

Aromatherapy For Cynics

relax and let your body heal



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Chapter 1: What is aromatherapy?

Sure, maybe you have heard of aromatherapy before and are, at least, marginally familiar with the term and the basics of what it means. Aromatherapy has something to do with scents and smells treating illnesses and conditions, right? Now, that does sound a bit unbelievable! How can it possibly do that, simply through the smell of something?

Don't worry, you are not alone in your cynicism. Others have often questioned the viability of this treatment method. How is it really supposed to work anyway? In order to better understand aromatherapy and how it works – if, in fact, it does work at all – we need to get a better understanding of what aromatherapy truly is.

Aromatherapy is actually a generic term that refers to many different types of traditions that make use of plant matter and essential oils to create a more positive atmosphere in conjunction with benefiting someone's quality of life. All current treatments throughout the Western civilized world that use essential oils and plant matter are considered aromatherapy, rather than “actual” medical treatments.

In general, aromatherapy is a form of therapy that is meant to help someone relax or to reduce stress. Aromatherapy is practiced using essential oils and volatile plant oils to create psychological and physical sensations. It usually requires scented compounds created through volatile plant materials, essential oils, or similar herbal products and it is used as a form of alternative medicine for positively affecting a person's health or mood.

All of these many uses have made aromatherapy a very popular treatment method among alternative medicines. Many people who do not like the sometimes-unpleasant side effects of prescribed medication, particularly for depression, stress, or other similar disorders, have opted to use aromatherapy to help reach the desired state of being. You might think of some of these people as oddballs for choosing to use aromatherapy instead of other synthetic medications, but it has proven to be effective in certain circumstances when used appropriately or with the permission of a physician.

Chapter 2: History of aromatherapy

Aromatherapy has been used in one form or another for thousands of years. Throughout time, people have used essential oils and plant matter to try to heal illnesses and cure diseases. For this reason, it is hard to give a specific date or event timeline for the creation and development of aromatherapy. It has adjusted over time to meet the specific needs of each culture as the cultural needs have changed. It has also changed as new plant matter and essential oils have been discovered and utilized.

Due to this ever-changing history, aromatherapy in its current manifestation evolved with the use of distilled plant material in order to create essential oils. This particular form of distillation can be traced back as a 20th-century innovation. As currently defined in the medical field, aromatherapy is a term that was first coined in 1920 by a French chemist Renée Maurice Gattefosse.

This renowned French chemist Renee Maurice Gattefosse had dedicated his life to research and study regarding the healing properties of essential oils. This dedication was spurred by an incident that happened by chance in his laboratory one day. Gattefosse accidentally set his arm on fire and was racing around the inside of his lab, searching for some way to put the flames out. While searching for the nearest vat of liquid to thrust his arm into, French chemist Renée Maurice Gattefosse came across a large open container of lavender oil. Quickly, the chemist put his arm into the lavender oil to extinguish the flames and, to his surprise, he experienced almost instant pain relief.

Gattefosse also noticed through this life changing experience that his burns healed remarkably quickly and left very little scarring. The difference in the healing process between these burns that were slathered in lavender oil and the burns that the chemist had suffered on a regular basis astonished him. One of the most significant breakthroughs that the French chemist Renée Maurice Gattefosse had discovered was that the lavender oil had shortened the overall healing process and healed with very little redness, inflammation, heat rashes, blisters, or scarring.

It was not until World War II that the studies of the French chemist Renée Maurice Gattefosse were continued through the work of Jean Valnet. Jean Valnet had used essential oils and other distilled plant material as a method of treating gangrene in wounded soldiers. While it was not necessarily a cure, there were many cases when Jean Valnet was capable of saving soldiers lives using these essential oils – a very helpful discovery during wartime crises.

Chapter 3: Does aromatherapy really work?

This is a very frequent question among most people when they think about aromatherapy. Does aromatherapy really work or is it all just a big sham? It is a common misperception that aromatherapy is new. Aromatherapy has been in existence and recognized as such for at least 80 years. However, the essential nature of aromatherapy has existed for thousands of years.

