

WHY ESSENTIAL OILS ARE ESSENTIAL

By Joan Apter, L.M.T.

For over 5,000 years, people have worn perfumes, burnt incense and used aromatic plants with oil-bearing qualities to enhance the human experience. Although the term “aromatherapy” is new to many, the practice of using aromatic essential oils for both physical remedies as well as to influence the mind and the emotions, is indeed a true and ancient art.

What Are Essential Oils?

Essential oils are the subtle, aromatic and volatile life-force extracted from the flowers, seeds, leaves, stems, bark and roots of herbs, bushes, shrubs and trees, through steam distillation under low pressure and low temperature.

Like human beings, they are alive, both chemically and electrically. They have a direct effect on the brain through the olfactory system and skin absorption. Serving the same function as human blood, essential oils are the regenerating, oxygenating and immune defense properties of the plant kingdom.

Essential oils are naturally antibiotic, antiseptic, antibacterial, anti fungal, antioxidant, anti-parasitic, anti viral and antidepressant. They are important in bringing oxygen and nutrients to the cells and assist in the efficient disposal of carbon dioxide and other waste products. They increase blood flow, negative ions and ozone, improve the efficiency of the immune system and decrease blood viscosity. Oils enhance brain wave function, improve spiritual awareness and bring about a beautiful balance to the body. Essential oils contain a frequency that is several times greater than the frequency of herbs and food. There is not a single part of the human body and brain that is not helped by the action of essential oils.

Aromatherapy is the art and science of the use and application of therapeutic essential oils for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual balance.

A short history of Essential Oils

Many writings tell us the distillation of aromatic plants was used over 5000 years ago. Some say that Aromatherapy began in China, some say India. According to papyrus found in the Temple of Edfu, dating back to 4500 BC, the Egyptians were using fragrant oils for rituals, ceremony and medicine. Three oils used in the embalming process were cedarwood, myrrh and frankincense. Well-preserved oils were found in alabaster jars in King Tut's tomb.

According to the Bible, the three wise men brought the oils of frankincense and myrrh to the Christ child. In those days, frankincense was considered more precious than gold, both for its ability to heal and protect as well as to enhance prayer and meditation.

There are 188 references to oils in the Bible, and some, such as frankincense, myrrh, rosemary hyssop and spikenard, which were used for the anointing and healing of the sick.

During the Great Plague of the Middle Ages, perfume oils were the best antiseptics available. It was widely reported that in those terrible days of widespread death, the perfumer's were virtually immune to the plague. Up until the nineteenth century, medical practitioners still carried a little bag filled with aromatics on top of their walking sticks, so they could inhale them when visiting any contagious cases.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, essential oils were being used comprehensively in medicine.

During the nineteenth century essences were investigated more scientifically than ever before. Rene-Maurice Gattefosse, a perfumer in Grasse, France, coined the term "aromatherapy" when he immersed his badly burned hand in a vat of lavender oil. Much to his surprise, his burn healed at a phenomenal rate, with no sign of infection and with no scar. In 1928, he published his first book on aromatherapy.

Another French doctor, Jean Valnet, began to use essential oils in his treatments during the Second World War. It is almost entirely due to his work that aromatherapy is now recognized as a therapy in its own right. Valnet first published his book, "Aromatherapie" in 1964.

For over 40 years essential oils have been researched and used therapeutically in Germany, Switzerland, France and England. Aromatherapy is taught in medical schools in France and England and the oils are used by doctors in many hospitals.

Now, in the 21st Century, the rediscovery of the healing attributes of essential oils are being studied and enjoyed by people all over the globe. Why do they work?

1. Properties and Characteristics

Essential oils are chemically complex mixtures that can contain hundreds to thousands of different chemical constituents, each responsible for different healing properties.

On average, an essential oil contains one hundred chemical components such as terpenes, alcohol's, esters, aldehydes, ketones and phenols. Lavender oil contains 160 components while rose oil contains 137. These components act as building blocks for just about everything in the human body, and act upon hormones, vitamins and energy.

2. Frequency

The effectiveness of essential oils cannot be fully understood without some discussion of frequency. Frequency is the measurable rate of electrical energy flow that is constant between any two points. Everything has frequency. Dr. Robert O. Becker in his book,

“The Body Electric,” establishes that the human body has an electrical frequency and that much about a person's health can be determined by its frequency.

In 1992, Bruce Tainio of Tainio Technology, an independent division of Eastern State University in Cheney, Washington, built the first frequency monitor in the world. Tainio has determined that the average frequency of the human body during the daytime is 62 - 68 Hz. (A healthy body frequency is 62 - 72 Hz.) When the frequency drops, the immune system is compromised. If the frequency drops to 58 Hz, cold and flu symptoms appear, at 55 Hz, diseases like Candida take hold, at 52 Hz, Epstein Barr and at 42 Hz, Cancer.

According to Dr. Royal R. Rife, every disease has a frequency. He found that certain frequencies prevent and even destroy the development of disease. He suggested that substances with a higher frequency would destroy diseases of a lower frequency.

