

Homemade Gift Ideas using essential oils and natural ingredients

by Penny Keay

Or what I like to call "Gifts from the Heart"!

As the holidays keep becoming more and more commercialized many folks try to find ways to bring back the common sense of gift giving.

True gift giving, as far as I'm concerned, is not how much you spend on an item but the 'heartfelt' joy in what you are giving. When they are made by the gift giver, all the more special.

When you create a simple, yet personal gift for someone, it usually will not go unnoticed, but will be welcomed with much enjoyment. With aromatherapy in mind, you can make something very simple and yet helpful and even healthful.

As you make your holiday gifts, try thinking about the person you are making it for, it puts that extra little part of love into the gift. You can think about them all the way through the wrapping part.

TIME a problem? Not really, most of these can be made in a few minutes to less than an hour. Your gifts will be ready in no time at all.

Why are you in a hurry? Get started now, don't procrastinate. Spend 1 hour every day or few days making your gifts - before you know it you will have them all ready to go!

A few Quick ideas include:

Use any [unscented base product, Shampoo, Conditioner, Lotion, etc.](#)

Properly add the correct amount of an essential oil or synergy blend in the percentage that is considered safe.

Put your own special label on the bottles stating it was made especially for "(Fill in the blank)" by "yours truly" (Your name or those that helped you make it.)

This is a simple yet inexpensive gift.

You might be able to even get the 'kids' to help to make Grandma or Grandpa a much appreciated gift.

Of course, you can assemble a few bottles of essential oils, a small diffuser in a gift box too.

How about making some bath salts?



We have a basic recipe as follows but scenting is very personal and many folks will make a special or "personally yours" type scent.

To make basic bath salt use:

1 1/2 cup dead [Sea Salt](#)

1 1/2 cup Epsom salt

1 ounce of [Dendritic Salt](#) - add your essential oils to this before mixing with the

above salts.

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Why use dendritic salt?

The essential oils will be held in the special crystals of the dendritic salt and when the aroma also known as a "scent throw" will stay true. Often times if you just mix the essential oils with the [Sea Salt](#), or Epsom salts, over time the essential oils scent will change. We found that mixing the essential oils with the dendritic salt first, the intended scenting is altered very little and the results are so much more enjoyable.

What salt to use?

You can use any combination of various salts - there are many different types of [Sea Salt](#) - you can use any sea salt, dead or not!!

If you are using dendritic salt:

add 15-35 drops of essential oil - any single note or any synergy blend depending on what you would like to have it do - calming, relaxing, energizing, etc.

Optional and other additions would be to: Add the essential oils to 1 tablespoon of [Fractionated coconut oil](#) or other carrier oil - [Sweet Almond](#) or [Sunflower](#) are commonly used.

Add this to the salts and mix completely. Place in a glass jar, seal and let "age" or "ripen" for a few days. Stirring or mixing every day.

Directions for use: Add 1/2 to 1 cup to running bath water, mix well to be sure salt has dissolved.

If you wish to make a Salt scrub

use the basic recipe from above, but add enough carrier oil to completely cover the salt in your jar. Don't add more essential oils though as you don't need more of those.

Again, you will scoop a little on your fingers and rub over the body parts you want to exfoliate.

Rinse off and wash with a mild cleanser to remove excess oil.

NOTE: Salt scrubs should NEVER be used on the face. Salt crystals are sharp and can cut your delicate facial skin.

Sugar Scrubs - the best is Brown sugar

Another popular scrub and softer, that is gentler on your face is a Brown Sugar scrub. This would also make a very nice personalized gift.

Use 2 cups brown sugar, add 1 cup of carrier oil - a nice blend such as [Virgin or Expeller pressed coconut oil](#) and Sweet Almond is very nice.

Then add your favorite mixture of essential oils. Use up to 90 drops of essential oils or blends per the recipe above.

