

How to Make Soap Without Lye

<http://knol.google.com/k/how-to-make-soap-without-lye#>

Soapmaking can be a fun hobby or craft, and there are several different techniques you can use to create soap from scratch. The old-fashioned method of making soap involves using an agent called lye, but lye can be a dangerous ingredient for beginning soapmakers to use. However, there are several ways to make soap without lye; you can make a glycerine-based soap that does not contain the caustic agent, or use a rebatching or hand-milled process of soap-making that does not rely on lye to form each piece of soap.

Why Use Lye for Soapmaking?

Lye is an essential ingredient for converting oils and fats in soap. Without it, the soap would not be able to break down when it comes into contact with water; it is commonly used in commercial soapmaking to bind all of the ingredients together; it is a very caustic agent, and can cause skin burns if too much is used in a particular mixture. Lye is traditionally used for lard-based soaps, and is often used to create the classic, 'rugged' style soap bars. When it is present in soap in the right quantities, lye soap can help relieve poison ivy rashes, reduce the symptoms of eczema, kill fleas and danger on bets, and may even work better than bleach to remove stains.

However, lye can be a particularly abrasive ingredient; if you are interested in making light and delicate soaps using everyday ingredients, herbal ingredients and essential oils, you can make bars of soap without lye. This process is often called 'rebatching' or melt-and-pour method, because you will be melting glycerin and other products into molds, and do not need to undergo the traditional soapmaking process. Many people who make hand-milled soap or handcrafted soaps rely on this process.

Benefits of Making Soap Without Lye

Lye-free soap is generally much gentler on the skin and soap makers can use a variety of essential oils and herbal ingredients to make delicately scented soap products. Lye-free soap has other benefits; you can:

- Use the ingredients to make very detailed soap designs
- Use a variety of colors
- Use freeze-dried fruits and vegetables in the soap
- Use dried petals and flowers
- Use intricate molds for the soap
- Enjoy the soap right after the molding process is complete!

How to Make Glycerine-Based Soap

Supplies and Tools Needed:

- Double boiler or crock pot
- Glycerine soap base

- Essential oils
- Fragrances
- Cocoa Butter, melted
- Coloring

The Process:

Place the glycerine into the double boiler or crock pot and set the heat setting high enough to make it melt. Melt it until all of the moisture is removed, but the soap is not too hot that it begins to bubble. First add the color so that the glycerine is evenly coated and absorbs all of the coloring. Slowly stir in your selection of essential oils and fragrances. Add the melted cocoa butter and keep stirring until the mixture is very smooth and even. When the mixture is completely bound together, slowly pour the hot mixture into molds. Allow the soap to harden in the molds until set before using.

How to Rebatch Soap

If you like a particular fragrance or type of soap from the store, you can rebatch the soap by cutting it down and then adding your own additional scents, flowers or other ingredients to it. Rebatching soap means you don't have to undergo the entire soapmaking process – any lye used to create the soap is already in it, so all you will need to do is chop up the soap pieces and use in your mixture.

Supplies and Tools Needed:

- Double broiler or crock pot
- Soap – shredded or cut into small chunks
- Whole milk
- Essential oils
- Fragrances
- Flowers, dried fruits or vegetables
- Cocoa Butter or Aloe Vera, melted
- Coloring

The Process:

Place the shredded soap into a double broiler or crock pot, then add the milk to it. Heat it until the soap melts completely, but do not allow this mixture to bubble or foam up. Next, add the color, oils, fragrances and other items and keep stirring everything together. Pour the soap into the molds, and let it settle for a few weeks until the soap is very firm and hard.

Some people who use the rebatching process for soap like to use goat's milk to create a very smooth texture. Goat's milk can be found at health foods stores, gourmet food stores and some grocery stores. You can also purchase it in bulk if you will be making soap with this process on a regular basis.

Finding Soap Recipes that Do Not Contain Lye

You can find dozens of books and guides for natural soapmaking, and many herbal stores and natural food centers offer classes in making soap without lye. In most cases, you will be working with natural ingredients and no animal products – vegetable soap recipes and

essential oil-based recipes are becoming increasingly popular as people move away from using and making milk-based and lard-based soaps.

You can find hundreds of natural soap recipes online. Some valuable resources for soap made without lye include:

SoapNaturally.org: http://www.soapnaturally.org/soap_recipes/index.html

Cranberry Lane: <http://www.cranberrylane.com/recipes.htm>

Miller's All-Vegetable Soaps: <http://www.millersoap.com/soapallveg.html>

Making soaps without lye offers a number of benefits for the skin, and you can use a variety of minerals, vitamins and ingredients to treat specific skin conditions. Using herbal oils and some types of scents gives you a chance to be creative with aromatherapy blends.

Whether you're a beginning soap maker or want to try some new recipes for your soapmaking hobby, you can get started with popular soaps such as:

- Chamomile soap
- Citrus soaps
- Honey based soaps
- Coconut soap
- Chocolate soap
- Oatmeal soap
- Bentonite Clay soap
- All-vegetable soaps
- Coffee soaps
- Cranberry soap
- Vanilla soap
- Aniseed soap
- Soymilk soap
- Buttermilk soap
- Lavender soap
- Mint soap
- Pumpkin soap
- Olive soap