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## Laurie's Student (Decorator) Icing – Stiff Consistency

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Notes: Great for roses and very white cake icing. Very resistant to warm weather. Okay at room temp for 3 days, fridge for 4 weeks, freezer for months.

### Ingredients:

**1 1/2 cups/12 oz. solid white vegetable shortening\*** **Hi-ratio shortening, found in cake stores, is the only one with the right consistency since they changed all the shortening to include zero trans-fats. When you can't buy hi-ratio,** Crisco is best (or half Crisco half hi-ratio), because it is thick and opaque (white) and will give you a bright white, firm icing. Always keep it in the cupboard, at room temperature. When recipes call for butter use room temperature butter (cold butter will form lumps). If you want to use a kitchen scale, like I usually do, a cup of Crisco = 8oz., 2 cups = 16 oz. or 1 pound. (This means you get three batches out of one large can of Crisco) You may experiment with 1/2 butter or margarine, 1/2 Crisco – or all butter/margarine (when the weather is cool).

**1 stick (4 oz.) margarine, slightly softened.** The addition of margarine helps solve some of the troubles associated with trans-fat-free Crisco, but adds a little color to the icing. When pure white buttercream is necessary you can use hi-ratio shortening or use a recipe meant to adapt to the new Crisco (LOTS of adjusted recipes at [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com) )

**\*1 teaspoon clear vanilla flavor, 1/2 teaspoon clear butter flavor** \*OR, use 1 tsp of vanilla, almond OR butter flavor) I use both to give the icing a sweet, rich, buttery flavor – quite necessary when your “buttercream” contains no butter!

**4 to 6 Tablespoons milk** (give or take) **Note:** this recipe makes an \*extremely\* stiff icing – this is to help you err on the side of caution. It's much easier to add a little extra liquid than it is to add a bunch of sugar. Plan on adding some extra liquid to achieve the right “stiff” icing for you. I.E. if you can roll it into a ball with your hands it is far too stiff.

**2 pounds pure cane confectioner's sugar** (powdered sugar) Sugar substitutes will not work for this icing. The best sugar is the kind in the plastic bags – not only does it not require pre-sifting to get the lumps out, but it also comes in 2 lb bags perfect for a batch. Measure carefully to achieve proper consistency. At home I use a scale. **Plus extra sugar, just in case.**

**2 Tablespoons Meringue Powder (optional)** **Used only in warm weather.** In this recipe it is used to lend strength and stability to the icing, and to prevent humidity from breaking down your decorations. **1 T cornstarch** may be substituted for Wilton meringue powder (as it is 50% cornstarch anyway).

**A pinch of salt (optional)** I use popcorn salt, because of its fine texture. I add this to all buttercream icings to enhance the buttery flavor.

### Instructions:

Blend the butter, shortening and flavorings together very well. Next, add 1 to 2 cups of the sugar plus half of the liquid and beat well again until very smooth. Add the rest of the sugar and the rest of the liquid (you may do this a little at a time) and beat until combined. Too much beating will make the icing break down. Use slow speeds. Add the meringue powder / cornstarch (optional) in the last batch of sugar. **IMPORTANT:** If your icing is way too stiff (i.e. the mixer makes a lot of noise), your icing needs to have a little extra liquid added to it. Add a 1/2 teaspoon of milk at a time until icing is more workable.

Scoop mixture into a Ziploc bag and freeze for up to 3 months or refrigerate for up to two weeks. Just be sure to let the icing thaw until it is at room temperature before attempting to decorate with it. In bowls, cover with a damp paper towel when not in use.

Converting icing from stiff to medium to thin consistency is only a matter of adding more of the liquid used in the recipe. Remember: if you need to make an icing stiffer you can usually just add a little more sugar.

**Stiff consistency = forms smooth, stiff peaks that hold their shape at an angle – used mainly for roses and other stand-up flowers.**

**Medium consistency = 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of milk/water per cup of stiff icing – used for piping smooth decorations that hold their shape (borders, leaves, stars)**

**Somewhere between Medium and Thin can be used for icing cake.**

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**Thin consistency = 1 teaspoon piping gel + ½ to 1 teaspoon milk/water per cup stiff icing - used for vines and writing and other decorations that will lay on cake surface.**

**Note: best and easiest thin/piping icing is the stuff from a can at the grocery store (really). Stir well and add color before using. Use a parchment bag with a very small tip to pipe intricate designs. Keep remainder in refrigerator for up to 8 weeks or freeze for later use.**

Yield: 6 cups

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