A nice Citrus - lavender blend of oils to use

[Grapefruit](#) -30 drops

[Lavender](#) -30 drops

[Lemon](#) - 20 drops

[Orange](#) - 10 drops

Add to the brown sugar - oil mixture. Again let "age" for a few days before using.

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Scoop a little on your fingers and gently massage your face or use on your body. Gently wash off any excess oil with a mild cleanser. If you can find a cute little wooden or plastic spoon to include with your Scrubs you can help prevent contamination of the product from wet fingers.

Be sure the person receiving the gift understands this is not to be eaten!! So don't forget to include a card or tag with directions on how to use your gifts!

These are just a few suggestions. But you can make many others.



Potpourris, Silk Flower arrangements, bath oils, perfumes, and the list is endless.

Special addition to this article follows for those that want to be a bit more creative.

LOTION TUBES or BARS

These are great for keeping hands, elbows, knees and feet soft.

Perfect for those folks that do a lot of handwashing and using a hand lotion is too time consuming.

These Lotion bars apply a thin layer of protective moisture barrier on the skin and helps protect from the constant drying effects of having your hand in water.

For the best results I suggest you use a small kitchen scale to weight out these ingredients.

Ingredients (By Weight)

[Cocoa butter wafers](#) - 6 ounces These will create a cocoa or chocolate scent to be noticeable in your lotion bars.

[Coconut oil](#) - 4 ounces (Virgin, if you don't mind a tiny amount of coconut oil scent, or use expeller pressed if you prefer)

[Beeswax Pearls](#) -4 ounces

ADD up to 7 1/2 ml [essential oil](#) (optional) Scenting is nice but not necessary.

These lotion bars are great to keep skin on hands and body (elbows, knees & feet) soft and protected from moisture loss.

If you Don't have a scale - or one is not available, you can use a measuring cup. :

[Cocoa butter wafers](#) - 2 1/2 cups

[Coconut oil \(melted\)](#) - 1/2 cup

[Beeswax pearls](#) - 1/2 cup

up to 7.5 ml (1 1/2 teaspoons) essential oil (optional)

Here is an alternate recipe - this will have very little odor and you can add essential oils to make this be made for healing skin that has been dry or wind damaged from winter weather.

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Shea Butter Lotion Bar Stick Ingredients:

[Shea Butter](#) - 2 tablespoons

[Coconut oil](#) - 1 tablespoon - may be solid at room temp

[Castor oil](#) - 2 teaspoons

[Beeswax](#) - 2 teaspoons

(optional) essential oil of choice - 20 drops

What to Do:

Slowly melt all ingredients, except essential oils, using a double boiler or sturdy glass bowl over a small pan of boiling water.

Remove from heat and let cool to below 140 degrees before adding essential oils (optional).

Pour in to lotion bar tubes.

Let cool - it may take several hours so you might want to set in refrigerator to speed the process.



Note: This recipe makes enough for two - [2-ounce tube](#). If you want the lotion bar/tube a little firmer use more beeswax a small amount more only. For a smoother lotion, use less beeswax and add a bit more coconut oil.

You can also pour this into the [small deodorant tubes and get 5-7 tubes](#) OR [you can fill lip balm tubes](#) to make a 'lotion stick'.



Lotion Bar - Stick Ingredients

[Shea Butter](#) OR [Cocoa Butter](#) - 1/3 cup (or a mixture of both)

[Beeswax pastilles](#) - 1/4 cup - before melting

[Coconut oil](#) - 1/3 cup

20-40 drops of Essential oils of choice (optional) .

Melt the butters, wax and coconut oil using a double boiler, (Bain Marie method) or in a microwave. Once all ingredients have melted, remove from heat, let cool to below 140 F. degrees and add essential oils.

Stir essential oils in and quickly and carefully pour in to the [plastic deodorant tubes](#) or silicone molds. Let sit on the counter for 4-6 hours or until completely cooled.

Frankincense and Myrrh Lotion Bar - makes 4 - 2oz tubes.

Ingredients: Follow the above instructions for other lotion bars- tubes.

