

Methods of Use

One of the nicest things about essential oils is the grand variety of things you can use them for and the stunningly wide range of ways in which you can use them. I have tried to break these many methods down into categories and give you simple instructions for each method.

DIRECT/TOPICAL APPLICATION

Because of the molecular structure of essential oils (the molecules are extremely small and the chemical structure is quite simple), they absorb readily into the body through the skin. This effect can actually be increased by the use of a good carrier oil. A good carrier oil allows you to use less of the more expensive essential oil with the same, or even increased, therapeutic effects.

A FEW GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TOPICAL APPLICATION:

• *DIRECTLY ON THE AREA OF CONCERN*

Apply the oils directly to the skin using 1 to 6 drops of essential oil, almost always with a carrier oil. More oil is not necessarily better since a large amount of oil can trigger a detoxification of the surrounding tissue and blood. Such a quick detoxification can be somewhat uncomfortable. To achieve the desired results, 1 to 3 drops of oil is usually adequate.

• *LAYERING*

The process of applying one oil, rubbing it in, and then applying another oil immediately. There is no need to wait more than a few seconds between oils as absorption occurs rapidly. A good example of this is the use of the blends ^{Le}WarmDown or ^{Le}TendaCare (for muscle relaxation and inflammation) and ^{Le}Paine or ^{Le}Deeper (for pain relief and healing). Layering them makes them more effective for muscle injuries than either one used alone. Another good example is ^{Le}Woman Wise (for hormone balance) and ^{Le}Deeper (deep tissue muscle spasms) for menstrual cramping and pain.

• *FEET*

Placing oils on the feet is a very fast way to get them absorbed into the body because the feet have abnormally large pores. The feet also seem to be an area least likely to be sensitive. Other areas of quick absorption are behind the ears and on the wrists. (The wrists are nice because they are constantly waving in front of the nose as we go about our day.) 1 - 4 drops per foot/ear/wrist are adequate.

• *ACUPRESSURE POINTS*

These points have been used for centuries as a means of accessing and correcting imbalances in the energy systems of the body. Essential oils applied to these points can be very effective, and certainly less invasive and scary than needles, as well as less cumbersome than holding the points or placing magnets, etc., on them.

There are many good books showing these points and how and when to use them. Two of my favorites are Reference Guide for Essential Oils by Connie and Alan Higley and Releasing Emotional Patterns with Essential Oils by Carolyn L. Mein.

• *WASH*

You can use an essential oil, diluted in distilled water, to wash infected areas such as wounds, grazes, cuts, and for other body and facial treatments.

• *LOTIONS*

Essential oils can be added to prepackaged lotions and creams or to ones of your own making. Be sure that the lotion you use is perfume free. Buy the simplest, purest product you can find. I find essential oils in a little distilled water or light carrier oil are more effective than any lotion.

• *AS PERFUMES OR COLOGNES*

Some single essential oils and many of the blended oils at Butterfly Express, llc have a nice enough aroma to wear as perfumes or colognes.

• **AURICULAR THERAPY**

This is a method of applying the oils to the rims of the ears, and occasionally, to the earlobes. This is well-documented in the books by Higley and Mein referred to previously.

• **COMPRESSES**

Fill a bowl with hot water. Add the desired essential oil. Stir the water vigorously and wait a few moments for any oil to rise to the top. A few essential oils mix very well with water, so you might not be able to see anything if you have used one of those oils. Lay a towel across the top of the water. After the towel is completely saturated, wring out the water. This will leave much of the oil, and all of its frequency, in the moist hot towel. Place the towel over the area needing the compress. Cover with a dry towel and apply a source of heat. Leave on location for one to two hours.

• **SHAMPOO OR SCALP TREATMENT**

Oils such as sage can treat or prevent hair loss. Chamomile Roman prevents (or covers to a certain extent) gray hair in lighter hair colors; rosemary does the same for brunettes. There are many other oils for hair and scalp treatment. Just mix the oil into the shampoo or conditioner—preferably a fairly natural one. I do this one application at a time by putting the conditioner into my hand and then adding the essential oil.

• **MASSAGE**

The human body holds every thought, feeling, trauma, pain, distress, tension, and emotional crisis within its muscular structure. Massage can release much of this negativity, and a massage with a well-chosen essential oil can be of particularly great benefit. Massage can also help improve circulation and essential oils can aid in this process also.

The chart below shows which parts of the body are most likely to hold certain types of stress. I hope you find it useful and informative.

Body Area	Emotions
back of the neck	difficulty expressing feelings
throat	difficulty expressing emotions
upper chest	sadness and/or regret
outer shoulder	afraid of letting go
back of shoulder	fear and/or sadness
upper arm - biceps	fear
forearm	anxiety and/or insecurity
hip - outer thigh	too much responsibility
upper thigh (front of the body)	feeling overburdened
outer thigh	persistent sadness
lower chest - center (solar plexus chakra)	fear of love - abuse issues
head/neck/solar plexus/tailbone	stress and tension
inner ankles	depression
calf muscles	feeling overwhelmed

OLFACTORY ADMINISTRATION

Odor molecules travel to the top of the nasal cavity and fit like little puzzle pieces into specific receptor cells on the nearly ten million olfactory nerve cells. These millions of nerve cells serve to transfer electric impulses to the olfactory bulb which, in turn, sends those impulses along to the amygdala and then to the limbic system of the brain. The amygdala is directly responsible for storing and releasing emotional trauma and responds only to odors. Recent studies indicate that it is the area of the brain that produces solutions when we are presented with a problem that needs solving.