To start with, do not get fooled by companies who will try to sell their pleasant smelling products as aromatherapy products. Some companies will hype up unfounded claims to be aromatherapy in order to make more sales. In countries such as the United States, aromatherapy is treated like other chemicals and the FCC requires appropriate identification of all ingredients. Make sure that what you were looking at contains all-natural ingredients, not synthetic ones.

So what about major illnesses? Can aromatherapy really help with illnesses or psychological problems? The truth of the matter is that aromatherapy cannot cure stress or cure an illness. Anyone who goes into the use of aromatherapy in order to cure something is going to be disappointed. This simply isn't how aromatherapy works.

However, aromatherapy is geared towards helping you cope with a physical condition, and the symptoms of an illness, and improve your mood, temporarily ease stress, or help with other psychological diseases. This does not mean all of these symptoms or issues will go away. It simply means that aromatherapy can help make these symptoms and issues easier to deal with.

Aromatherapy is unable to cure cancer, AIDS, or other major illnesses. Instead, it can help calm the fear, reduce nausea, and enhance a person's overall mood. It should never be used as a primary treatment method for any major illness. It only acts as a complementary treatment that supports other treatments already ongoing.

It can offer the possibility of taking the place of prescription or over-the-counter chemical drugs in certain areas. For instance, it can offer quite a strong benefit in dealing with indigestion, inflammation, skincare, hygiene, wounds, and mental or emotional issues.

In addition, aromatherapy will not work the same way for each person who tries it. Your sensory memory is going to affect how or when therapy will work for you. Therefore, if you have a bad experience with a particular sense, this will not have the correct impact on you as is desired.

Do some research on the company where you are planning to buy your essential oils or other aromatherapy treatment ingredients. You want to make sure they are using all-natural ingredients and are giving you correct information on how to use the aromatherapy ingredients. For instance, be leery of companies that tell you to use essential oils on your skin. You should only use essential oils on your skin if they are diluted. There are many mislabeled products on the market and a tremendous amount of misinformation about aromatherapy that may also make bogus claims as to the so-called healing properties of aromatherapy oils.

Chapter 4: Aromatherapy at home

Aromatherapy can be used as a form of treatment or prevention for some diseases and can be extremely useful for reducing levels of stress. The essential oils that are released through aromatherapy have a significant influence on the aroma center of the brain, specifically in the limbic system. While no specific medical studies have proven aromatherapy to have positive effects on the body currently, many preliminary clinical studies show a synergy between the body's healing processes and aromatic oils. These aromatic oils are often released as gas or vapor during aromatherapy, as the oils are often burned.

Throughout the English-speaking world, aromatherapy is used on a day-to-day basis, even if you are not aware of it. Many people in the Western civilizations may not necessarily recognize it as aromatherapy, but are likely to see it in their day-to-day lives through perfumes, massage oils, and scented lotions. This is one reason why many practitioners tend to emphasize their use of aromatherapy through massage oils and incense. It is only in America and other English speaking countries that aromatherapy is regarded as such a complementary method.

Have you ever used a perfume to get a desired scent? Have you ever used lotions that, for some reason, just feel so soothing to you? Have you ever burned incense with names such as "Tranquility", found that the incense was quite soothing, and helped you to relax? Have you ever used bath soap or other bath lotion that was designed to help soothe and calm?

These are all aspects of aromatherapy in its complementary sense. All of these are methods through which people use scents, smells, and other natural aspects to help create a soothing, warm, and welcoming environment.

In France, where it was originally discovered, aromatherapy is a part of their national mainstream medicine. Throughout France, there is an emphasis on the use of the many properties of essential oils such as the antiseptic, antiviral, antifungal, and antibacterial properties. They may also find these properties to be in other distilled plant material and use these properties in order to control the spread of infections. This is quite different from the methods familiar to many English-speaking countries. In France and its neighboring countries, it is not uncommon for a patient to be prescribed essential oils that are then administered by a physician.

