

# HOW TO MAKE YARROW TINCTURE

Making a tincture at home requires very little in the way of equipment and ingredients. Essentially, all you'll need is a jar with a tight-fitting lid, a funnel, cheesecloth, and vodka.

For the jar, I recommend using a mason jar made with amber glass. A regular mason jar will work fine, but amber glass helps to block out sunlight and preserve the potency of the tincture. It's no problem at all if you end up using a clear glass mason jar, you'll just need to make sure you keep it stored in a dark place.

When it's time to decant the tincture, a basic funnel lined with a few layers of cheesecloth will work beautifully.

I like to use Smirnoff vodka as the menstruum when I make tinctures (a menstruum is the term for the liquid in a tincture). It isn't expensive, it has a clean taste, and it always produces excellent results.

You can use any type of ethyl alcohol that's at least 40 percent (or 80 proof ) alcohol such as brandy, gin, or rum. You don't want to go any lower than this since you need the alcohol to act as an antibacterial agent, otherwise there's more of a potential for spoilage.

Never use rubbing alcohol (also known as isopropyl alcohol) for making tinctures as it's toxic to ingest.

If you don't want to use alcohol, you can make another kind of herbal extract called a glycerite tincture with food-grade vegetable glycerin. The method is pretty much exactly the same, and I've included instructions in the notes section of the recipe card below. [\[link\]](#)

Traditionally, tinctures made with yarrow leaves are used externally, think cuts, burns, and bug bites, whereas tinctures made with yarrow flowers are taken internally for cold and flu symptoms. I sometimes just combine the leaves and flowers to make a multi-use tincture in a single bottle.

While I'm on the subject of bottles, I always store finished tinctures in amber glass bottles that have a dropper. Tincture dosages are measured by the dropperful, which takes out all the guesswork, and the amber glass helps preserve and protect the contents of the bottle. To make a tincture with fresh yarrow leaves and flowers, roughly chop or grind up the plant matter — the more surface area that's exposed the more potent the finished tincture will be. Fill a clean mason jar about 3/4 of the way full with chopped yarrow, resisting the urge to pack the jar too tightly.

Completely cover the yarrow with vodka, or your choice of high-proof alcohol, and seal the jar with a lid.

If you're using dried yarrow flowers, you'll only need to fill the jar 1/2 way full. Dried plant material is very concentrated when compared to fresh material and it absorbs liquid efficiently, which results in expansion as the tincture sits.

Store developing tinctures in a cool, dry place away from light. Every couple of days, give the jar a gentle shake. If you notice the alcohol level lowering, add a bit more until the yarrow is completely covered again. The alcohol prevents mold growth from occurring, so keep a close eye on it throughout the process.

Tinctures need about 6 to 8 weeks to develop before they're at full strength. Although it might be tempting to strain earlier, that extra time will ensure you're rewarded with an effective, super-potent tincture. [00]

When it's time to strain your yarrow tincture, the process is easy.

Simply line a funnel with cheesecloth, or if you aren't working with particularly fine yarrow particulates, you can just use a fine mesh strainer. If using a funnel, strain the tincture directly into a glass bottle, squeezing the remaining plant material to remove every single last drop of liquid.

**ALTERNATIVES TO YARROW TINCTURE** You don't have to wait 6 weeks to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of yarrow, if you have fresh yarrow available you can quickly make a poultice to use for external wounds.

Fresh yarrow leaves can be ground into a paste and applied directly to the skin in the event of cuts or burns. If you're out on a hike or away from the campsite, you can even partially chew the leaves with your teeth until a rough paste is formed, although full disclosure: the leaves will be very bitter.

To keep the poultice in place, cover it with a length of gauze or muslin and secure with a loose knot.

**YARROW TINCTURE** Keep this powerful and easy-to-make yarrow tincture on hand for cuts, burns, cold symptoms, and menstrual cramps.

## **MATERIALS**

- Fresh or dried yarrow flowers and leaves, roughly chopped
- Vodka or other high-proof alcohol (\*see notes for making a glycerite tincture) **TOOLS**
- Pint mason jar (or any other jar with a tight-fitting lid)
- Funnel
- Cheesecloth
- Dark amber dropper bottles
- Adhesive label or masking tape (for labelling tincture)

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Fill a clean, empty mason jar 3/4 full of fresh yarrow leaves and flowers or 1/2 full of dried yarrow flowers.
2. Cover the fresh or dried yarrow with alcohol, making sure the contents of the jar are completely covered.
3. Screw the lid on tightly and gently shake the contents of the jar. Place in a cool, dry location away from light, allowing the extraction to occur over the next 6 to 8 weeks.
4. Give the contents of the jar a gentle shake every couple of days.
5. Keep an eye on the alcohol level, adding more alcohol to cover the plant material if needed.

6. Once the tincture is ready to be decanted, line a funnel with cheesecloth and place the tip of the funnel into the neck of a dark amber glass bottle. Pour the solvent and the yarrow leaves and flowers into the cheesecloth-lined funnel, pressing to make sure all of the liquid makes into the bottle.
7. Label the tincture with its contents, date of production, recommended dosages, and suggested usages. Store in a cool, dry area away from light.

**NOTES** \*To make a glycerite tincture: cover the plant material completely with a preparation of 3 parts glycerin to 1 part distilled water. As the glycerite tincture develops, it will need to be shaken every day.