Because the limbic system is directly connected to those parts of the brain that control the autonomic nervous system, essential oils can have profound physiological and psychological effects. The autonomic nervous system controls the heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, memory, stress levels, and hormones. .

Our sense of smell is very sensitive and highly developed. We can detect as little as 1 part of fragrant material in 1 billion. Our noses can differentiate several hundred different odors at the same time. Fragrances such as those of essential oils can bring about the deepest emotions and sensations in us. The smell of something familiar from your past, such as the aroma of baking bread, can take you by surprise and bring you either memories of times when you were happy and safe, or take you back to scenes of severe distress.

The sense of smell is closely related to memory; olfactory memories are very accurate and almost indelible. Since the olfactory system is, literally, the doorway to the subconscious, it would be logical to use aroma in psychotherapy. This is being done, but the research is in early stages and made difficult by the fact that every person's olfactory associations are different. There are some oils, however, that seem to have similar effects on most people. You will, no doubt, quickly develop your own list of favorites.

DIFFUSER

Diffusing means to get the volatile molecules into the air. This is not difficult. A cotton ball pinned to a fan or heat vent or a piece of paper, accordion folded, and placed in the vent of your car, works very well.

Here are a wide range of diffusers on the market. They can be divided into two basic groups: heated and non-heated. Heat and essential oils was discussed in some depth in Chapter 3 on shelf life. For a simple method, place a few drops of oil into a bowl and pour warm water over it. Oil molecules in the air remain and are effective for healing purposes long after the aroma has vanished. There are non-heated diffusers on the market that have specially designed filters to disseminate the molecules. These work well, but are extremely expensive and often no better than cheaper methods.

A simple and effective diffuser is simple fountains, bought inexpensively at Wal-Mart, etc. You may have been told that you need fountains with specially designed motors. Essential oils are not really oily, except when they have been adulterated with a carrier oil. Most pure essential oils do not clog motors, although the resins and balsams require that you clean your fountain or diffuser well after each use. If the oil solidifies and forms a crust around the top of the bottle, it may clog a diffuser or be difficult to remove when you are finished and want to use a different oil. Learn to read labels carefully because many otherwise reputable oil companies (not Butterfly Express, ever) add carrier to their essential oils.

A Scentsy® candle warmer, with water substituted for the wax, is my new favorite way to diffuse essential oils. Put a little water in the dish part and add a few drops of essential oil. Do not place the essential oil directly into the dish (without water). The oil, directly on the dish, gets too hot and just bakes there. This damages the therapeutic properties of the essential oil and makes a sticky mess of the dish. The water heats just enough to evaporate slowly, diffusing the oil molecules into the air very nicely.

SMELLING

This is the simplest method imaginable. Simply open the bottle and take a whiff. Or you can put a little on a cotton ball and place it in a vent or in front of a fan. I have put the cotton ball into a zip-lock bag and carried it with me. Placing some oil in a tissue or handkerchief also works well. I love to place a drop or two of oil on my pillow at night.

INHALATION

Place a few drops of an essential oil in a bowl and add hot water. Place a light cotton dish towel, or something similar, over your head and hang your head over the bowl. Inhale deeply. This is a great method for oils such as eucalyptus, and blends like ^{Le}Breezey, ^{Le}Mariah, ^{Le}Aspire, ^{Le}IQ, ^{Le}GoodNite, ^{Le}MyGraine, and ^{Le}EndoRelief.

INHALERS

Small plastic tubes with a cotton core onto which an essential oil may be placed is a convenient way to have the aroma of an essential oil with you at all times. A drop or two of oil added, as needed, will refresh the inhaler very quickly and inexpensively. This is a very good way to get a whiff of an essential oil in a public place without the aroma of the oil dispersing all over the room and being obvious to everyone around you.

ROOM SPRAYS

Put warm water into a plant mister, add the essential oil and shake vigorously. Avoid spraying over furniture and fabrics or anything that could be damaged by water. This is very effective at removing odors and for disinfecting purposes.

WATER MAGIC

Essential oils and water do not mix readily in most cases. As was explained in the section on diffusers, pure essential oils are not really oily at all, and most of them (the balsams and some of the resins are an exception) mix well enough with water to accomplish your purposes. In any case, the frequency of the oil seems to be imbued into the water whether or not it is mixed in well or is just floating there in droplets or even sinking to the bottom of the tub.

