

Essential Oil Dilution Chart for Hair

How many drops of essential oil to add to your carrier oil or shampoo, and how to patch test a new mix before you put it on your scalp.

WASH-OUT SCALP OIL

1% to 3%

LEAVE-IN SCALP OIL

0.5% to 2%

IN SHAMPOO OR CONDITIONER

1% to 3%

AMOUNT YOU'RE MIXING	0.5%	1%	2%	3%
1 teaspoon	under 1	1	2	3
1 tablespoon	1	3	6	9
2 tablespoons (1 ounce)	3	6	12	18
3 tablespoons	4	9	18	27
2 ounce bottle	6	12	24	36
4 ounce bottle	12	24	48	73
8 ounce bottle	24	48	96	146

What you need

- ☐ Your essential oil
- ☐ A carrier oil, like jojoba, coconut, or grapeseed oil
- ☐ Measuring spoons and an amber or blue glass bottle

Mix it

- 1 Start with the lowest strength listed for your use, but check your essential oil’s individual limit first. Some oils need a weaker mix.
- 2 Find the amount of carrier oil or shampoo you’re using, then read across to your strength. If it says “under 1,” make a larger batch instead of rounding up.
- 3 Add that many drops, close the bottle, and shake it. Using two or three oils? Split the drops between them.

Every number is a count of drops

This chart counts 20 drops per mL, but drop size varies with the oil and bottle, so your mix may be a little stronger or weaker.

Use it

- 1 Wash-out: massage the diluted mix into your scalp, then shampoo it out. Wash it out right away if it causes itching, burning, or discomfort.
- 2 Leave-in: massage a few drops of the diluted mix into your scalp, then leave it in until wash day.
- 3 Shampoo or conditioner: only add essential oils if the product’s directions allow it, and follow those directions.

Patch test a new mix first

- 1 Pick a quarter-sized spot on the bend of your elbow or the underside of your arm.
- 2 Apply a thin layer, as thick as you’d use on your scalp, and leave it on as long as you would there.
- 3 Repeat twice a day for 7 to 10 days.
- 4 No redness, itching, or swelling? Use it. If your skin reacts, gently wash the mix off and don’t use it again.

Oils with lower limits

- ✖ Lemongrass: 0.7% or less in any mix. More can irritate your skin.
- ✖ Bergamot: 0.4% or less in anything you leave on.
- ✖ Thyme 1.3%, ylang-ylang 0.8%, jasmine 0.7%: keep each at or below that in any mix. More can irritate your skin or cause an allergic reaction.
- ✖ Cold-pressed lemon and bergamot can cause burns when treated skin is exposed to sunlight or tanning beds. The risk can last 12 hours or longer. Don’t assume washing them off makes sun exposure safe.

Storing your mix

- Store it in a glass bottle with a tight lid, somewhere cool, dry, and out of the sun, so air and light don’t break it down.
- Label it with the oils and the date.

