

How to Make Loofah Soap

One of the best things about being in the great outdoors is the feeling of becoming one with nature. Often that means you get a little, or a lot, dirty! This activity shows how to tackle the grime and teaches some interesting facts about soap making and a unique plant called the loofah.



What You Need:

- Large loofah sponge
- Block of glycerin soap – available at craft stores
- Soap fragrance (optional) - available at craft stores
- Glass measuring cup
- Metal spoon
- Microwave
- Plastic wrap
- Tall glass drinking glasses
- Knife
- Scissors

What You Do:

1. Dampen the loofah in water and squeeze out the excess. Cut the loofah in half with the scissors into 3 inch pieces.
2. Cut a generous piece of plastic wrap and sit a piece of loofah down in the center of the plastic. Pick the plastic wrap up and lower the loofah into one of the glasses, with the plastic wrap covering the sides of the glass. Do this with the other pieces. Make sure that the plastic wrap edges hang over the edge of the top of the glass so that you can pour the soap into the cup without it touching the glass.
3. Next, cut the glycerin soap base into squares and put them into the glass measuring cup. Begin to heat this in the microwave at 30 second intervals. Do not heat the soap for more than 30 seconds at a time. Do not let the soap boil. Stir the soap in between.
4. When the soap is melted you can add your fragrance. Add to the specifications of the product that you purchased. Most likely it will not be very much. Fragrances are very concentrated, so use caution.
5. Pour the soap in the glasses, over the loofahs. Let them sit overnight to set up and cool.
6. Remove the soap from the drinking glass and then remove the plastic wrap. If you have trouble removing it from the glass, put it in the freezer for about 10 minutes.
7. Use a knife to cut the loofah soap into slices. You can store this for a few months. It makes a great exfoliating soap and it really scrubs well!

Did You Know?

- The discovery of soap was accidental. It was by chance that a mixture of animal fat, rain water and ashes mixed together. This chemical reaction is called saponification.
- Early soap making was not an exact science, which resulted in harsh lye soap that often burned skin and differed from batch to batch. Today soap is made with vegetable oils and sodium hydroxide.
- The loofah plant is a vegetable that is grown on a vine in tropical and subtropical areas. It can be eaten like a gourd but is most known in North America for its use as a bath sponge.