Processed/canned food has a frequency of zero. Fresh produce has up to 15 Hz, dried herbs from 12 to 22 Hz and fresh herbs from 20 to 27 Hz. Essential oils start at 52 Hz and go as high as 320 Hz, which is the frequency of rose oil. Clinical research shows that essential oils have the highest frequency of any natural substance known to man, creating an environment in which disease, bacteria, virus and fungus cannot live.

3. Lipid-Soluble

Essential oils are soluble in lipids, or fats, which is why they are easily absorbed through the skin. They can start to affect an organ within 3-5 seconds after application, and deliver 21% more oxygen to every cell in the body in twenty minutes, without detrimental effects! Essential oils stay in the body about 20 minutes to two hours, and leave no residuals. While oils are not accumulative in the body, their frequency and effect is cumulative. Their effects can last up to 5 months.

Once essential oils enter into the bloodstream they are transported into the nervous system and eventually into the brain. Because the size of the molecules in essential oils is very small, they are able to pass from the olfactory through the “blood-brain barrier”, gaining entrance to the brain. This is why essential oils, especially those high in the chemical constituent sesquiterpenes, (frankincense, sandalwood, myrrh) are able to allow gentle and effective emotional release from memories that are stored in the cells of the body.

4. The Brain Connection

The olfactory bulb, which is just above the top of the nose, is actually a part of the brain that extends from the limbic system. The limbic system of the brain, often called the “back brain” or “reptilian brain” is the seat of memory and emotion. Essential oils connect directly into the hippocampus and amygdala areas of the limbic system. In 1989 it was discovered that the amygdala plays a major role in storing and releasing emotional trauma. The only way to stimulate this gland is with fragrance, or the sense of

smell. This is why essential oils may play a major role in our effort to release emotional trauma, and may profoundly affect our mood and emotion.

How to Use Essential Oils

1. Diffuse

Essential oils are highly aromatic and therefore, many of the benefits can be obtained by simply inhaling them. You can rub the oil on the palms of your hands and inhale, or they can be diffused into the room.

Essential oils, when diffused, can be the best air filtration system in the world.

- They will:
- Purify, by removing metallic particles and toxins from the air.
- Increase atmospheric oxygen.
- Increase ozone and negative ions in the house, which inhibits bacterial growth.
- Destroy odors from mold, cigarettes, and animals.
- Fill the air with a fresh, herbal aromatic scent.

Heat is one enemy of essential oils. The “diffusers” often found in the stores with candles and lamps destroy the chemical constituents of a therapeutic essential oil. I recommend using a diffuser with an air pump and a glass nebulizer, which shatters the essential oil molecules into a micro-fine mist, leaving all of its therapeutic value intact.

2. Massage

Massage or therapeutic touch has always been part of the healing for both physical and emotional needs. When essential oils are combined with massage, the benefits are numerous. When applied topically, essential oils, or their components, travel through the layers of the skin to muscle tissue and joints and then to the lymphatic system, cardiovascular system, nervous system, endocrine system and to the glands. Circulation and lymphatic drainage and the elimination of tissue wastes are improved. The oils create peace and tranquillity and bring about keen mental awareness. Massage with essential oils opens and increases the flow of energy, balances the entire nervous system and helps to release physical and emotional disharmony.

3. Internal Application

When taken by mouth, essential oils travel to the stomach and then to the small and large intestines, liver, pancreas, organs and tissues, and reproductive system. I would never recommend taking any essential oil internally until you have verified the absolute purity of the product from independent lab studies!! Although essential oils are prescribed as medicine in France, in this country we should never use essential oils as medicines. Always consult an experienced therapeutic essential oil practitioner before deciding on any protocol with essential oils.

Distillation and oil Purity

There are approximately 400 essential oils distilled today, 100 of which are used in aromatherapy.

It is of primary importance to know the quality of the essential oil you are using. High pressure, high temperatures, rapid processing and the use of solvents or any other chemical will fracture the oil molecule, destroying the therapeutic value and altering the fragrance.

Before you purchase an oil, be sure that the company knows the origins of its oils and can produce gas chromatograms from an independent lab of each oil as proof of their purity. . Often a supplier will extract a particular chemical component of an oil and sell it to the perfume industry. It then replaces it with a synthetic chemical component and sells it to the more gullible American essential oil buyers, who then pass it on in the marketplace as a “pure” essential oil, which it is not. Synthetic, adulterated oils can cause allergies, rashes and burns. I cannot vouch for the purity of the oils in the health food and specialty shops.

Producing the purest of oils is very costly and may require several hundred or thousands of pounds of plants to extract one pound of oil. The preciousness of an essential oil reflects the amount of work it takes to extract the oil. To produce one pound of Peppermint, 35-40 pounds of plant are required. Lavender requires 175-250 pounds of plant, while it takes 5000 pounds of rose petals to distill one pound of oil. (Sixty thousand rose blossoms are required to produce one ounce of rose oil!) The jasmine flower must be picked by hand in the early morning of the first day they open. It takes eight million handpicked jasmine blossoms to produce 2.2 pounds of oil, being one of the most expensive oils on the market. The sandalwood tree must be thirty years old and thirty feet high before it is cut for distillation. Melissa requires three tons of plants to produce one pound of oil, which sells for \$9,000 to \$15,000!

