mashing the herbs with the mortar and pestle until they are finely ground together. Then heat them in the oil in the saucepan, stirring over low heat for about an hour. Be careful not to boil or burn the mixture or leave it unattended. After an hour, remove the pan from the heat and set aside. When slightly cooled but still warm, strain the oil and crushed herbs through clean cheesecloth, then discard the herbs. Divide the herbal oil in half and set one half aside.

2. Melt the beeswax in the double boiler, then mix half of the herbal oil into the melted beeswax along with half the citric acid. Stir the mixture well (Whipping the warm ingredients in a food processor or with a hand-held frother instead of stirring produces a light, creamy preparation.) and let cool slightly. Pour the beeswax mixture into the cosmetic jars, let cool for 30 minutes, then tightly lid all the jars.

3. Mix the other half of the citric acid into the other half of the herbal oil. Pour it into the cosmetic bottles, let cool and then lid tightly. Label as "Fresh Herbal Muscle Rub" and store out of sunlight until use or give as gifts.

To use: Use the creamy rub on sore muscles and aching joints; use the oil during gentle massage. They both work well to ease hip and leg joint pain and stiffness of elderly pets. I suggest adding a few drops of the oil to hot bath water for a soothing steam bath, which also helps sinuses and congestion. You can also make wraps. Soak large gauze strips in hot water, remove them from the water, wring out excess, add some oil and wrap aching ankles or wrists or lay on sore muscles.

FYI: Ginger root is available at most grocers, and fresh bay and eucalyptus leaves will be easier to find locally on the west coast and in the south than in northern areas. For those in the midwest and north, finding fresh bay leaves and eucalyptus leaves may be more challenging. Try health food markets with fresh produce, local florists or online sources.

★Use stainless steel cookware and tools to avoid contaminating oil and rub with plastic or chemicals from non-stick surfaces

Body & Soul: Fresh Grapefruit Cleanser

By Janice Cox

This cleanser is perfect for oily skin types because it is mildly acidic and astringent. Citric acid (from citrus fruits) helps tone the skin while restoring a natural acid balance. Heat is used in this recipe to release the essential oils from the grapefruit peels. You can substitute other citrus fruits, such as orange, lime and pomelo.

- Peel from 1 grapefruit
- 2 tablespoons fresh grapefruit juice
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon borax

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl and gently heat in the microwave or over a pan of water on the stovetop until very hot but not boiling.
2. Remove from heat and let the mixture cool completely. Strain the mixture and pour into a clean container. To use: Use in place of soap to cleanse your skin.

Body & Soul: Herbal Aftershave

By Janice Cox

Aftershave helps refresh and close your pores after cleansing or shaving. Used as a final facial splash, the combination of herbs in this recipe will help tighten pores and keep your complexion clear. They are all naturally antiseptic and cleansing.

- 1 cup witch hazel
- 1 teaspoon dried yarrow
- 1 tablespoon dried lavender
- 1 tablespoon dried sage
- 1 teaspoon dried mint
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon vegetable glycerin (optional)

1. Mix all ingredients. Pour into a clean jar with a tight-fitting lid. Place the jar in a dark, cool place for 2 weeks.
2. At the end of 2 weeks, strain off the liquid and discard any solids; pour into a clean container. After shaving or cleansing your face, pour a small amount into your hands and pat on your face.

Note: You may also use fresh herbs in this recipe; use three times the amount called for and store in the refrigerator for 1 week before straining.

Body & Soul: Olive Oil Shaving Cream

By Janice Cox

The addition of olive oil to this recipe helps create a rich, moisturizing cream. For an even better (and less irritating) shave, shower beforehand to let the steam soften hairs. Stearic acid powder is found at some drugstores and pharmacies or chemical suppliers.

- 1/4 cup stearic acid powder
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 teaspoon borax
- 2 tablespoons grated mild soap

1. On the stovetop or in the microwave, gently heat stearic acid powder and olive oil until just melted. Remove from heat and continue to stir until you have a clear liquid.
2. In a separate container, mix together hot water, borax and soap, and stir until the soap is completely dissolved.
3. Pour the soap solution into a blender or food processor and blend for a few seconds. Slowly pour the stearic acid and oil mixture into the soap solution and continue to blend on high until you have a smooth, creamy mixture.
4. Spoon into a clean container. To use: Soften your beard with warm water and then smooth the shaving cream over your face. Use a sharp, clean razor.

Body & Soul: Brewer's Yeast Facial Mask

By Janice Cox

Brewer's yeast is the byproduct of beer-making, so it's the perfect manly ingredient. Use the facial mask once a month to clean out clogged pores and remove any dead skin and surface impurities. Brewer's yeast can be found at most natural food stores in both powdered and liquid form.

- 1 teaspoon powdered brewer's yeast
- 1 tablespoon buttermilk or plain yogurt

1. Mix yeast and buttermilk until smooth.
2. To use: Spread an even layer over your face and neck. Let sit for 10 to 20 minutes. Rinse well with warm then cool water and pat your skin dry. Store any leftover mask in the refrigerator.

Body & Soul: Balinese Boreh

By Janice Cox

This treatment was first used in Bali by rice farmers to treat tired legs at the end of a long day. Today, spas apply hand-crushed herbs and spices to the entire body to stimulate circulation and warm the skin. Makes 4 ounces (1 treatment).

- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon rice powder
- 1 to 2 teaspoons water

1. Mix ground spices and rice powder, add water and stir until you have a smooth paste. (Add a bit more water if mixture is too dry.)

2. To use: Rub the rich spice mixture all over body; wrap in a warm bath towel or sheet. Relax for 5 to 10 minutes and feel the heat of the dried spices. Rub off mixture with cotton washcloth and rinse well with warm water. Moisturize using a rich body cream or coconut oil.

Body & Soul: Ginger Mint Body Glow

By Janice Cox

This invigorating traditional Thai treatment uses honey to moisturize and sesame seeds, lavender, and mint to cleanse and energize. Makes 8 ounces (1 treatment).

- 1 cup honey
- 1/2 cup sesame seeds
- 2 teaspoons fresh ginger mint or 1 teaspoon dried
- 2 teaspoons fresh lavender or 1 teaspoon dried

1. Mix honey, sesame seeds and herbs into a thick paste.

2. To use: Rub paste slowly all over your body, taking time to deep cleanse and exfoliate dead skin cells. Rinse well in a warm shower and moisturize all over using a light oil such as sesame or almond.

Tip: Ginger mint has milky yellow and light green leaves with a mild ginger scent and flavor. It makes an attractive potted plant and is great in cooking and cosmetic recipes.