

### **Basic dry herbal compress blend**

An excellent all-purpose dry mix is the one mentioned below. In most cases, all of these dry ingredients are available around the world from herbal wholesalers and online companies, where they are often described as "cut and sifted." This means that the dried herbs, plants and rhizomes are prepared and cut in a uniform shape and size. When you find sources for each of the main herbs in your area, order several pounds or kilos of each ingredient and store them unopened in a dark place.

Always mix dry materials outside if possible. This way, the powders and fine particles in the herbs escape to the outside air, instead of settling on your floor and furniture or penetrating your nose and lungs. Make sure to mix the herbs in a completely dry container or a large plastic bag, and don't allow any water or moisture to make contact with the dry herbs. Store the mix in large plastic zip-lock bags, or in large airtight glass or plastic containers at room temperature in a dark place such as a closet. Stored in this way, herbs should retain their medicinal properties for up to one year.

#### ***All-purpose dry herbal blend***

lemongrass (2 parts)

eucalyptus (2 parts)

dried ginger pieces (2 parts)

ginger powder (1 part)

peppermint (1 part)

dried galangal pieces (½ part)

rock salt ( ½ part)

Directions: All the ingredients listed above are dried. For each compress you prepare with this all-purpose dry mix, add approximately 40-50% (by volume) of freshly-smashed and ripped ginger root. Don't simply cut the ginger with a knife. Instead, smash the pieces with a blunt heavy object and then pull apart the fibers. In fact, whenever you use fresh herbs and roots, make sure to tear and crush them, since plant surfaces should be irregular for optimal transference of medicinal properties.

Mix all ingredients in a small bowl and pack everything into a muslin drawstring bag (or directly onto a cotton cloth) and sprinkle some camphor crystals on top before tying and wrapping the compress. Camphor crystals will sink to the bottom with use, and that's why they shouldn't be added to the pre-made dry mix.

### **Re-using and storing used compresses**

Whenever possible, do not re-use freshly-made compresses with multiple clients for more than one day. Instead of discarding a compress after each use, you can replenish it with fresh herbs in-between clients, or modify it and give it to each client to take home as a bath infusion. Bath infusions are discussed later in this chapter.

### ***Using one compress for multiple clients***

If you use one compress throughout the day on multiple clients, keep it in the steamer on a very low “warm” setting all day long, and check your water level every few hours. Whenever possible, change the outer cotton wrapper for each new client. This is a hygienic concern but it’s also important to minimize “energy transference” from one person to the next (see below.) If you are using compresses for light duty, as an occasional accompaniment to your Thai massage routines, then a compress may be used from one day to the next, as long as you keep it in the refrigerator in an airtight plastic bag. If this is the case, refresh the compress with a new outer cover, a small amount of new herbs, a few pieces of fresh ginger, or an extra pinch of camphor. Use your best judgment.

### ***Energy concerns***

If a compress has been used in a session where there has been a strong reaction of some kind, especially an emotional release when a person has cried or recalled past trauma, it is always best to discard the compress and to never use it ever again. If you feel any outside energy has been transferred to the compress, be safe, and immediately dispose of it. Do not use it on another person, or give it away as a bath infusion, and do not use it on yourself. Instead, empty the contents of the compress onto the soil outside, or into a compost heap.

### ***Do not re-steam used compresses that have dried out***

Some people allow compresses to completely dry out and then steam them a few days later again to re-use on another person. Please don’t do this! Mold can easily grow on drying compresses and in this way, it can be transmitted to another person’s skin. Cladosporium and fusarium fungi are allergenic and toxigenic molds that can grow and spread even at colder temperatures. Respiratory issues are the most common problems that result from inhaling or otherwise coming into contact with these molds.