[Coconut oil](#) - 1/3 cup

[Shea butter](#) - 1/3 cup

[Beeswax](#) - 1/3 cup

15 drops each of [Frankincense](#) and [Myrrh](#) essential oils

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JUST FOR MEN



If they have a beard:

Men that have beards usually want to keep them healthy looking. They can dry out just like other hair and so adding a bit a conditioning oil will help their beard look amazing.

You can use any of the following carrier oils or a blend of them, and add scenting as desired.

[Avocado oil](#), [Jojoba Oil](#), [Camellia Oil](#), [Vanilla infused Jojoba Skin & massage oil](#)

Beard Oil Recipe #1

Carrier oil - 2 ounces

[Sandawood](#) or [S'woods](#) - 6 drops

[Petitgrain](#) - 2 drops

[Bergamot FCF](#) - 2 drops

[Clary Sage](#) - 2 drops

Blend well, use a few drops after you have shampooed and dried your beard. Comb or brush thoroughly.

For a another scent choice use the following essential oils added to the carrier oil

Beard Oil Recipe #2

[Frankincense](#) - 4 drops

[Myrrh](#) - 3 drops

Carrier oil - 2 ounces

Beard Oil Recipe #3

[Patchouli](#) - 6 drops

[Juniper Berry](#) - 3 drops

[Cypress](#) - 2 drops

Carrier oil - 2 ounces

Beard Oil Recipe #4

[Spruce Needle](#) - 4 drops

[Cedarwood](#) - 3 drops

[Douglas Fir Needle](#) - 2 drops

[Vetiver](#) - 2 drops

[Lime](#) - 2 drops

Carrier oil - 2 ounces

Any of these recipes of essential oils without the carrier oil can be added to Body Spray base to make a cologne or an after shower body spray for men too. Just mix the essential oils together and add to two ounces of Body Spray base.

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READERS Contributions - Really easy Holiday Gift Ideas

I'm not too crafty but many of you are. If you have some simple Holiday gift ideas please send them to me and we'll include them in the next issue of the Newsletter.

We had a few readers send us their gift ideas over the years. The first one is very easy to make and I agree would be a great hit. All of them are fairly easy and inexpensive to make.

If you have more suggestions please let us know, as there will be at least one more Newsletter where we can share simple to make homemade gifts and there should be plenty of time for the last minute crafty people to put together some of these "FROM THE HEART" gifts made.

Gwen S. writes: Tea Cup Cozies

One year I took fine bird seed, added a few drops of a relaxing essential oil. [Lavender](#) my favorite but you can use any and let it age a few days.

Then I filled square, round or heart shaped pouches made out of fabric in the dimensions of approx. 4" x 4" so that they were still fairly flat but thick. I stitched these shut and used them as "saucers" or tea cup cozies.

The heat of the hot cups of tea would release the fragrance of the oils and add to the relaxation experience while sipping on the hot tea. Everyone loved them.

Susan S writes: Table Decoration

One of my favorite gifts to make is also one of the easiest!

Take a small ivy bowl (the almost-sphere bowl found in craft stores), fill with [dried flowers](#) and a small set of Christmas tree lights, then add some essential oils to the dried flowers (a homemade potpourri).

Add a bit of lace or mesh to the top tied on with a bow with the plug of lights hanging out. Plug it in and, voila! A lovely and cheerful gift that smells great! I have one in the dark corner of my kitchen which makes me happy to look at.

Rae T writes: Neck Wraps

I would like to make rice bags and would like to scent them, can you help?

We wrote Rae back with this information: Although we have not made any rice bags, they can be easy to make.

You need cloth or a tube sock. Rice and a dried herb and/or flowers. Suggested are dried [Lavender](#), [Chamomile](#), Rosemary and Sage. (you may need to get those from the spice isle)

Add your desired Essential oils or an essential oil blend to your herb and flower mixture.

Blend this in a glass jar for a few days.

