

Ginger Oil: The Pain Relief Oil

I have discussed the benefits of ginger in my site for some time now. I am particularly impressed by its anti-inflammatory properties, which make it one of the most potent home remedies you can use to relieve pain and motion sickness.¹ ² This is why it's not surprising to learn that ginger oil, extracted from fresh ginger root, also offers these whole body benefits and so much more.

What Is Ginger Oil?

Warm, spicy, and energizing, ginger oil comes from ginger root (*Zingiber officinale*), a pungent, peculiar-looking underground rhizome. A member of the Zingiberaceae plant family, this perennial herb grows up to three to four feet high, with narrow spear-shaped leaves, white or yellow flowers,³ and small tuberous rhizomes with a thick or thin brown skin. Its flesh can be yellow, white, or red, depending on the variety.⁴

Ginger has been valued for thousands of years for its medicinal and culinary properties, particularly in ancient Chinese, Indian, and Greek civilizations.

The *Mahabharata*, a 4th century BC Indian Sanskrit epic, even describes a stewed meat dish that uses ginger as an ingredient. In Ayurvedic medicine, ginger is considered a key plant.

Eventually, ginger was exported to the Roman Empire and became widely traded in Europe by Arab traders. It was also used as an ingredient in sweets. By the 13th to 14th century, ginger – along with black pepper – became a commonly traded spice. It was said that a pound of ginger could be traded for a sheep.⁵

Ginger is one of the most flexible food ingredients today. It can be eaten fresh or dried, steeped as a tea, or grated into your vegetable juice (one of my personal favorites). The dried root is the source for tinctures and supplements, and is also transformed into ginger oil, an energizing and uplifting oil with a wide range of uses.

Ginger oil has a thin consistency and is light yellow in color, with a pleasantly pungent aroma. The scent varies according to the distillation and quality of the ginger used. However, the most aromatically superior ginger oil is said to come from distilling fresh ginger root.

Uses of Ginger Oil

The benefits of ginger for relieving pain are widely known today, and while I prefer using fresh ginger (eaten raw, grated into your vegetable juice, or steeped into tea), using ginger oil can provide these wholesome benefits as well.

When used topically, ginger oil can help relieve aches and pain, as well as promote normal blood circulation.⁶

Aromatherapists also value ginger oil's soothing and warming qualities to help address digestive problems. In fact, this is one of ginger oil's most popular uses:

relieving any kind of digestive upset, such as nausea, indigestion, diarrhea, gas, and even morning sickness.

Here are some ways to use ginger oil for various health problems:[7](#)

- **Apply two to three drops in a diffuser, or place on a cotton ball or your handkerchief, and then inhale.** This will help reenergize and revitalize your body, mind, and soul.
- **Mix two to three drops in an ounce of carrier oil, and use as a massage oil.** This helps relieve backache, arthritis, muscle pain, rheumatism, and fractures, as well as stimulate your circulatory system and revitalize your libido. You can also add it to your hot bath or put a few drops on a hot or cold compress, and then apply it to the affected areas.
- **Inhale via a diffuser or vaporizer to relieve sinusitis, sore throat, and runny nose.** It can also work as a decongestant.
- **Massage a drop into your abdomen to relieve gas and diarrhea.**

Composition of Ginger Oil

Ginger oil benefits mostly come from its powerful mono- and sesqui-terpenoids, such as neral, geranial, 1,8-cineole, zingiberene, B-bisabolene, and B-sesquiphellandrene. It also contains a-pinene, B-pinene, camphene, linalool, borneol, γ-terpineol, nerol, geraniol, and geranyl acetate.[8](#) [9](#)

Benefits of Ginger Oil

Ginger oil's many benefits are attributed to its anti-inflammatory, digestive, expectorant, antiseptic, carminative, analgesic, and stimulating properties. It's helpful in alleviating various health problems, such as:[10](#)

- **Stomach and bowel related problems** – Ginger oil helps promote proper digestion, and can be a great remedy for spasms, dyspepsia, indigestion, and flatulence. It can also increase your appetite, which is great for people who are trying to gain weight.
- **Food poisoning** – Ginger oil's antiseptic and carminative properties can help treat food poisoning, as well as intestinal infections and bacterial dysentery.
- **Malaria and yellow fever** – A study found that ginger oil can help repel *Anopheles culicifacies* mosquitoes, which is the primary carrier of malaria in India.[11](#)
- **Respiratory problems** – Ginger oil can help relieve and treat coughs, flu, asthma, breathlessness, and bronchitis. Fresh ginger can actually remove mucus from throat and lungs, and is commonly added to tea for its soothing effects.
- **Pain** – Ginger and ginger oil can help reduce prostaglandins, which are the compounds associated with pain. For more information about how ginger relieves pain (particularly after-exercise pain), check out my article [here](#).
- **Heart ailments** – Using ginger oil regularly can help reduce your risk of blood clots and arteriosclerosis, as well as help decrease the bad cholesterol levels in your blood.[12](#)

How to Make Ginger Oil

Ginger is traditionally steam distilled to produce ginger essential oil, But you can also create your own ginger oil infusion at home. Here's what to do:[13](#)

Materials:

Fresh ginger
1 1/2 cups olive oil
Oven-safe bowl
Cheese grater

Procedure:

1. Rinse a cup of fresh ginger, including the skin, thoroughly, and let dry for a few hours.
2. Pour the olive oil in an oven-safe bowl.
3. Chop the ginger and then shred using a clean cheese grater. Add to the olive oil and mix well.
4. Put the mixture in the oven and leave it to simmer under low heat (150 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least two hours.
5. Pour the mixture through an unbleached cheese cloth to filter it and take out the bits of ginger. Once all the oil has been filtered, squeeze out the remaining oil from the cheese cloth.
6. Transfer the ginger oil into clean vials or bottles and store in a cool dry place.

This ginger oil infusion can stay fresh for up to six months.

How Does Ginger Oil Work?

Ginger oil is composed of 90 percent sesquiterpenes, which are responsible for its anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and other healing properties.[14](#) When applied topically or inhaled, it has a warming and energizing effect. Ginger oil can also be ingested, but I advise doing this under the supervision of a qualified health physician.

Is Ginger Oil Safe?

As long as it's not used in very strong concentrations, ginger oil is generally safe, as it is non-toxic and non-irritating. If you have sensitive skin, please do a skin patch test before using ginger oil (or any essential oil, for that matter) to see if you have any allergic reactions to it.

You should also consider diluting ginger oil in other carrier oils. Some of the best choices are citrusy and spicy oils like neroli, frankincense, bergamot, ylang-ylang, rose, and sandalwood.¹⁵

Ginger oil may be phototoxic, so avoid applying it on skin areas that will be exposed to the sun within 24 hours after application.¹⁶ I also advise pregnant women and nursing moms to use ginger oil with caution, even though it has been deemed useful for morning sickness. Consult your healthcare provider before use. Avoid administering this oil to very young children as well.

Side Effects of Ginger Oil

If you have any sensitivity to ginger root, do not use ginger oil at all. Some potential side effects of ginger oil are heartburn, sores in mouth, nausea, and skin rashes (when applied topically).¹⁷ If you are taking any type of medication, consult your physician first if it is safe to use or ingest ginger oil.