Can you imagine what that would be like in the United States? Imagine if you were going to a physician who prescribed you an aromatherapy

treatment for your stress, rather than synthetic medication. This would truly be different from what we are accustomed to in Western civilizations. Yet, so many other countries use aromatherapy treatments in order to prevent illnesses and treat existing illnesses or conditions.

Although there has been many breakthroughs throughout the aromatherapy medicine field, present day aromatherapy is a form of a valid science branch that has not been validated in the United States, Russia, Germany, or Japan. It is very common for physicians in these countries to neglect to recognize the usefulness of aromatherapy treatments. Yet, other countries throughout the world are still using aromatherapy in order to treat illnesses and diseases and to prevent further infection of illnesses or diseases. Despite the obvious usefulness of aromatherapy and reducing stress levels, most physicians in Western civilizations do not like to use aromatherapy in treating stress.

Chapter 5: What affects does aromatherapy have on the limbic system?

Perhaps the usefulness of aromatherapy may not be so obvious to you either. It is helpful to understand how aromatherapy actually works in order to understand how it can help. The primary effects of aromatherapy are on the limbic system. The limbic system has been described by the medical community as a set of brain structures that support a variety of functions. The functions that the limbic system of the brain maintains include both the motion and memory brain functions. This system of the brain operates in tandem with the endocrine system and the automatic nervous system. Through the endocrine system, the limbic system can influence the amount of pleasure that is felt. The same part of the brain plays a role in sexual arousal as well as other high endorphin moments.

Because of the large role that a scent can play in bringing a specific memories or emotions, aromatherapy can be a useful tool to utilize or apply therapy to the limbic system of the brain.

There are various aromatherapy scents and related feelings to these scents, the smells are designed to remind the person taking them of a happy time or place that the person has had at some point within their life. That limbic system response is why many aromatherapy products have some success using smells that are season oriented. Many times, the cinnamon candle can remind someone of Christmas or give him or her all of the Christmas season feelings.

Have you ever wondered why a certain sense or smell will remind you of places, people, or things? Have you ever noticed that some smells will make you feel warm and comfortable and remind you of places where you were happy and other smells can have the opposite effect? This is very similar to how aromatherapy works. The scents and smells will evoke certain responses within your body that will produce a desired effect.

Chapter 6: Essential Oils

How to determine what essential oils are best

Many essential oils can be used in aromatherapy. There are at least 90 different essential oils and absolutes and at least 15 carrier oils commonly used in aromatherapy. With so many different oils to choose from, it is no wonder that most people have difficulty understanding what oils may be best for their specific desired affect. It is very important to study the different types of oils to determine which one will be the best one for you to use, should you decide to use aromatherapy.

Undiluted essential oils and similar products suitable for aromatherapy can usually be distinguished from other similar products since, in most cases, the undiluted oils are of a therapeutic grade. This of course is only a good standard to go on if you live in a country that regulates the industry. In the United States, the content of components of oils is standardized to the use of FCC labeling. FCC labeling refers to the food chemical codex and it is a criteria established by the FCC determines the specified amounts of a specific aroma and creating chemical must naturally occur in the oil.

This type of regulation is used to help regulate the industry so that aromatherapy retains at least some sense of standards. Not only does the FCC help to regulate aromatherapy, it also helps to determine what types of oils and essential plant material are best suited for certain therapies. In addition, this regulation determines how much of specific oil should be used for a specific purpose, eliminating the worry of using too much of any particular oil. There is no law however, that prevents a manufacturer from adding a synthetic chemical in order to meet any criteria established by the FCC for any specific oil.

The best method, however, for determining if an essential oil is going to be of much use is simply an educated nose. Many people specifically skilled in aromatherapy can often determine if a scent is synthetic or natural. This skill is something that is believed anyone can obtain, as long as he or she is willing to put in the time and effort. It is important that you should try to avoid adulterated oils and materials for your aromatherapy whenever possible.

