REVIEWS

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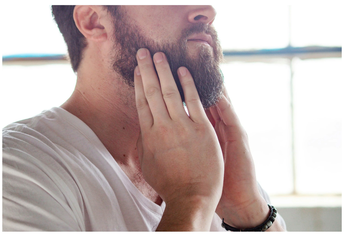
Beard Oil vs. Beard Balm: What's the Difference, Dude?

If you want to tame your face-mane, you'll need to choose the right tool for the job.

Guys: Your beard is a beast. But if it were an actual animal, what would it be? A giant grizzly standing on its hind legs outside a cabin in the woods? A ferocious lion stalking prey in the Serengeti? A porcupine shooting deadly quills at unsuspecting predators? A docile llama at a petting zoo? Or maybe a feral rabbit that looks soft but is actually savage?

Whether it embodies the spirit of a hungry jungle cat or a cuddly farm animal, your beard can only look its best if you resolve to tame it and train it. That requires knowing how to take care of your beard by choosing — and then religiously using — the right beard care products. But what are the best beard products for a face full of unwieldy whiskers?



Although there are legions of beard care products to choose from, the best place to start if you want to establish a new or better beard care routine is with two staples that form the foundation on which all other beard maintenance rests: beard oil and beard balm.

Beard Oil vs. Balm: The Basics

By nature, beards are bristly. Their course hairs are rough, renegade and unruly. Beard oil and beard balm are beard care products whose shared superpower is making them softer, stronger and more style-able. But what, exactly, is the difference?

Beard oils are … well, oil. Essential oils, to be exact. Billy Jealousy Devil's Delight Beard Oil, for example, features a mix of sunflower, soybean, sweet almond, avocado and jojoba oils, the combination of which conditions beard hairs, infuses them with hair-fortifying vitamins and even helps them repel germs. Beard balms, on the other hand, are made primarily of waxes and butters. Along with beard-nourishing sunflower, coconut and castor seed oils, for example, Billy Jealousy Devil's Delight Beard Balm contains beeswax and shea butter, which sets it apart from beard oil — even though the end goal is the same: a more beatific beard.

When and How to Use Beard Oil

Whether your beard is short and neat or long and prophetic, the best reason to use beard oil is to moisturize and protect your facial hair, as well as the skin underneath it. If your beard is itchy, coarse or flaky, beard oil is the beard grooming wingman you need in your corner. Although you can use it whenever your whiskers are feeling parched, perhaps the best times of day to apply it are after a shower — when your pores are open and primed to drink all the good stuff your beard oil has to offer them — or before bed, as an overnight treatment. Just a dab will do you; dispense a pump or two into your palm, rub your hands together, then rub it into your beard, down to the roots. Bam! A mug that's as healthy and hydrated as it is hairy.

When and How to Use Beard Balm

The oils in beard balm give it the same moisturizing properties as beard oil. The wax and butter, however, gives beard balm something that beard oil lacks: body. That makes beard balm ideal for guys who want to not only fortify their beard, but also style it. Stray, stubborn hairs that stick up when you want them to lie down, or curl right when you want them to curl left? Beard balm's got you covered. Use it in the morning as the final step in your face-care routine; just scoop out a small amount with the back of your thumbnail, rub it in between your palms, then apply it evenly from neckline forward, styling your beard as you go if it's long enough. If it's not, fear not: Even on short beards, beard balm provides a nice finish in the form of long-lasting shine and moisture.

And the Winner Is …

Here's the bottom line, boys: If you like the way your beard looks, but not how it feels, use beard oil to conquer your dry, scratchy face. If your beard is as unruly as it is dry, use beard balm to get both the feel and the look that you want. As long as you don't use them together — which might make your mug greasy — the result will be a healthy, handsome face … whether your beard is channeling a bear or a bunny.

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