Then add a couple of tablespoon to your rice and add to the cloth bag or sock. Stitch it closed.

Make sure the cloth or socks you use are made from 100% cotton. Essential oils sometimes can deteriorate synthetically made fabrics.

The rice bag can be heated in a microwave for 2-3 minutes. The rice will absorb the heat, the heat will release the essential oils.

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The rice bag can be placed on sore necks, legs, etc. or ones that are chilled too!

An alternative that I saw on making these therapeutic bags is to use flax seed or dried soy beans in place of the rice. In place of the dried herbs and flowers, you can use a couple of herbal tea bags.

Pauline H writes: Smelly Gelly Jars

I make a Smelly Gelly Jar.

You need to buy a product from the Home and Garden section that is used to keep the soil moist for extended periods for your house plants.

The brand I used was called "Soil Moist". It is a product that will hold many times it's weight in water /liquid. The beads or crystals are made from polyacrylamide copolymer.

To make the Smelly Gelly Jars.

I took 1 part of the "Soil Moist" and then added 3 ounces water and 1 ounce vodka.

I stirred that in and let the soil moist swell. Then after an hour or so, I added about 5 ml of my [favorite essential oils.](#)

[To some I added Lavender,](#) some I used Birch Hill Happenings [Mint Energizing blend](#) and another their [Calming blend.](#)

I then put this mixture in a fancy Jelly Jar, I used some lace and fastened it on the top of the jar with the Jar ring.

The great thing about these air fresheners is that although they dry out after a couple months, you can revive them with a little water and more essential oils.

I gave them as gifts with an attached card and instructions on reviving them.

We are still using one in our bathroom after almost 2 years! Of course I'm still reviving it!! I know of people that have also used Knox Gelatin to make air fresheners similar to this but understand they dry out rather quickly. We would like to Thank everyone providing these great suggestions for easy to make holiday gifts.

How about any of the following?

HOLIDAY MIST SPRAYS

[Clove Bud](#) - 40 drops

[Cinnamon](#) - 30 drops

[Ginger](#) - 30 drops

[Orange](#) - 20 drops

Mix with Pure distilled water (4 ounces) or our [Room Spray Base](#).

Shake well and mist Spray bottles available

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How Much Essential Oil to do I use making my Personalized products and Gifts?

by Penny Keay

Before long you will be busy making those personal gifts we all like to make for our friends and relatives.

Again, it is a wonderful and fun way to introduce them to essential oils. Soon they will see why you enjoy the wonderful benefits these precious oils provide. And you get to have fun along the way too.

We are often asked, how much essential oil to add to unscented lotions, shampoos, and massage oils. Also about how much to add to other liquids where they are applied to the body or used into the air (Spray misting).

The general rule of thumb in aromatherapy is to use a 2% or less dilution of essential oils when added to any finished product that is to be applied to the skin. Of course, there are exceptions.

The simple thing to remember about adding essential oil to your final product is its intended use. Ask yourself, if the final product is going to remain on the skin or washed off?

Any essential oils in the blend should be about a 1- 2% dilution or less if it will be left on the skin such as in a lotion or cream or body spray. If used on a baby or the elderly reduce the dilution to .5% to 1%.

If your blend is going to be used in a product that will be washed off or rinsed away, you can blend it stronger - up to a 5-10% dilution. Not this strong for young children though.

Products that are washed off or rinsed away include: Shampoos, Hair Conditioners, & Shower gel. Again, though if you are using it on a child less than 5 years or the elderly reduce the dilution to 2-5%.

Lotions or products used on and left on the skin such as toners and massage oils should only be blended in a 1- 2% dilution, again less if used on babies or the elderly.

Here are some general guidelines that are easier than having to do the percentage calculations. Remember these are guidelines and usually will give your finished product a nice scent.

Although the particular essential oils used in the blend may need adjusting. Some essential oils such as Peppermint are very strong and you may only need a drop or two to make a wonderful smelling blend. Others are much softer and may end up being the bulk of the percentage of your blend.