No matter what therapy, sense, or smell you end up choosing, it is important that you remain close to your natural preference. In many cases, if you like the way that an oil smells or makes you feel, more than likely you will enjoy using it. If you do not enjoy the smell and enjoying using it as a form of therapy, it will do you no good, regardless of what that specific oil or scent is supposed to do or how it

should benefit you. If you are not enjoying the scent of a specific essential oil, this is your body's way of telling you to keep looking.

How to test an essential oil

When you are out sampling various different types of essential oils for your aromatherapy, it is very important that you sample properly. To sample an oil, simply open the bottle approximately 3 to 4 inches directly below your nose. Slowly sway the bottle from right to left as you gently inhale. It is important that you do not inhale too deeply or use the bottle as an inhaler. Breathing the aroma more deeply will not increase the potency and could very well be dangerous as specific oils can have overpowering aromas.

Through this sampling, you should be able to determine what oils feel most natural to you as well as what oils bring about specific feelings within you. As I mentioned before, many times people associate the smell of cinnamon with the holiday season and the same can be said for the scent of pine trees and campfires. While there is certainly no essential oil for campfires, there is for pine trees and for just about any other season or experience that you would like to conjure up.

What are essential oils?

An essential oil is usually a liquid that has been derived from a plant and distilled. This distilling process usually involves water from a stream or slow-moving river combined with the leaves, flowers, stems, bark and other parts of the plant that is used for making this particular oil. Essential oils do not actually feel oily at all, contrary to the use of the word. Most of essential oils are clear or are a very clear orange or amber color. Essential oils are believed to contain the true essence of the plant or tree from which they were obtained. Due to the high concentration that the essential oils maintain, they are often sold in very small bottles that can last a long time.

Essential oils, while they do represent scents, are not the same or even similar to fragrances or perfumes. Essential oils are always derived from real plants, while the vast majority of perfume or fragrance oils are artificially created or at the very least contain artificial substances and often offer little or no therapeutic value. Since the use of the word aromatherapy is not yet regulated by the United States government, many companies will offer fragrance oils as aromatherapy therapeutic oils even though they are not the same. This is an unfortunate situation as many times these fragrant oils have little or no natural ingredients. It is important to understand that if an aromatherapy product contains any type of synthetic or perfume oil, it is not a true aromatherapy product, simply someone trying to sell a lesser product as a greater one.

The aroma and chemical composition of therapeutic essential oils is the key. This makes aroma and chemical composition can provide valuable physical therapeutic benefits as well as psychological stress relief. The majority of people who practice with therapeutic oils do so through methods including application of diluted oil to the skin and through inhalation.

The major essential oils

There are many different types of essential oils and all of them have specific properties. You may not even realize it, but many of these oils are used in their other forms while cooking! For example, some of the following essential oils are ones you would find in everyday household cooking in a different format (such as leaves or ground powder):

Basil

Basil is often used in cooking for various purposes because of its unique flavor. Its aromatic properties are sweet, herbaceous, and licorice like. While Basil is most often used in cooking, it can be used to help treat bronchitis, colds, coughs, exhaustion, flatulence, flu, gout, insect bites, insect repellent, muscle aches, rheumatism, and sinusitis. However, it is suggested that Basil only be used sparingly and with caution. Too much Basil may be carcinogenic because it contains methyl chavicol. It is suggested that you do not use basil if you have liver problems and you should not use basil during pregnancy.

Ginger

Ginger, also often used in cooking, is another aromatherapy essential oil. It has a warm, spicy, earthy, and woody smell. Ginger is best used to treat aching muscles, arthritis, nausea, and poor circulation. However, you should not use this if you will be exposed to direct sunlight for an extended period of time as it can create sun poisoning.

Lemon

Lemon is a very common fruit that most people are familiar with. Its aroma is very similar to the scent of lemon rinds except richer and more concentrated. It can be used to treat athlete's foot, chilblains, colds, corns, dull skin, flu, oily skin, spots, varicose veins, and warts. Similar to Ginger, it is suggested that lemon not be used if you are going to be exposed to direct sunlight for an extended period of time.

