

## **Favorite herbal compress recipes**

### **Bob's all-purpose herbal blend**

The all-purpose mix that I prepare and use with my clients consists of:

*Lemongrass 2 parts*  
*Eucalyptus 2 parts*  
*dried ginger pieces 1 part*  
*ginger powder 1 part*  
*peppermint 1/2 part*  
*galangal 1/2 part*  
*and salt.*



For each compress I prepare, I add approximately 50% of freshly-smashed ginger root, and a pinch of camphor crystals, if desired.

***Here are some other compress blends you might want to experiment with:***

**Decongestant blend:** Good for clearing congestion in lungs and sinuses. Spend extra time working on the chest, lung area, upper back and throat:

*Eucalyptus leaves*  
*Ginger root*  
*Kaffir lime leaves, or fresh lime rind*  
*Cloves*  
*Camphor crystals*

**Relaxing blend:** This sweet-smelling mix is good for general relaxation and to relieve stress:

*Peppermint*  
*Ylang-ylang flowers*  
*Jasmine flowers*  
*Rose flowers*  
*Lemongrass*  
*Salt*

**Skin treatment and cleanser:** Good to cleanse the skin, open pores and care for insect bites and superficial cuts and wounds:

*Eucalyptus leaves*  
*Galangal root (fresh or dried)*  
*Turmeric (fresh or dried)*  
*Salt*  
*Lemon, Lime or Orange rind*  
*Citrus essential oil*

**Stimulating blend:** Good to energize you and lift your spirits.

*Ginger root*  
*Lemongrass (fresh stalks if possible)*  
*Camphor crystals*  
*Cinnamon sticks*  
*Peppermint*

## Herbal bath infusions: procedure and recipes

If you have never experienced a Thai herbal bath soak, you're missing out on one of life's simple pleasures :-). Herbal bath infusions can be made fresh, just for the bath, or they can be prepared using a warm compress that just came out of the steamer after a Thai massage. If you are using fresh herbs that have not been pre-steamed, be sure to soak the sachet in the tub for a few minutes in extremely hot water. To prepare the bath, follow these guidelines: Place the sachet directly under the faucet and allow only hot water to run directly over it. Use the hottest water you have available, and allow it to run slowly over the sachet until the tub is filled to approximately 1/3 of its volume. Close the bathroom door so the fragrance of the herbs doesn't leave the room. Return in a few minutes to see how things are going. With your hand or another object, stir the water around, and remove the herbal sachet and squeeze it a few times so the herbal tinctures are released into the water. Stir the bath again, and continue to fill the tub with more extremely hot water, or temper the water with a bit of cold, so the next 1/3 of the tub will be close to the temperature you desire for the bath. Prepare the bathroom with anything else you might desire, such as a candle, a glass of water, a cup of herbal tea, etc.



**NOTE:** Before preparing an herbal bath, always shower and wash your body first. This removes surface dirt, grease and sweat from the skin, and allows the herbs to work at an optimal level. Place the herbal pack under hot running water and slowly fill your tub. Soak for 10-15 minutes at the hottest temperature you can bear.

**Cleansing and Detox Thai bath** *Ingredients:* galangal (30%), lemongrass (30%), ginger (30%), kaffir lime (10%), and pandan extract. This recipe uses the healing properties of Thai herbs to revitalize the mind and cleanse the skin. In a muslin bag, place

5-6 slices of dried or fresh galangal (or one handful of cut and sift dried galangal), a handful of dried lemongrass, 6-8 ripped kaffir lime leaves (or a large pinch of kaffir lime power), and a mixture of fresh, pounded ginger plus ginger powder. Then add a few drops of pandan extract to the sachet and tie it closed. If desired, you may add to the bath water a few more drops of pandan extract.

**Invigorating Thai bath** *Ingredients:* lemongrass(20%), peppermint (20%), eucalyptus (15%), fresh ginger (15%), cloves (15%), salt (10%), rose petals (5%) Use dried and/or fresh lemongrass, peppermint, eucalyptus and rose. (If fresh, make sure to tear and crush leaves and petals. Plant surfaces should be broken and irregular for optimal medicinal value.) Smash and tear ginger root into small pieces, and pull them apart with your hands so the pieces are "stringy." Crush fresh cloves in a mortar and pestle, or if not available, use clove powder.

**Relaxing Thai bath** *Ingredients:* lemongrass (20%), rose petals (20%), lavender (20%), ginger (20%), salt (10%), lime or lemon rind (5%) , honey (5%) Use fresh and/or dried herbs and roots (if fresh, crush and tear as indicated above). Cut the rind off of the fruit, including the white flesh directly under the skin. Place all herbs, roots and fruit in a muslin bag, but put the salt and liquified honey directly into the bath water and mix thoroughly.



## Homemade Thai hot herbal balm , and relaxing balm

*Adapted from Kelly Bornt Kidson, Bob Haddad, and other sources.*

In Thailand, traditional herbal recipes are often more popular than commercial items. Natural remedies are often preferred more than mass-produced items or chemical alternatives. Herbs, roots, rhizomes, plant leaves and tree bark are used because of their natural tonifying, rejuvenative, and antibacterial properties.

Medicated rubbing balm is a favorite topical application, and in Thailand it is made in small batches by individuals or small companies, who sell jars to markets and herbal apothecaries. Medicinal balms soothe sore muscles, and alleviate discomfort due to colds, congestion, and sinusitis when applied to the chest and throat. Here is a basic recipe for an all-purpose blend.

### Medicated (hot) balm: Ingredients

10 drops essential oil of peppermint  
10 drops essential oil of eucalyptus  
5 drops of camphor oil  
5 drops essential oil of clove  
60 ml coconut oil (or you may use olive oil)  
15 g beeswax (a small amount)

Heat oil and beeswax in a double-boiler over low heat. Stir until wax is melted. Remove from heat. Stir in essential oils, and pour into small glass jars or metal containers to cool.

Note that commercial Thai “hot” balm is available in several strengths, so you may adjust quantities of essential oils in this recipe. This recipe calls for essential oils, but extremely strong decoctions of fresh herbs may be used as well by combining fresh herbs in a pan with a pint of water. Boil to reduce water by 70%. Strain, and combine the liquid with oil and wax, and continue cooking over low heat until water has evaporated, making sure not to boil the oil. Remove from the heat and cool.

### Relaxing balm for working the face and neck: Ingredients

8 drops lavender essential oil  
2-3 drops lemongrass essential oil 60 ml coconut oil (or you may use olive oil)  
15 g beeswax (a small amount)

Follow the cooking recipe above. If it is too soft, re-heat and add a little more beeswax. If it is too thick, add a little more oil.

