

Wool Wash Recipe

By Sandy Derniat, [January 15, 2000]

Sandy has developed the following American version of the 1997 *Aussie Wool Mix for Woolens* by Claude Circiarelo.

“Americanized” Wool Mix for Woolens

10.5 oz. [300 grams] shredded Ivory soap [bar, not detergent]

1 cup [200 ml] denatured alcohol

50 ml oil of eucalyptus

Mix soap with denatured alcohol.

Add oil of eucalyptus and stir.

Store in wide-necked screw top jar.

To Use: Measure out 1 tablespoon mixture [stir before measuring] per garment. Dissolve in a small quantity of hot water and then pour into lukewarm washing water. Hand wash or machine wash on wool [gentle] cycle. **No rinsing needed! Be careful!** If you are using an automatic washer, set a timer or watch the clock to make sure the machine does not go into a rinse cycle or you will have defeated the purpose of using this product. Actually, I don't even agitate my woolen items. I let them soak in the mixture for 20-30 minutes, then set the machine to spin cycle to remove the wool wash.

Some more notes from Claude: No need to rinse [the eucalyptus oil preserves the wool] **unless** white garments are to be stored for a long period. In that case, rinsing reduces the risk of yellowing. After washing, squeeze gently and roll in a towel to remove excess water . . . or . . . place garment into a pillowcase and spin out in the washing machine. Keep garments blocked in shape while drying. Do not dry in direct sunlight [weakens wool]!

I've used the above recipe with good results. The garments I washed with it came out soft and clean with only a hint of eucalyptus sent that dissipated as the garments dried. What I didn't like about it was the use of the Ivory soap. When dissolved the soap made the water look “scummy” and I wondered how much of that “soap scum” was going to be deposited on my garments. Was there a better product that could be used? After consulting with some friends who were spinners and experienced wool fleece washers, I developed the following recipe:

“Superior” Wool Mix for Woolens [coming next month].