Parsley

Parsley is also often used in cooking. It has a very woody aroma that can be quite appealing. It is often used to treat amenorrhea, arthritis, cellulites, cystitis, frigidity, griping pains, indigestion, rheumatism, and toxic build-up. However, this particular essential oil can sometimes be

dangerous. It tends to be toxic to the liver and can induce abortions. It should be used in each with extreme caution particularly around pregnant women.

Peppermint

Peppermint is an extremely common smell that you are probably very familiar with. It is minty and is very reminiscent of spearmint only more concentrated and fragrant. This scent will often remind people of the Christmas holiday. It is an excellent treatment for asthma, colic, exhaustion, fever, flatulence, headache, nausea, scabies, sinusitis, and vertigo. It can be somewhat toxic to the nerves and should be avoided in the case of someone afflicted with epilepsy or fever. Peppermint may be taken orally but only under the guidance of a qualified aromatherapy practitioner.

Thyme

Thyme is frequently used in cooking. It has a fresh but medicinal type smell. Thyme is often used to treat arthritis, colds, cuts, dermatitis, flu, insect bites, laryngitis, lice, muscle aches, oily skin, poor circulation, scabies, and sore throats. People with hypertension should not use thyme. It can also cause dermal irritation or can be a strong mucous membrane irritant.

Rose

Particularly interesting is the use of Rose in aromatherapy. All of us are accustomed to roses being used as a gift. However, roses are also used for aromatherapy. They have a floral and sweet sense. Rose, in its essential oil form, is often used to treat depression, eczema, frigidity, mature skin, menopause, and stress. When you think of giving roses to someone you care about, remember that just the scent of roses can help to alleviate depression and stress. No wonder women like them so much.

Nutmeg

Most everyone is very familiar with nutmeg. It has a wonderful smell that is rich, spicy, sweet, and woody. The essential oil is very similar to that of the cooking spice, only richer and more fragrant. It is commonly used to treat arthritis, constipation, fatigue, muscle aches, nausea, neuralgia, poor circulation, rheumatism, and slow digestion.

Marjoram

Marjoram is also a cooking spice, only one that is not used as frequently as others mentioned here. In its aromatherapy version, its sweet and woody smell can be very appealing. It has the capacity to deal with a wide number of potential problems while still smelling nice. It is used to treat aching muscles, amenorrhea, bronchitis, chilblains,

colic, coughing, excessive sex drive, flatulence, hypertension, muscle cramps, neuralgia, rheumatism, sprains, strains, stress, and ticks. However, pregnant women should avoid using it, although there are no other precautions necessary.

Lavender

Earlier, in the history of the use of aromatherapy, it was mentioned that the French chemist Gattefosse discovered aromatherapy through an accidental dosage of Lavender oil. What does Lavender really treat? It's fresh, sweet, floral, and slightly fruity scent is much enjoyed. It's possible uses are many and include acne, allergies, anxiety, asthma, athlete's foot, bruises, burns, chicken pox, colic, cuts, cystitis, depression, dermatitis, dysmenorrhea, earache, flatulence, headache, hypertension, insect bites, insect repellent, itching, labor pains, migraine, oily skin, rheumatism, scabies, scars, sores, sprains, strains, stress, stretch marks, vertigo, and whooping cough. Even with all its many treatments, there is no need for special precautions with this essential oil.

Essential Oil Safety

Like all treatments, medications, and therapies, it is very important that you exercise safety and caution when using essential oils. Remember that these are highly concentrated liquids, which can be harmful if they are not used as prescribed, or in an appropriate manner. However, do not let that scare you. Just as long as you exercise caution and stay informed, you should do just fine with aromatherapy.

While some safety guidelines should be followed, they can sometimes be broken under the guidance of a qualified and trained aromatherapy practitioner in the case of certain oils. When in doubt always consult your physician or a qualified and trained aromatherapy practitioner.

An important guideline to remember is an essential oil should never be used undiluted on the skin. While there may be exceptions to this precaution, you should never make that judgment on your own without careful consultation with an authority on the subject. Using the oil on the skin can cause skin irritation, rashes, severe sensitivity, and can be very toxic. Lavender and tea tree can be used on the skin but should only be done so on very rare occasions so that you do not incur the possibility of sensitivity.

