

What are Essential Oils?

Essential oils are the 'essences' extracted from a wide variety of plants and are extremely concentrated. For example, it takes the petals of around 30 roses to produce just 1 drop of rose essential oil and several kilos of lavender to produce a small bottle of essential oil.

Each essential oil has its own unique healing properties and fragrance. One essential oil may contain over 100 different chemical constituents. These oils in their natural state have been found to possess a powerful synergy. Several oils are often used in combination (as a 'blend') to promote healing on different levels; physical, mental and emotional. This is sometimes referred to as 'Aromatherapy'.

There are several ways of using the oils, for example, massage, bathing, compress, and inhalation (do not use them orally). They work by the absorption of minute quantities of the oil through the skin and also through inhalation of the aroma.

Aromatherapy in the UK is based on a holistic approach, which seeks to encourage health on all levels. For example, a person who has arthritis may be helped with a blend of rosemary, juniper and chamomile. Their feelings would also be considered. Are they angry or resentful about their condition? If so then ylang ylang might also be considered. The oils chosen would act as a catalyst to promote healing on all levels. Home use of aromatherapy is a very practical way of doing this.

The use of the oils helps promote a more balanced lifestyle. There is less likelihood to succumbing to everyday illness and the effects of stress. A balanced state of mind promotes vitality and being able to cope with difficult events. The use of aromatherapy can also stimulate the immune system, avoiding that 'run down' feeling which can often lead to colds or flu.

History of Essential Oils

Smell is one of the most powerful of all of our senses. I'm sure every one of us knows that special aroma that can take us right back to a moment in time, whether that be carbolic soap or a certain aftershave.

We know that around 3500BC the Egyptian temples were burning resins such as frankincense to clear the mind. The Romans used essential oils for massage, and aromatic herbs within the home. The Bible makes specific reference to frankincense and myrrh. In 17th century England, pomanders of oranges and cloves were used to ward off the Black Death.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the development of chemistry and the creation of synthetic drugs. Their use overshadowed the use of more traditional remedies.

In 1937 a French chemist called Rene Gatefosse burnt his hand whilst working in his laboratory. He plunged it into the nearest bowl of liquid, which happened to be lavender essential oil. His hand healed with remarkable speed. As a chemist, after much researching, Gatefosse realised that it was the healing and antiseptic powers of the lavender that had helped with his recovery.

Another Frenchman, Dr Valnet, added to this research whilst working as a medical surgeon in the Second World War that medical supplies were short and the essential oils proved to be a very effective alternative in many cases.

The work of Rene Gatefosse, Dr Valnet and several other highly respected researchers have helped in the scientific validation of aromatherapy.

Using Essential Oils in Diffusers

Use 4 - 10 drops, depending upon the size of the room (this should be mixed with the water, to full capacity of the diffuser)

Benefits

- treats emotional problems
- treats respiratory tract problems
- eliminates catarrhal conditions
- calms the nervous system
- reduces tension and anxiety
- treats throat infections
- relieves mental and physical fatigue

Applying Essential Oils on to the Skin/Massage

It is NOT recommended that undiluted essential oils are applied to the skin. They should be diluted in a suitable base oil, cream or lotion.

The essential oil content in the blend should usually be 1 to 3%, depending upon the disorder and the health of the recipient.

For a 1% blend 5 drops of essential should be diluted in 25mls of base oil, cream or lotion.

Benefits

- relieves pain
- penetrates quickly
- soothes and moisturises
- reduces tension and anxiety
- speeds up healing process
- improves blood and lymph circulation
- improves mobility
- calming to the nervous system

Emotions

Condition	Top Note	Middle Note	Base Note
Anxiety, Tension, Ongoing Stress	Orange, Bergamot, Clary Sage, Thyme, Petigrain	Chamomile, Geranium, Juniper, Lavender, Marjoram, Melissa	Cedarwood, Neroli, Jasmin, Rose, Patchouli, Sandalwood, Ylang, Ylang
Depression	Basil, Orange, Bergamot, Clary Sage, Thyme, Grapefruit	Chamomile, Geranium, Lavender, Melissa, Marjoram	Rosewood, Frankincense, Jasmine, Rose, Neroli, Patchouli, Sandalwood, Vetivert, Ylang Ylang
Emotional Exhaustion	Basil, Clary Sage	Lavender, Juniper, Marjoram	Benzoin, Jasmine
Insomnia	Basil, Thyme, Clary Sage	Lavender, Juniper, Marjoram, Chamomile	Neroli, Rose, Sandalwood, Rosewood, Ylang Ylang
Irritability		Chamomile, Cypress, Lavender, Marjoram	Neroli, Rose
Sudden Stress	Basil	Juniper, Lavender, Marjoram, Peppermint	Neroli, Rose
Fear	Bergamot	Lavender	Frankincense, Sandalwood, Rose, Ylang Ylang
Panic Attacks		Lavender	Frankincense, Sandalwood, Rose, Ylang Ylang
Uplifting	Basil, Bergamot, Lemon, Grapefruit	Lavender, Geranium, Rosemary	

Respiratory

Condition	Top Note	Middle Note	Base Note
Asthma	Clary Sage, Eucalyptus, Lemon, Thyme	Lavender, Marjoram, Peppermint, Rosemary, Chamomile	Sandalwood, Benzion, Clove, Frankincense
Bronchitis	Basil, Bergamot, Eucalyptus, Lemon, Tea Tree, Niaouli	Lavender, Peppermint, Rosemary, Cypress, Pine, Hyssop	Cedarwood, Sandalwood,, Clove, Frankincense, Myrrh, Origanum
Catarrh	Lemon, Eucalyptus, Thyme, Tea Tree, Niaouli	Black Pepper, Lavender, Marjoram, Peppermint, Pine	Cedarwood, Frankincense, Jasmine, Sandalwood, Myrrh
Coughs	Eucalyptus, Thyme, Tea Tree	Black Pepper, Pine, Lavender, Peppermint, Rosemary	Benzion, Cedarwood, Jasmine, Origanum, Sandalwood
Influenza	Eucalyptus, Lemon, Thyme, Tea Tree	Chamomile, Lavender, Pine, Peppermint, Rosemary, Juniper	Sandalwood, Cinnamon
Anti - Viral	Lemon, Sage, Tea Tree, Thyme	Black Pepper, Geranium, Chamomile	Cinnamon
Anti - Fungal	Tea Tree	Lavender	Marigold

The contents of this article are not intended to be regarded as a substitute for professional medical advice.