

Homemade Soap

These days, "handmade" can mean unique, high-quality, and, often, *expensive*. But it doesn't have to be. Teach your teen self-sufficiency by showing her how to create her own products at home. Take your first plunge into handcrafting with this neat and tidy soap recipe.

Don't worry, you're not actually making the soap from scratch, but by adding food color and scents (called additives in the world of handcrafting) the process still allows for creativity and hands-on fun. Experiment with herbs and scents from your own home. Adding sugar or salt will create a natural exfoliant. Cinnamon gives your soap a holiday smell. Honey is a great relaxant. Here's a creative tip from the pros: Pack an exfoliant, such as oatmeal, onto the mold before you pour the soap and you'll get a unique look.

What You Need:

- 1 or more pounds of basic bar soap
- Grater
- Water or milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon assorted additives per pound of soap: sugar, salt, cinnamon, honey, or oatmeal all work well
- Soap molds or muffin tin

What You Do:

1. Use a food processor or cheese grater to finely shred unscented and uncolored bar(s) of soap for the "base."
2. Put about half of the shredded soap in a pot, using a double boiler works best.
3. Add just enough water or milk to cover the soap. Milk burns easier, but if you do it right it will make a smoother soap.
4. Put the pot on low heat and as the soap melts add more of the shredded base soap. Stir well, soap can easily begin to burn.
5. As the water or milk evaporates, add a little more to the pot.
6. When the soap is melted, add any scents or additives.
7. Pour the soap into molds. They don't need to be fancy molds, even cupcake tins work fine. Bang it down to get rid of any air pockets.
8. Cover the mold with a towel overnight.
9. Put the mold in the freezer for a few hours the next day, then remove the soap from the mold and enjoy.

By combining scents and trying different colors you'll not only create a perfect gift for any friend, you'll also show your middle schooler how with some hard work and imagination you can create or improve upon anything you want!

