

**Wee changes
to help you feel
better using
essential oils**



WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL OILS?

Have you ever smelled a rose and thought oh that's lovely, yes? well you have experienced the aromatic qualities of essential oils. Or, ever had a cold and used something with Eucalyptus in it? Again, you have experienced using essential oils.

These aromatic compounds are found in seeds, bark, stems, roots, flowers and other parts of the plant. Think about peppercorns, stem ginger, scented flowers, sandalwood. It's the essential oils in the plants which give them their distinctive smell. Essential oils have been used in beauty treatments and health care practices for a very long time. You may have used it and not known you have, think of that well known chest rub when you have the cold!

There are thousands of aromatic compounds identified to date, what's important to remember though as these can be costly, that the composition of the same oil can vary depending on where it was grown, the time of year, the weather, also some can be harmful! So before investing in buying oils speak to someone who is an expert in this area.

Essential oils have been used for a very long time, for a wide range of wellness applications either as a single oil e.g. lavender on your pillow to help you sleep, or a combination of oils specific to a given purpose.

Remember also, as with all things, **ALL ESSENTIAL OILS ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE.** Before making any health choices its always wise to consult with someone who is trained in this area. The aim of this booklet is to raise awareness not to teach you to use oils. We have listed contacts at the back if you are interested in learning more. **If you have a health condition or are going to have surgery its essential you contact a clinical aromatherapist for advice.**

There are contraindications for most essential oils e.g. some essential oils can affect blood sugar levels so if you have diabetes, this is something you would need to be aware of, also, other oils are not advisable for use two weeks prior to surgery so if in any doubt at all consult a professional clinical aromatherapist. We touch on contraindications here but **this is an information booklet not an essential oil manual so if in doubt ask a clinical aromatherapist.**

Do not use essential oils with children or elderly people unless you have consulted a clinical aromatherapist as some oils are unsuitable and the dilution may need adjusted.



This brochure **DOES NOT TRAIN YOU TO BE AN AROMATHERAPIST,** it is for information only so you can make more informed choices.

HOW TO USE ESSENTIAL OILS SAFELY

USING AS AN AROMATIC

Our sense of smell is really powerful and is a tool that can cause physical, mental and emotional responses, think about smells you like and dislike and how you feel about them and you will understand what we mean.

Essential oils are absorbed by smell receptors which have a direct link to the part of the brain which supports things including emotions, behaviour and memory. Think about the smell of cinnamon e.g. for many people this immediately has them thinking of Christmas, or, warm freshly baked bread which can create a feeling of happiness or wellbeing. People selling their homes are often advised to have the smells of coffee or home baking around as this can increase the chance of a sale!!

Some essential oils can invigorate, some can calm so in choosing oils it's wise to consider the impact you want them to have e.g. if you want to use essential oils to get a better night's sleep, choose something you find relaxing.



TO USE ESSENTIAL OILS AROMATICALLY YOU CAN:

- ◆ Use a diffuser always check the instructions for use, for most diffusers you can use the oil neat but some recommend diluting in water, check what yours recommends as some need water added
- ◆ Put on cotton wool ball or pad close by, for example on your pillow, or beside your bedside table
- ◆ Make a healthier room scent by mixing oils in a spray bottle with water and mist over room avoiding polished surfaces and soft furnishings
- ◆ See further reading (1) for more information on using essential oils around the home, remember, this is an oil and oil is slippery so be aware of where you use oils so no one slips e.g. in the bath
- ◆ Adding essential oils to any product which touches your skin you need to be aware of the need to dilute it as neat essential oils can cause skin irritation and sensitivity



HOW TO USE ESSENTIAL OILS SAFELY

TOPICAL

An Essential oil blend can be easily absorbed into the skin, to help absorption you can use a light massage, this will increase the blood flow to the area as well as improving distribution of the oil throughout your body.

If you are applying essential oils to your skin its important they are diluted in a carrier oil .These carrier oils dilute the essential oil to a safer level for applying to your skin. For more information on carrier oils visit (2) in further reading section. Some oils claim to have their own health benefits and as with anything there can be a vast variation on price. However, Olive oil, Sunflower Oil and Grapeseed Oil can all be used as carrier oils and are easily available at your local supermarket.



As well as safety, using a carrier oil helps absorption even more especially if your skin is dry or flaky as it can help moisturise the skin. Care must be taken in the carrier oil you use to decrease the likelihood of skin sensitivity one which is often recommended is Coconut Oil.

As we have said already, some oils are very potent and you would not put them on the skin undiluted so a carrier oil would always be used. The recommended dilution ratios can vary depending on the essential oil being used so if using essential Oils topically it would be worth first consulting with a clinical aromatherapist to work out the blend which is right for you.

