

How to Make Tinctures - Step by Step

(WikiHow)

What You Need

1. Mason jar(s) or other wide mouth jar with lid
2. Unbleached muslin cloth
3. Label & marker
4. Food-grade, non-GM solvent (40% alcohol, 5% apple cider vinegar or vegetable glycerin)



Purchase quality alcohol.

The preferred type of alcohol for producing a tincture is [vodka](#) - this is owing to its being colorless, odorless, and fairly flavorless.

If you cannot obtain vodka, [brandy](#), rum, or whiskey can be substituted.

Whatever alcohol is chosen, it must be 80 proof (namely, 40% alcohol) to prevent mildewing of the plant material in the bottle.

It is also possible to make a tincture from quality [apple cider vinegar](#) or glycerin.

The alternatives may work better where the patient refuses alcohol.



Use a suitable container.

The container for the tincture should be glass or ceramic.

Avoid using metallic or plastic containers because these can react with the tincture or leach dangerous chemicals over time.

Items such as a Mason jar, a [glass bottle](#) with an attached stopper, etc., are ideal for steeping a tincture.

In addition, you will need to get some small dark glass tincture bottles for storing the tincture in once it has been made; these bottles should have a tight screw-on or tight clip-on lid to prevent air intrusion during storage but to allow for ease of use.

Ensure that all containers are both washed clean and [sterilized](#) prior to use.



Prepare the tincture.

You can prepare a tincture by measurement or by sight; it really depends on your level of comfort with simply adding [herbs](#) and judging by eye, or whether you feel more comfortable adding them by measured weight.

Also, you should know whether you want to add fresh, powdered, or [dried herbs](#) to the tincture. Some suggestions for adding the herbs in the order of fresh, powdered, or dried are as follows:

Add enough fresh chopped herbs to fill the glass container. Cover with alcohol.

Add 4 ounces (113g) of powdered herb with 1 pint (473ml) of alcohol (or [vinegar](#)/glycerin).

Add 7 ounces (198g) of dried herb material to 35 fluid ounces (1 liter) of alcohol (or [vinegar](#)/[glycerin](#)).



Stir.

Using a butter knife, stir around the edge of the glass container to ensure that air bubbles are broken.



Seal the container.

Place it into a cool, dark area; a cupboard [shelf](#) works best. The container should be stored there for 8 days to a month.

Shake the container regularly. Humbart Santillo recommends shaking it twice a day for 14 days, while James Wong recommends shaking it occasionally.

Be sure to label the steeping tincture so that you know what it is and the date on which it was made. Keep it out of the reach of children and pets.



Strain the tincture.

Once the [steeping](#) time is finished (either the tincture instructions you're following will inform you of this or you'll know already from experience but if not, about two weeks is a good steeping time), strain the tincture as follows:

Place a muslin cloth across a [sieve](#). Place a large bowl underneath to catch the strained liquid.

Gently pour the steeped liquid through the muslin-lined sieve. The muslin will capture the plant material and the liquid will pass through into the bowl underneath.

Press the herb material with a wooden or [bamboo](#) spoon to squeeze out some more liquid, and lastly, twist the muslin to extract any leftover liquid from the herbs.



[Decant](#) the liquid into a prepared tincture bottle.

Use a small funnel for this step if you don't have a steady hand. Tighten the lid and date and label the tincture.

If you're storing this for long-term without using until later, consider sealing the caps with [wax](#).



Store and use.

A tincture can have a shelf life of up to 5 years owing to the fact that alcohol is a preservative.

Pay attention to the properties of the particular herbs you've used & check your recipe's guidelines (in terms of shelf life).

Follow the instructions relevant to your tincture for usage, and consult a qualified herbalist if you need more information.

Video

["How to" video by *Mountain Rose Herbs*](#)

(see next page for "Tips" & "Warnings")

Tips

- Avoid using pots made of steel, iron, and any other metal. Some herbs react to them.
- Tinctures last longer than dried herbs, usually up to 2-5 years.
- A coffee filter can be used in place of the muslin cloth.
- It is cheaper to make your own tinctures than to buy them from a health store.
- You can make combinations of herbs if you have instructions to follow from a reputable source.
- You can "burn off" the alcohol by putting the dose into a cup of boiling water and drinking as a tea.
- You can control the quality of the herb product in the tincture by making adjustments; follow the tincture instructions.
- When unable to purchase 100 or 80 proof alcohol, make your own by freezing a lower type of concentration (e.g. from vodka) by freezing it - the resulting liquid part of alcohol is considered pure, and therefore can be used as a substitute.

Warnings

- Some herbal remedies that are fine for the general population can be harmful for specific members of the population, such as infants, children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and persons with lowered immune systems or allergies. Know the properties of the herbs and the possible complications of the patient!
- High concentrations (about 40+%) are flammable so watch out if you are working near heat, or especially open flames.
- For dosing information consult the "Physician's Desk Reference for Herbal Medicines" or a reputable herbalist book. Again, if you don't know, consult your doctor or a qualified health professional before using.
- Keep out of the reach of children and pets.
- Always consult your doctor or a qualified health professional before using any herbal treatment. If you don't know what you're doing, then don't do it; get expert advice.