

AROMATHERAPY

“The language of scent
is the sweetest melody
of the soul”

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What is Aromatherapy?

The use of plant extracts, called Essential Oils, to enhance well being and healing on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels.

Essential Oils, contained within selected plant cells, are extracted from flowers (lavender), leaves (manuka), wood (rosewood) and fruit (orange), to name a few.

Many are extracted by the steam distillation method, where temperature controlled steam passes through the plant material forcing the cells to open and release the essential oil. The steam is then cooled through a condenser and the essential oil is decanted off the water (hydrosol).

How do essential oils work?

Essential oils consist of many naturally occurring chemical constituents referred to as the 'life force' of the plant and, just like the spinal fluid is to man for his survival, plants cannot function without this balance of constituents.

Properties of essential oils vary and include anti-bacterial, antiseptic, calming, uplifting and relaxing - to name a few.

They can be dispersed in water, oil or lotion for use in a variety of ways such as: baths, inhalations, creams and aromatherapy burners.

Are they safe to use?

Providing you know the benefits and considerations of the essential oil you are using and follow suggested dose guidelines essential oils are usually safe to use.

For Medical Conditions, pregnancy, elderly people and children, special considerations apply. In these instances it is best to ask for advice before using Essential Oils.

Blends and recommendations included in this handout are given for a healthy adult.

Quality is important if wanting a therapeutic benefit from your oils. Climate, country grown, harvesting methods, storage and species all contribute to the quality of the end product.

Also note that Essential Oils are 70x more concentrated than the herb or plant they are extracted from, therefore only small quantities are used.

Other safety factors...

- Only purchase Essential Oils that have the Latin name/botanical species written on the label. This ensures correct species for therapeutic benefit wanted. Labels carrying the wording 'Fragrance' are not essential oils but synthetic products and will not have desired therapeutic benefits.
- Store essential oils in dark glass bottles that have a dripulator, in a cool place away from light.
- **Never** take essential oils internally.

- Do not apply essential oils directly to the skin (unless directed to do so by a qualified aromatherapist).
- Keep out of reach of children.
- Keep away from eye areas.
- Mix essential oils thoroughly into creams, oils and water before use.
- Do not expose skin to sun or sun bed for up to 12 hours after applying citrus oils, as they are phototoxic (can cause brown spots).
- Take homeopathy an hour apart from essential oils as some wipe out its effectiveness.
- If essential Oils cause skin irritation or get into eyes, repeatedly apply carrier oil (olive oil is best) to the affected area and gently wipe with a soft clean cloth. Wash carrier oil away with warm soapy water once irritation has subsided. Seek medical advice if pain or irritation persists.

What is a good brand to use?

There are many companies offering essential Oils for sale. There are often two grades available. **The Therapeutic or Aromatherapy Range** is the best quality and the one considered for Aromatherapy. **The Natural or Essential Oil range** is still 100% pure but doesn't meet the top grade standard normally used by Aromatherapists.

It can be difficult to determine who sells what! Experience and preference prevail!

Using Essential Oils

Aromatherapy Burners

Aromatherapy burners are a vapouriser, usually consisting of a hollow pottery or ceramic stand, with a scooped dish that sits on the top. Warm water is placed in the dish that is heated by a tea light candle (small round candle in an aluminium dish) burning underneath it. Essential oils are dropped onto the heated water and evaporate into the air. Some burners are electric with thermostatic heat control. They are much safer to use as they don't overheat and have no naked flame.

1. Fill the dish with warm water.
2. Light the candle or turn electric burner on.
3. Drop 1 – 5 drops of essential oil onto the water, depending on the room size (1-3 drops in a bedroom, 3-8 drops in lounge or larger room).

Depending on the oils used the amount can be repeated every 2-3 hours.
Best not to mix varied therapeutic properties in one session.

The water in the dish will need to be topped up from time to time. This will depend on the depth of the dish and the height between the candle flame and the dish. Best to check every hour. If the water in the dish boils/bubbles this usually indicates the height between candle and water dish is too short creating too much heat, thus the water may evaporate in 30 minutes!

Creating Baths and footbaths

Large Bath

Fill bath with desired amount of water – not too hot.
Drop 3-6 drops of essential oil onto water surface
Mix thoroughly into water using a figure 8 motion 8-10 times
Get in, relax and enjoy.

Soak for at least 10 minutes but no more than 20 minutes to get the full benefit of the oils added.

Take care with citrus essential oils, as they can become skin reactive with hot water and may create stinging, red and/or itching skin for up to 30 minutes. (Apply olive oil to reduce inflammation).

Foot Bath

Fill a bowl with water to cover ankles.
Place stones or marbles in bottom of bowl as soothing/stimulating massagers and skin cleansers.
Drop 2-3 drops of oil onto water.
Immerse feet in water and soak as for bath above.

A small cup (1/2 cup for foot bath) of epsom salts can be mixed into the water to help with relaxing muscles, cleansing skin and increasing circulation – take care with circulatory conditions.

Lotions and Creams

Essential Oils can be added to body lotions and face creams to assist in skin moisturising. 5-6 drops of a blend or single essential oil can be added to a 50gm jar of plain face cream/oil and used as a moisturiser or after-shave.

These could include Sandalwood, Frankincense, Patchouli, and Rose.
There are many books offering recipe suggestions.

Ensure that essential oils are mixed thoroughly into creams before use. If mixing your own blends leave them to sit for 24 to 48 hours before using so the oils blend together.

Massage

Carrier Oils are cold pressed plant extractions used to dilute essential oils for application to the skin. Blended mixes can be purchased for immediate use or you can mix your own. Carrier Oils include Sweet Almond (medium texture), Grape seed (light texture), Jojoba (silky texture nice for face).

For a hand or foot massage mix 2-3 drops of essential oil into 5ml of lotion or carrier oil and massage for 5-10 minutes per foot/hand.

Use up to 15 ml for a back massage with 2-6 drops of essential oil.
Essential Oils (a small selection to get you started).

Calming/relaxing/balancing:

Lavender, Rosewood, Geranium, Frankincense, Lime (citrus), Patchouli, Sandalwood, Ylang Ylang, Bergamot (citrus).

Refreshing/uplifting:

Lime, Lemongrass, Spearmint, Manuka, Orange (citrus).

Antiseptic/immune:

Tea Tree, Manuka, Eucalyptus, Lavender.

Essential Oil Blends, called synergies, are a blend of oils suited for a specific purpose and are labelled accordingly eg Relaxing, Muscle warmer, Sinus Clear etc. These blends are used individually and not mixed with other essential oils. The Essential Oils blended are listed on the label but not usually botanical names.

[Useful books to get you started:](#)

Aromatherapy an A-Z

The Fragrant Pharmacy

The Directory of Essential Oils

The Encyclopaedia of Aromatherapy

Patricia Davis

Valerie Ann Worwood

Wanda Sellar

Chrissie Wildwood

[NZROHA Incorporated](#)

The New Zealand Register of Holistic Aromatherapists Inc is the National Association who would be able to assist you in locating a qualified Aromatherapist in your area.

The contact address is P.O. Box 18399, Glenn Innes, Auckland 6.