It's wise to seek advice from someone qualified or embark on further learning yourself. See (4) in further reading for courses on aromatherapy. Also, we are all individuals so age, overall health, size can again influence the dilution so if in doubt always consult a qualified and experienced clinical aromatherapist. They will also advise how often to use a topical application.

With perfumes and scented candles etc. we have become used to strong smells so at first a blend may not have much scent, overtime you will become accustomed to the new ways to experience scent so please don't add extra oils so it smells stronger, please treat the essential oils with respect.

HOW TO USE ESSENTIAL OILS SAFELY

Some areas which are beneficial to apply essential oils blends include:

- ◆ Neck
- ◆ Forehead and temples
- ◆ Chest and abdomen
- ◆ Arms, legs, bottom of feet

You can also:

- ◆ Add a few drops of oil to a warm bath just **be careful it is oil and will make the bath slippery**
- ◆ Make a hot or cold compress by soaking a towel or cloth in water, adding essential oils, and then applying to the desired area, the water becomes the carrier in this instance
- ◆ Add oil to a lotion or moisturiser and then apply to skin, the lotion or moisturiser becomes the carrier in this instance however, take care which lotions or moisturisers you use, they need to be unperfumed base creams like an aqueous cream, your local pharmacist can advise.

This is useful for people who don't react well to oily carrier oils due to skin conditions. Again this shows why if you have any health conditions including skin conditions you should speak to a qualified clinical aromatherapist to find out the blend which works for you

There are sensitive areas to avoid and DO NOT USE essential oils here:

- ◆ **Some facial areas, such as the skin around the eyes**
- ◆ **Eyes and inner ears**
- ◆ **Broken, damaged, or otherwise injured skin**



PLEASE NOTE...

There are also ways Essential Oils can be used internally but we will not cover that in this booklet as this requires the advice of a qualified clinical aromatherapist with skills and experience in this area and this leaflet is for those interested in the subject who want to learn more, not to teach people to use essential oils. I would also advise if you have a health condition or are on any medication you consult with your doctor before taking any essential oils internally.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Even though these are plants, they are still not for everyone. Plants can be toxic think deadly nightshade. There are some health conditions means some essential oils may be unsuitable, there may be some skin conditions which means oils cannot be used topically at all. **If you have any health conditions its essential you seek advice before using essential oils.**

Using essential oils on the skin undiluted maybe harmful and cause severe irritation or sensitisation. Sensitisation can vary from person to person, It's like a skin allergy which can have a severe or itchy rash. In severe cases sensitisation can cause breathing problems or even anaphylactic shock so we cannot emphasise enough, seek advice from a clinical aromatherapist or attend training if you want to learn more about using oils safely.

Once you develop a sensitivity to an essential oil its usually permanent, even if you use it diluted. It may even be you start to have a reaction to other oils or products which contain these oils so avoiding sensitisation is a priority. See section (5) in further reading.

TREAT ESSENTIAL OILS WITH RESPECT

The aim of this booklet is not to scare people out of using essential oils. There are many benefits aromatherapy can offer. Just treat oils with the same respect as medicines. As we learn more about using essential oils the safer our practice becomes so if you are interested in making aromatherapy part of your life we hope this booklet sparks your curiosity to go and learn more.



Some examples of medical conditions which mean you need to avoid some essential oils:

If you are pregnant (avoid all oils in first trimester):

Thereafter avoid Basil, Cedarwood, Clary, Coriander, Hyssop, Jasmine, Juniper, Marjoram, Oregano, Myrrh, Peppermint (which should also be avoided while nursing), Rockrose, Rosemary, Sage, and Thyme.

If you suffer from a seizure disorder like epilepsy:

It's best to avoid Basil, Fennel, Hyssop, Rosemary, and Sage.

If you have hypoglycemia (low blood sugar):

Avoid Geranium.

If you have high blood pressure avoid:

Pine, Rosemary, Sage, and Thyme.

Those with kidney problems:

Should approach Juniper, Sandalwood, and Coriander with caution.



PHOTOSENSITIVITY

The following oils can cause severe sun damage (photosensitivity): Bergamot, Mandarin, Grapefruit, Patchouli (mild); Virginia Cedarwood, and Petitgrain (very mild).

Consider any cold-pressed citrus oil a potential photosensitizer. Steam-distilled citrus oils, on the other hand, do not carry this risk.

Clary Sage should not be used when consuming alcohol, because it can greatly increase its effects. Marjoram and Chamomile can cause drowsiness.

