

Aromatherapy for Health and Wellness

My love affair with aromatherapy and essential oils began about 20 years ago. I was introduced to them by a colleague at a conference we were attending. She wanted me to experience them before bedtime, but I declined. She slept peacefully. I, with all my relaxing, natural aides tossed and turned all night. The next night I experienced several essential oils and had the best most relaxing feeling of peace and slept well. From then on I couldn't get enough of the oils and started using many different oils for many different purposes. I also introduced them to my clients and continue to do so today.

Aromatherapy is the term used to describe a therapeutic treatment using natural essential oils, which enhances well-being, relieves stress and helps in the rejuvenation and regulation of the human body. Essential oils are the volatile (meaning they evaporate) liquids that are distilled from many different parts of plants including the seeds, bark, leaves, roots, stems, flowers and fruits.

Aromatherapy is beneficial for both the brain and the body. Studies have shown that essential oils have an effect on brainwaves and can also alter behavior. Used professionally and safely, aromatherapy can be of great benefit as an adjunct to conventional medicine or used simply as an alternative.

The benefits of aromatherapy are real and are being used by more and more individuals, health care professionals and hospitals. The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston uses essential oils as a complimentary treatment for their cancer patients. The hospital understands the uses, healing properties and how-to use aromatherapy to help their patients heal and de-stress. (1)

True aromatherapy involves the use of pure essential oils. Using pure therapeutic essential oils is the only way to ensure that the desired result will occur. Synthetic oils do not contain the therapeutic properties of quality essential oils and can cause rashes, burns and other irritations. * Quality oils are light and heat sensitive, and will be in a blue or brown light protective glass. Be wary if you see an oil in a clear bottle

Labeling on the bottle should provide both the common and botanical name for the oil. Stay away from oils with rubber eyedroppers since the oils react with the rubber causing it to break down and contaminate the oil.

Long before prescription drugs were our mainstay, people used plant oils to heal many illnesses and emotional disorders. Essential Oils were man's first medicine. Ancient Egyptian, Chinese Indian, and Hebrew cultures used essential oils. The Greeks, Romans and Arabian civilizations learned about oils from the Egyptians and brought them into their cultures. (2) There are over 188 references to essential oils in the bible. (3)

Essential Oils more than just smell good. They have chemical constituents or properties to support people of all ages on physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. Without getting into a science lesson, essential oils have many healing qualities. They are: anti bacterial, anti catarrhal, anti-depressant, anti fungal, anti infectious, anti inflammatory, anti microbial, anti parasitic, anti rheumatic, anti-septic, anti-spasmodic, anti-viral, analgesic, and immune stimulant (4) Many essential oils have more than one healing quality. For example, the properties of lavender include anti-depressant, anti infectious, anti inflammatory, anti microbial, anti parasitic, anti rheumatic, anti-septic, anti-spasmodic, and analgesic.

Aromatherapy is a wonderful, natural alternative to other treatment options such as prescription medications and caffeine. When used properly, there are few side effects. So how do you use essential oils? They may be used topically, applied directly on the skin. When applying oils to the skin test a small amount in a small area for sensitivity. Oils may be applied "neat", (without carrier oil like massage oil) or mixed with carrier oil. Where would a person put them? There really is no right or wrong place, other than do not put in eyes or ears. In my professional work I either let the client feel where they need the oil or I will muscle test to find the area the system wants. Applying to the bottom of the feet is always a good choice.

Essential oils may be experienced by inhalation. A person can simply smell the oils. They can also be diffused in the air by various methods. They may be used in baths and compresses. Because of their antibacterial properties essential oils may be added to dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers for greater hygiene. They can flavor water, making sure to use a glass or glass container. Oils like Lemon, Spruce or Fir can be effective nontoxic cleaners.

Essential oils are not to be heated in any way because heating them changes the chemical make-up of the oil and its therapeutic qualities. The body has the ability to heal itself. Conditions from A-Z can be matched with essential oils and can aid in this process. Popular uses of aromatherapy include treatment for stress, sleep disorders, anxiety, food cravings, depression and energy fluctuations and more.

According to Dr. Alan Hirsch, a neurologist and psychiatrist and neurological director of The Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation Institute and author of many books on aromatherapy the future of medicine lies in aromatherapy. "We're already seeing aromatherapy more and more in the treatment of patients. Ten years from now aromatherapy will be a regular part of the physician's palette." (5) Hirsch says that in the future, instead of simply prescribing valium as a sedative, a physician will prescribe a small dose of valium supplemented with lavender.

Remember the same essential oil help may help many challenges. Some of my favorite and popular essential oils and some of their uses are **Lavender**: insomnia, scarring, nervous tension, sunburns and more. **Peppermint**: headaches, motion sickness, digestive problems, increased mental accuracy (do not use if you have high blood pressure)

Oregano: colds, viral and bacterial pneumonia, digestive problems, muscles and bones (an excellent defense in today's toxic world.).

For health and well-being aromatherapy is a complimentary approach that is becoming more and more mainstream and worth experiencing. Please remember, all the references to particular essential oils are based on my experiences and are not intended to replace present medication. This is for information only. It is not meant to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease and is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. If you choose to try some of these oils please remember the cautions listed earlier.

Barbara Schwartz, M.A. is the Founder of **EQUILIBRIUM**. She is a pioneer in the education and development of effective techniques for overcoming symptoms of autism, dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, and other related problems –like anxiety, stress, fear, fall and balance issues from physical, emotional, learning and environmental conditions affecting children and adults in alarming numbers.

Ms. Schwartz has over 25 years of credentialed classroom teaching experience and is an Educational Kinesiologist, Developmental Specialist, a Certified Brain Gym® Instructor, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome Evaluator and Holistic Health Practitioner.

After much research and clinical observation, Ms. Schwartz developed a series of Integrative Brain Body Techniques that allow immediate and measurable improvement, without the risks and known dangers of medical drug treatment.

EQUILIBRIUM can provide these safe, proven, drug-free solutions to individuals, families, seniors and groups. Ms Schwartz frequently provides workshops tailored for adults and seniors, as well as classroom, home – study, daycare and camp programs for children, and teacher/parent workshops. She also works directly with adults, seniors, children and families on a private confidential basis.

As an author, frequent lecturer and television personality, Barbara Schwartz offers articles, lectures and workshops on many topics for children, adults, and the senior population.

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1. www.medicalnewstoday.com
2. Aromatherapy Pocketbook, Kendra Grace
3. Aromatherapy A-Z, Connie and Alan Higley
4. Reference Guide for Essential Oils, Connie and Alan Higley
5. www.smellandtaste.org