



DIY natural skincare gifts

By Gemma Hurditch for CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine).

Every festive season luxury skincare items are sure to appear somewhere on our present list. If you have the time and inclination, you could make your own for a really special gift.

DIY skincare recipes that require fresh ingredients, such as avocado in a face mask, are not ideal as gifts. Unless used immediately the ingredients can quickly turn rancid, or look unappealing. Best save those for your own pampering New Year renewal programme!

The easiest way to go for your festive gifts is to master one or two recipes with longer-lasting ingredients. Try out our suggestions below for recipes that suit most skins types, and have fun experimenting with essential oils to make variations.

Nourishing moisturizer

Christmas is usually a season of drier skin due to the indoor heating and the cold weather outside, so a nourishing/balancing moisturiser can be a real winner for all the family.

5 tbsp Extra Virgin Coconut oil
1 ½ tbsp Oil – Avocado/Castor/Almond oil, or for oilier or younger skin choose Jojoba oil
2 drops of Geranium essential oil
2 drops of Lavender essential oil



Gently warm the coconut oil in a heatproof bowl suspended in a saucepan of water over a low heat. Slowly pour in the Almond or other 'carrier' oil and mix gently. Remove from the heat and stir in the Geranium and Lavender oils. Pour into glass jars, pre-decorated if wished. Leave to cool before putting lids on. They are ready for use right away.

Variations

There are lots of changes you can make to personalise your gift. For example:

- Coconut oil soothes sensitive and irritated skin. Shea butter will do the same.
- Castor oil is cleansing, in fact you can use it on cotton wool as a cleanser, but make sure that the oil is organic.
- Lavender or Chamomile oils are soothing and suit all skin types.
- Patchouli and Sandalwood oils are traditionally thought of as 'masculine' scents.
- Peppermint and lemon oils are reviving and refreshing.
- Orange and geranium oils are purifying and uplifting.

Important: Make sure you use only good quality essential oils, as fragrance oils can be full of toxic nasties.

Feet-treat

Other products that will keep include foot balms.

Decant some coconut oil into small gift jars from a larger jar of organic coconut oil (you may need to stand the jar in warm water until it becomes liquid), pour into your gift jars and add 10 drops of peppermint essential oil per every 30ml of coconut oil.

Bath bombs

These can be a great way to relax and warm up on a cold winter's night and they make a lovely gift which can be beautifully presented. You'll need to invest in a bath bomb mould, which is a round mould like a tennis ball that opens in two halves. You'll find simple recipes on-line from the manufacturers of bath-bombs, and if you want to get creative, you can add several drops of natural food colouring, or dried lavender or rose petals.

It's worth remembering that chemicals applied to our skin as creams, lotions or make-up can be absorbed directly into our blood stream. It pays to be just as careful about what we put on our skin as what we eat, so we recommend keeping ingredients natural and preferably organic.

Of course, looking after our skin means eating well to ensure that we are getting all the nutrients we need, reducing stress, and addressing any imbalances in our microbiome (the bacteria in our gut). A consultation with a CNM trained Naturopath, or studying a CNM course can promote both skin health and overall health. Plan your path to a healthy 2018!

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