The suggested amounts of essential oils to use in most base products are:

Mixed with Massage oils

- 6 drops per ounce of carrier base. This is about 1% dilution - you can triple the drops per ounce to make a 3% dilution but do be careful as 3% is a fairly strong blend for a general massage.

Shampoo, Conditioner or Shower Gel

- 10-12 drops per ounce of product base. Because this will be 'washed' off you will see that you can increase the amount of essential oils used in these types of products.

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Mixed with Lotions and creams

- 6 drops per ounce of [Lotion or Cream carrier base](#). This is about 1% dilution and makes a nice light scent because this is something that is left on. Remember use less if for babies or the elderly

Room spray

- added to our [Room spray base](#) (as it has preservatives and you want your recipient to be able to use it for several weeks). Varies with the essential oils used but it is not unusual to be as high as 50 or more drops per 4 ounces of water. Make sure you use an emulsifier to help keep your essential oils in suspension in water-based liquids. Always add the instructions to shake well before spraying.

Linen spray

- added to our [Linen Spray base](#) (as it has preservatives and you want your recipient to be able to use it for several weeks). Again, since this is usually a bed pillow or bed sheet you will want to keep the dilution or concentration lower. You don't want to have the scent too strong for sleeping. Use about 10-12 drops per ounce of liquid. Always add the instructions to shake well before spraying.

Body spray

- Added to the [Body Spray base](#) (as it has preservatives and you want your recipient to be able to use it for several weeks) Keep the percentage to 1%. Use only 20-24 drops per 4 ounces of liquid base.

Bath salts

- very popular this time of year. Again this one is figured a little different. It is based on the Per Bath amount. Most folks add about 1/2 - 1 cup of bath salt blend to the tub.

You have to make sure your directions are clear to the recipient of your bath salts especially if you are making them a 'jar' full of Bath Salts.

The rule is that in a bathtub you should use no more than a combined total of 8 drops of essential oils to the tub. If they are to add 1/2 cup of Bath salt then your blend should contain 8 drops of essential oils.

You need to be aware of this and give good directions for use. I have seen other recipes for bath salt and they don't give the directions on how to use and if by chance you intend it for 2 or 3 bath tub uses and they add the whole jar at once to the tub of water, potentially they could have a skin irritation (depending on the essential oils you used). And you don't want that to happen.

So, if you want them to use 1 cup of bath salts then the Bath Salt needs to again be blended so that the 1 cup of bath salts would contain just 8 drops of essential oils.

Personally, I like to add more Salt in my Tub. We have an extra-large tub and to stay within the recommended guidelines for using essential oils, I use my Bath Salt Base blend. It's just a wonderful blend of [Sea Salt](#), Epsom salt and Sodium bicarbonate equal parts of each. I mix this up ahead of time and keep in a seal container. I'll add a cup to 2 cups of salt but I'll ONLY add up to the 8 drops of pure essential oils to my tub, while the water is filling. Sweet Bliss for me!

My favorite include: [Calming Blend](#) of course. Unless I'm feeling a little under the weather. Then its 4 drops of [Four Robbers blend](#) and 4 drops of [Pure Cleansing blend](#) in a nice hot tub!

You could also just make an unscented Bath Salt blend and include several bottles of essential oils with instructions to only add 3-8 drops of essential oils to the tub while it is filling.

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Hope this will help you decide on how much to use in your blends. As always, if you should develop any kind of irritation, then you should discontinue use and reformulate your recipe for next time.

Also for beginners, start with a little, just a couple drops of essential oils and only add more to your blends as needed. You can always add more to a formulation but it's really tough to take it out!

Last but not least **WRITE YOUR FORMULATIONS down!!** This is a must so you don't have to repeat your experimentations later! Happy Blending!

PLUS you never know if someone wants to make some of the same for their family or friends.

Wow! That would be an awesome compliment to you! The creative one!

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