

Various soap making techniques

Cold Process Method

The **cold process method** is substantially more complicated, neatly mixing science with art. Unlike melt and pour soap making, the cold process method involves creating your own soap base from scratch.

How? Through a chemical reaction called saponification.

Saponification is the grouping of a base and an acid to form a salt. In other words, you mix Sodium Hydroxide, also known as lye (which is your base) with an oil or fat, (which is your acid) to form soap (which is your salt).

As the chemical reaction occurs, other ingredients are added. Some of these additional components change with the reaction, and some remain the same, but are embedded within the soap.

Out of the three soap making methods, this seems to be the most popular technique for home soap makers.

With this technique you get the extra value of knowing exactly what goes into every bar of soap and are able to completely eliminate the use of artificial ingredients if you so desire.

Hot Process Method

The **hot process soap making method** is very similar to the cold process method except that heat is used to speed up the saponification process. Heat is applied at different stages using an oven, crock pot, or even a microwave, depending on your method.

This method is more historical in nature. I think you've all seen the picture of a pilgrim mixing a huge pot of soap over an open flame...

One huge disadvantage to this style of soap making is that it can sometimes be difficult to remove the soap from its mold. Also, depending on your hot process method, it can sometimes be hard to get the soap into the mold. Hot process soap making has a nice advantage in that the cure time is greatly reduced. So, no more waiting weeks on end to use your new soap!

Melt and Pour Soap Making Method

The **melt and pour method** could be the simplest method of them all or could be the most complex depending on the intricacy of your project. So what is the process? Well, it's really straightforward:

1. Buy a pre-made soap base.
2. Melt the soap base into a liquid.
3. Add extra ingredients like soap dye, essential oils, herbs and nutrients.
4. Pour the soap into your mold of choice.
5. Decorate and design if desired
6. Let it harden.

That's it! Simple, right? Since this could potentially be the easiest of all the soap making methods, it is an absolutely wonderful way for beginners to start out making their own soap. As your melt and pour skills grow, you may find yourself eventually creating wonderful and detailed works of art to display in your bathroom. Even if you decide to make just a basic bar soap, you can explore your creativity through the mixing of scents, and adding colors.

**NACB: cold process is the most ideal soap making method since no external heat is used so the goodness of the natural ingredients are preserved as much as possible.*

Sodium Hydroxide - Commonly known as lye, this is what transforms our premium vegetable oils into pure natural soap. All bar soap is made with it. If you make the soap properly though, there is no active lye left in the final bar.