In the last few years there have been several studies done verifying the homeopathic nature of aqueous solutions. Some of these studies, involving the filtering of bacteria from distilled water, clearly demonstrated that an “imprint” of the bacteria remained in the water after all of the bacteria had been removed. While science may be at a loss to explain this phenomenon, homeopathy relies on it millions of times every day. Put a couple of drops of an essential oil in your bathtub, enjoy a 10 minute soak, and you will have experienced this phenomenon, too.

Water is an excellent conductor of electricity, which is an important point to keep in mind when you consider that the human brain is 90% water and brain activity is electrical in nature. It is known that substances put into bath water often enter the body by osmosis. This is good news for the use of essential oils and alarming when you consider the chemicals present in our water!

BATHS

Run the bath as usual, then add the drops of essential oil and swish the water around. One interesting bath method is to place the oil in milk powder and then place the milk powder in the bath. Milk is popular and well-liked because it makes the skin feel so soft and smooth. Diluted oils used in the bath are gentle to sensitive skin and give aromatherapy effects at the same time. 2 - 5 drops is enough. More than that of some oils will cause skin irritation!

FOOT BATH

Fill a large bowl with warm water and add the essential oil, being sure to swish it around some. This method can be used to pull toxins from the body, or by using soothing/calming oils can facilitate relaxation and sleep. Other oils could be used to stimulate the immune system or to increase circulation. This is one of my favorite methods. Again, 2-5 drops is enough.

HOT TUB OR JACUZZI

Use as you would in a tub. The literature says that an oily residue may be left on the pipes and jets. This may be true with heavy balsamic or resin oils which are not typically used in the bath anyway. If the oil is pure and undiluted with a carrier or extender oil, there should be no problem with any oil residue which water will not readily wash away when the tub or jacuzzi is drained.

SHOWER

Place a few drops in the bottom of the tub or shower. The hot water will diffuse it upward in a very pleasant manner and the therapeutic effects will absorb through the large pores of the feet and be very effective. It helps if you close the drain and let 2 or 3 inches of water build up in the bottom of the tub.

MISCELLANEOUS METHODS

GARGLE

Although I do not recommend essential oils for internal use, some oils make excellent gargles and mouth washes. Mix the essential oil of your choice (^{Le}Deliverance, ^{Le}SpiceC, ^{Le}RefreshMint, or spearmint are good choices) into water. My personal favorite, especially for gingivitis, is ^{Le}TendaCare. Some people like mixing the oil into a teaspoon of honey, then diluting with warm water until the honey is thoroughly dissolved. I liked this, but it was way too much work and I didn't like the idea of something that sweet being left on my teeth and gums and feeding any unwanted bacteria in my throat. I prefer not to swallow the oil, or the oil and honey mixture, and I never use more than 1 - 3 drops of any oil.

TOOTHBRUSH

During times of illness or when other members of the family are ill, I often put a drop of ^{Le}Deliverance oil on my toothbrush as a way of fighting bacteria. A friend of mine who often footzones very ill people has been doing this for some time and has greatly reduced the number and duration of the "bugs" she catches. Never use more than a drop or two.

DISHWASHER, DISHWATER, WASHER, DRYER

Unadulterated essential oils can be added to the dishwater or put into the dishwasher (1-2 drops is sufficient) to clean, disinfect, and fight bacteria when family members are ill. I use them in the laundry to fight the smell of oil, grease, and gasoline. They can also be placed on dryer sheets. My favorite oils for this are ^{Le}Sunburst and ^{Le}Purify. You should avoid the resin oils, listed in Chapter 10.

INTERNALLY

Occasionally, I will add a drop or 2 of essential oil to 5 gallons of distilled water, or run a drop or two through my distiller to freshen and sanitize it. The machine must then be cleaned and copious amounts of water ran through it if you wish to eliminate the flavor of the essential oil. Lemon, lime, grapefruit, and orange are particular favorites of mine and cause the least complaining about the residual taste.

COOKING WITH ESSENTIAL OILS

There are all sorts of recipes out there for cooking with essential oils. The oils referenced here have been purchased in culinary shops and are meant to be used in cooking, rather than in a health oriented shop for their therapeutic properties. These are essential oils which have been mixed with carrier oils such as almond for ease of use. There is nothing unethical about this practice; they are not being represented as anything other than what they are. Just don't confuse them with pure, unadulterated, therapeutic essential oils and expect them to be healing. They are meant to be cooking ingredients.

I have tried cooking with pure essential oils. The recommended number of drops is way too much and too strong! One drop of mandarin, lemon, or lime in a batch of frosting or cookie dough is offensively strong. 3 drops of peppermint in a whole batch of "green herbal drink" gives your mouth a real cooling sensation! I have tried mixing a drop with a tablespoon of cooking oil and then using it in much the same way as you would use the extracts you can buy. I have been quite pleased with the results.

Less than a single drop of oil is often needed when cooking with essential oils. This can be easily accomplished by placing a drop of oil on a toothpick and then immersing the toothpick in your batch. Immerse the toothpick again if the flavor is not quite strong enough for your taste.

Pure, undiluted, high-quality essential oils, in my personal opinion, are not meant to be taken internally. While not usually dangerous there is usually no need to do so!