

Liniments

What is a Liniment?

A liniment is a topical preparation used for external application to the skin. It typically consists of herbal extracts or essential oils combined with a solvent such as alcohol, vinegar, or oil. Liniments are commonly used for relieving muscle and joint pain, as well as for their anti-inflammatory and soothing properties.

Benefits of Liniments

1. **Pain Relief:** Liniments can provide relief from muscle aches, joint pain, and stiffness. They often contain ingredients that help reduce inflammation and improve circulation.
2. **Soothing:** The application of liniments can have a cooling or warming effect, depending on the ingredients used, which can help soothe discomfort.
3. **Easy Application:** Liniments are typically easy to apply and can be massaged directly onto the skin where relief is needed.
4. **Customizable:** You can tailor liniments to target specific issues by adjusting the herbs and essential oils used.

Shelf Life and Storage Guidelines

- **Shelf Life:** Liniments generally last from 6 months to a year. Alcohol-based liniments tend to have a longer shelf life compared to those made with oils or vinegar.
- **Storage:** Store liniments in a cool, dark place to maintain their potency and prevent degradation. Glass bottles or jars with tight seals are ideal.
- **Refrigeration:** Not usually necessary for alcohol-based liniments, but refrigeration can be beneficial for those with a high oil content, especially in warmer climates.

Preparing Liniments: Step-by-Step

1. **Choose Your Ingredients:** Select herbs and/or essential oils based on the therapeutic effects you desire. Common choices include:
 - **Arnica:** For bruises and muscle pain.

- Peppermint: For its cooling effect and relief from headaches.
 - Ginger: For its warming effect and ability to improve circulation.
 - Eucalyptus: For its anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties.
2. Prepare the Herbs: If using fresh herbs, allow them to wilt slightly to reduce moisture content. For dried herbs, ensure they are completely dry and free of moisture.
 3. Select Your Base:
 - Alcohol: High-proof alcohol (e.g., vodka) is commonly used for its solvent properties and preservative qualities. It extracts herbal constituents effectively and has a long shelf life.
 - Vinegar: Apple cider vinegar or white vinegar can be used as a base for those preferring a non-alcoholic option. It provides astringent properties and is beneficial for certain skin conditions.
 - Oil: Carrier oils (e.g., olive oil or coconut oil) can be used for a more moisturizing liniment but may have a shorter shelf life.
 4. Combine Ingredients:
 - Alcohol-Based Liniment: Use a ratio of 1 cup of herbs to 2 cups of alcohol. Place herbs in a clean glass jar, pour alcohol over them, and seal tightly.
 - Vinegar-Based Liniment: Use a ratio of 1 cup of herbs to 2 cups of vinegar. Place herbs in a clean jar, pour vinegar over them, and seal tightly.
 - Oil-Based Liniment: Use a ratio of 1 cup of herbs to 2 cups of oil. Place herbs in a clean jar, pour oil over them, and seal tightly.
 5. Infuse:
 - Cold Infusion: Store the jar in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks. Shake the jar daily to mix the ingredients.
 - Heat Infusion: For a faster infusion, place the jar in a double boiler or slow cooker on low heat for 1-2 hours. Keep the temperature below 120°F (49°C) to avoid damaging the herbs.
 6. Strain: After the infusion period, strain out the herbs using a fine mesh strainer, cheesecloth, or coffee filter. Ensure all plant material is removed to prevent spoilage and maintain clarity.
 7. Bottle and Label: Pour the liniment into sterilized glass bottles or jars. Label with the date, type of ingredients used, and any other relevant information. Store in a cool, dark place.

Liniments should be applied 3-5x per day or more as needed.

Tools / Ingredients

- Tinctures
- Infused Oils
- Essential Oil (optional)
- Funnels
- Bottles & Caps
- Labels

	Shelf Stable	Retains potency up to 1 yr.	Cap & Label - include “shake well before use”	
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