As with all things, people can have allergies, essential oils proven to or suspected to have a history of allergies includes:

- Aniseed • Bay • Benzoin (indeed, any Styrax oil)
- Balsam of Peru (VERY HAZARDOUS) • Calamus
- Cardamom (suspect) • Cassia • Cinnamon Bark & Leaf
- Citronella • Clary Sage (suspect) • Costus
- Dill Seed (not weed) • Fennel • Bitter • Fig Leaf Absolute
- Galbanum Resin (cross sensitizing with Peru Balsam)
- Hyacinth Absolute (suspect) • Jasmine Absolute
- Junipers (suspect) • Laurel (Bay Laurel) • Lemon (suspect)
- Litsea Cubeba (suspect) • Lovage (suspect)
- Mimosa Absolute • Oakmoss Concrete (suspect)
- Orange (suspect) • Pines (suspect)
- Rose Absolute (if used in high concentrations) • Spearmint
- Tolu (balsam, VERY STRONG?) • Tagetes • Tolu Balsam
- Turpentine • Lemon Verbena (the IFRA strongly advises against the use of Verbena oil in cosmetics or perfume products)
- Ylangylang (in very high concentrations).

NOTE: Some oils should not be used by anyone except a clinically trained aromatherapist. Among them are Birch, Sage, Thuja, and Wintergreen.

ETHICAL SOURCING OF ESSENTIAL OILS

Sadly use of essential oils has caused issues with commercialisation to a point where some plants and trees are in danger, please ensure the oils you use are ethically sourced, we have provided a link at the additional reading section (6) to find out more.

SOME ESSENTIAL OILS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF AND THEIR POSSIBLE USES:

◆ Lavender

This highly versatile oil is best used for its soothing properties. Lavender relaxes the mind and body, and helps aid in reducing inflammation. To reduce stress, try adding a few drops to a diffuser or on your pillow for a good night's sleep.

◆ Peppermint

Just a whiff of this oil can provide you with a natural burst of energy and improve mental alertness. Peppermint oil can be used as massage oil and lotion. It also helps alleviate symptoms of congestion and aids in digestion. Try switching from traditional tea or coffee to herbal tea to help improve digestion most supermarkets stock a range of herbal teas.

◆ Sandalwood

This exotic oil is long lasting and can help calm and focus the senses. Applying a few drops of sandalwood oil to your body lotion can help improve skin hydration and relieve tension.

◆ Bergamot

This citrus scented essential oil is widely used in perfumes and colognes. Bergamot is used to treat stress, anxiety, as well as several skin conditions. It's important that this oil is diluted before applying to the skin, as it can potentially burn skin if applied in its pure form.

◆ Rosemary

Known for its rejuvenating effects, this oil can help relieve headaches, boost your memory, alleviate stress, and stimulate circulation in the scalp to treat dandruff and other scalp-related conditions. Try adding a few drops of rosemary oil to your shampoo for healthy, shiny hair. Caution do not use if you suffer from Epilepsy or High Blood pressure.

◆ Tea Tree

Tea Tree One of the most popular and effective essential oils, tea tree oil is widely used to fight infections and boost the immune system. Tea tree oil's healing benefits are immense and can be used to treat skin conditions, cuts and burns, dandruff, athlete's foot, and blemishes among many others. A few drops can be added to shampoo to improve scalp health again though care must be taken with the other ingredients in the shampoo.

◆ Chamomile

This oil has powerful calming benefits. It is also an effective mood booster. Chamomile can be used in steam or vapor therapy to help relieve stress.

◆ Ylang-Ylang

Ylang-Ylang This oil has calming properties and is beneficial for all skin types - especially oily, congested, or inflamed skin. Ylang-Ylang has a sweet flowery fragrance and can be found in a variety of different skin and hair products. Try blending a few drops into your lotion or add to your bath to help unwind after a long day just remember it is an oil and can make the bath slippery.

Essential oils can bring many benefits, as with anything be aware there are contraindications and use wisely. For more advice speak to a qualified aromatherapist. Remember before making any changes to your health routines it is advisable to speak to a qualified health professional, especially if you have existing medical conditions and/or on medication

There are many useful websites on the web, see (7) as an example of a useful site which also shares current research.

FURTHER READING

1. <http://www.quinessence.com/blog/10-easy-ways-use-essential-oils-around-home>
2. <http://www.aromaweb.com/vegetableoils/>
3. Book: Essential Oil Safety: A Guide for Health Professionals by Robert Tisserand and Rodney Young
4. <http://www.scottishtherapyacademy.co.uk/courses/online-courses/aromatherapy-course/>
5. <https://www.aromaweb.com/articles/essential-oils-that-cause-irritation-sensitization.asp>
6. <http://naha.org/explore-aromatherapy/sustainability-issues>
7. <http://tisserandinstitute.org/>