



How to Make Herbal Compresses

Expert
Reviewed

Three Parts: [Selecting the Herbs for the Compress](#) [Gathering Your Supplies](#) [Making the Herbal Compress](#)

Herbal compresses can help to relieve sunburns, skin irritation, headaches, chest congestion, and swollen muscles.^[1] You can apply this herbal remedy hot or cold to your skin until the condition has been relieved. To make your own herbal compresses, you should start by selecting herbs for your specific medical need. You can then gather the necessary supplies and create the herbal compress to relieve your ailment.

Part
1

Selecting the Herbs for the Compress

1 Use arnica and chamomile for bruises, aches, and pains. Arnica is a great herb for minor bumps, bruises, aches, and pains as it is anti-inflammatory and can reduce pain. However, you should never use arnica on broken skin or open wounds.^[2]

- You can also use chamomile or a combination of arnica and chamomile for bumps, bruises, aches, and pains. Chamomile has natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory properties as well.

2 Go for peppermint for headaches. Peppermint is a great herb for soothing a headache, especially when used in a cold compress. You can also use peppermint for muscle sprains and strains.^[3]

3 Use calendula and plantain for irritated skin. You can use herbs like calendula and plantain for skin that is irritated due to a rash or a skin condition like eczema or acne. These herbs are vulnerary, making them ideal for irritated, inflamed skin.^[4]

- You can also use the herb comfrey in your compress as well to sooth irritated skin. It has healing, anti-inflammatory properties.

4 Try eucalyptus for chest or nose congestion. You can use eucalyptus to ease any congestion you are having in your chest or your nose. This herb is also good for sinus issues, particularly sinusitis.^[5]

5 Use aloe vera for a sunburn. You can soothe a sunburn by applying an herbal compress made of aloe vera, a known anti-inflammatory. Aloe vera has been used for the treatment of burns for centuries.^[6]

6 Make a lavender compress for puffy eyes or skin. Lavender is a good calming herb, as it can help to reduce puffy eyes or swollen skin. You can also apply a lavender compress to give yourself a nice, soothing facial once a week.^[7]

- Tea tree is a good herb for reducing puffy skin. You can also use tea tree to sooth bruises, bumps, and irritated skin.

Part
2

Gathering Your Supplies

1 Use dried herbs or essential oils. You can make herbal compresses using dried herbs or herbs in the form of essential oils. You can get both types at your local health food store or online.^[8]

- If you need to make an herbal compress quickly, you may opt for essential oils as they are easier and quicker to use than dried herbs.
- You can also use an herbal tea bag for an herbal compress in a pinch. Make sure the tea bag contains herbal ingredients suitable for your issue.^[9]

- 2 Get a cotton or linen cloth.** To make the compress, you will need a cotton or linen cloth. The cloth will need to be strong enough to soak up the herbs and lay flat on your skin. You can also use a piece of gauze or cotton balls.^[10]
 - If you do not have access to medical supplies, you can use a clean tube sock in a pinch. The sock will need to be large enough to cover the affected area on your skin.^[11]
- 3 Gather your other supplies.** In addition to herbs and a piece of cloth, you will need a large clean bowl to prepare the compress. You should also have access to a tap with cold and hot water.^[12]
 - Depending on your ailment, you may apply a hot herbal compress or a cold herbal compress to your skin. You should make sure you have access to hot and cold water so you can soak the herbs and the cloth in water that is a suitable temperature for your needs.

**Part
3****Making the Herbal Compress**

- 1 Infuse the dried herbs in hot water.** If you are using dried herbs, you will need to infuse them in hot water to then use for your herbal compress. You can also use any leftover infused water for herbal tea.^[13]
 - To make an infusion, put the dried herbs in clean water in a sauce pan. Bring the mixture to a boil and let it simmer for 15 minutes. You should then let the infusion cool before you use it for a compress.
- 2 Put six to twelve drops of the essential oil in the bowl.** If you are using essential oils for your herbal compress, you can simply put six to twelve drops in a clean bowl. You will then add water to the bowl and mix the essential oil into the water.^[14]
- 3 Make a cold compress for bruises, sprains, and headaches.** You should use cold water for your herbal compress if you are using it for bruises, sprains, and headaches. Wash your hands before you prepare the compress.^[15]
 - Soak the cloth in the infusion once it has cooled or in the essential oil and cold water mixture. Once the cloth has soaked for about a minute, wring out any excess liquid.
 - Apply the compress to the affected area, securing it with safety pins so it does not slide off, if necessary. You can leave the cold compress on the area for 10-15 minutes and re-apply as necessary.
- 4 Create a room temperature compress for eczema and sunburns.** You should use room temperature water for an herbal compress made to treat skin irritation like eczema, acne, or a sunburn. Wait until the infused water cools to room temperature or mix room temperature water with the essential oils.^[16]
 - Soak the cloth in the water and then wring out any excess liquid.
 - Put the herbal compress on the affected area. Leave the room temperature compress on the area for 10-15 minutes at a time. Re-apply as necessary.
- 5 Apply a hot compress for chest colds, sore throats, and digestive issues.** You can use warm to hot water for herbal compresses made to treat chest colds, sore throats, and digestive issues. Hot herbal compresses are also good for menstrual cramps and bloating.^{[17][18]}
 - Soak the cloth in the hot infused water or the essential oils in hot water. Wring out any excess water and make sure the cloth is warm to the touch but not scalding hot.
 - Apply the herbal compress on the affected area and leave it on for 10-15 minutes at a time. Apply it again as necessary, dipping the cloth in the water every time.
 - Never apply a hot herbal compress to broken skin or open wounds.

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Things You'll Need

- Dried herbs or essential oils
- A clean linen or cotton cloth
- A clean bowl
- Access to hot or cold water

Sources and Citations

1. http://www.ndhealthfacts.org/wiki/Herbal_Poultices_and_Compresses
2. <http://frugallysustainable.com/2012/05/creating-a-kitchen-pharmacy-how-to-make-an-herbal-compress-and-poultice/>
3. <http://frugallysustainable.com/2012/05/creating-a-kitchen-pharmacy-how-to-make-an-herbal-compress-and-poultice/>

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