Oil Usage Guide

Here are a few of my favorite single oils and blends.

Lavender (*Lavandula Augustifolia*) is often called the universal oil, being multifaceted for physical as well as mental/emotional distress. It is beneficial for cleansing cuts and wounds, and is the ideal remedy for tissue regeneration and speed wound healing, especially from burns. Lavender has been clinically evaluated for its relaxing effects. Apply on location. I never leave home without a bottle of lavender in my purse, and end up distributing it all day long to people I meet for headaches, stress, cuts, bruises and relaxation.

Peppermint (*Mentha Piperita*) Peppermint is one of the oldest and most highly regarded herbs for soothing digestion, being an anti-inflammatory for the intestinal and urinary tract. It may also help arthritis, skin conditions, food poisoning, headaches, allergies,

asthma, toothache, fever, as well as relieving pain. Massage on location, apply to bottom of feet or rub on the temples to treat headaches. Peppermint will also improve concentration, alertness and memory.

Helichrysum (Helichrysum Italicum) has been researched in Europe for regenerating tissue and nerves and improving circulation. It is considered the king of pain reduction. I have found this essential oil to be worth its weight in gold for relief of pain and inflammation. It stops bleeding on contact and will erase the pain and black and blue of bruises. I applied this blend to a chainsaw foot injury after the hurricane hit Woodstock. The next day the injured man reported that he spent the next day pain-free and was able to get a good night's sleep!

Lemon (Citrus Limon): The essential oil is cold pressed from the rind. It takes 3,000 lemons to produce a kilo of oil! Lemon has antiseptic-like properties. According to Jean Valnet, MD, the vaporized essence of Lemon can kill meningococcus bacteria in 15 minutes, typhoid bacilli in one hour, Staphylococcus aureus in two hours and Pneumococcus bacteria within three hours. Even a .2% solution of Lemon oil can kill diphtheria bacteria in 20 minutes and inactivate tuberculosis bacteria. Add 2 drops to water for purification or combine with Peppermint for a refreshing lift.

My favorite blend for purifying the air of virus, bacteria, fungus and mold contains the essential oils of Citronella, Lemongrass, Lavandin, Rosemary, Melaleuca and Myrtle. I diffuse 15 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours, or I put some of the blend on cotton balls and place them in air vents in my car, hotel rooms and offices.

I use a toothpaste that includes the antimicrobial Essential Oils of Clove, Cinnamon, Lemon, Eucalyptus and Rosemary.

HORMONAL IMBALANCES: The essential oils of **clary sage, fennel, sage, jasmine** and **lavender** have been shown by European research to have beneficial results in helping to reduce some PMS and pre menopausal symptoms. I use this blend with massage, and in the bath.

MUSCLE ACHES AND PAINS: I use an essential oil blend of **birch, juniper, marjoram, red thyme, vetiver, peppermint, eucalyptus** and **lemongrass** to assist with aches and pains, relieve muscle cramps and arthritic pain and give relief to sports injuries.

RELAXATION: The essential oils of **tangerine, rosewood, spearmint, peppermint, ylang ylang** and **lavender** are beneficial for stress, muscle cramps and tension. They assist us to relax and unwind. I use a blend of these oils on my massage clients, and they love it!

SENSUAL: The exotic oils of **ylang ylang, rosewood** and **jasmine** are specific for combating the effects of the increased chemicals in our environment, air, food and

water as well as our stressful lifestyles, which take their toll on our glandular and hormonal balance. I love taking a bath with these oils, mixed in a bath gel base.

CIRCULATION: **Cedarwood, juniper, clary sage and pepper** are beneficial for toning the skin. The oil of cypress enhances circulation, strengthens vascular walls and decongests the lymphatic system. Orange and grapefruit oils are beneficial in dissolving cellulite. I use a blend of these oils in a massage oil base, and apply topically after my shower.

IMMUNE SYSTEM: This blend is a strong support to the immune system, and contains, **cistus, frankincense, hyssop, ravenara, mountain savory, oregano, clove, black cumin and tansy**. I apply it to the bottom of my feet every day during cold and flu season and successfully avoid getting sick.

Conclusion

The educated use of therapeutic essential oils supports the burgeoning trend of individuals who want to manage their own health. According to a recent survey published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, nearly 40% of Americans utilize alternative medicine services. Visits to alternative practitioners were up 50% (689 million), nearly twice that of visits to primary care MD's (386 million.) The natural products industry has reached 20 billion in annual sales.

Daniel Penoel, MD, in his book, "Natural Home Health Care Using Essential Oils" states, "Essential oils are carriers of life force, builders of vigor and strength and generators of calm and joy. They contribute powerfully to achieving and maintaining authentic and profound global health".

I invite you to enjoy this miracle from nature's pharmacy!

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