Keep in mind that some oils may produce sensitivity or allergic reactions in some individuals. Like with almost all other things, some people are bound to be allergic to essential oils used in aromatherapy. In order to safeguard yourself and others against a potential allergic

reaction, always apply a very small amount of diluted essential oil (never undiluted) onto a small patch of skin. It can be helpful to do this on the inside of an elbow and then apply Band-Aid. Allow the oil to sit for at least 24 hours to see if there is any form of reaction. It does not matter if you think that you are not going to be allergic to any essential oil, you should always check first.

Some essential oils will also be problematic for people during pregnancy or for those with asthma, epilepsy, or other serious health conditions. Keep this in mind and look for precautions on that essential oil before using it with a person who has a potential health issue in order to prevent complications.

Never take essential oils orally unless under specific directions from a physician or qualified aromatherapy practitioner. Most oils cannot be taken orally but a rare few can in specific regulated doses. These should only be prescribed by a physician or qualified aromatherapy practitioner.

Unlike most things in life, essential oils are always falling under the rule of less is more. Use only a small amount of essential oil, just enough to get the job done. Essential oils are highly concentrated and it is very easy to use too much.

Not everything that is an essential oil should be used for aromatherapy. Certain essential oils such as wormwood, pennyroyal, onion, camphor, horseradish, wintergreen, rue, bitter almond and sassafras should only be used under the direction of or by a qualified aromatherapy practitioner, if it is used at all

Keep in mind that essential oils are flammable! Always keep essential oils away from fire hazards and you should use extreme caution when the oils are near flames.

It should go without saying that you should never let children use essential oils without the presence of an adult who is versed in information about aromatherapy. However, we may neglect to remember to take this precaution by preventing children from being able to get into your essential oils store. Keep them somewhere safe and out of a child's reach.

Hazardous Oils

There are oils that are considered hazardous and dangerous. However, just because oil is not listed here as dangerous does not mean that it is safe or does not have other side effects that you should be aware about. Just be careful and research your essential oils before using them.

Here is a list, in alphabetic order, of hazardous oils that you should avoid:

Ajowan (<i>Trachyspermum copticum</i>)	Jaborandi (<i>Pilocarpus jaborandi</i>)
Almond, Bitter (<i>Prunus dulcis</i> var. <i>amara</i>)	Melilotus (<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>)
Arnica (<i>Arnica Montana</i>)	Mugwort (<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>)
Birch, Sweet (<i>Betula lenta</i>)	Mustard (<i>Brassica nigra</i>)
Boldo Leaf (<i>Peumus boldus</i>)	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
Broom, Spanish (<i>Spartium junceum</i>)	Pennyroyal (<i>Mentha pulegium</i>)
Calamus (<i>Acorus calamus</i> var. <i>angustatus</i>)	Rue (<i>Ruta graveolens</i>)
Camphor (<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>)	Sassafras (<i>Sassafras albidum</i>)
Deertongue (<i>Carphephorus odoratissimus</i>)	Thuja (<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>)
Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)	Wintergreen (<i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>)
Horseradish (<i>Armoracia rusticana</i>)	Wormseed (<i>Chenopodium ambrosioides</i> var. <i>anthelminticum</i>)
	Wormwood (<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>)

Again, while this list includes oils that are hazardous in general, this does not mean that there are no other hazardous oils or oils with possible side effects that could damage you, particularly if you have an existing health condition.

Chapter 7: Safety For Users

Are Aromatherapy Ingredients OK to use on pets?

Just as aromatherapy can be good for humans, it can also help our pets and provide them with the needed healing (both emotional and therapeutic) effects of aromatherapy. However, it is extremely important to remember that animals are much different from humans. It is best to consult a qualified aromatherapy practitioner who is familiar with and comfortable about working with animals. A recommended book on this topic is "Holistic Aromatherapy for Animals" by Kristen Leigh Bell, written in 2002. This book is the only major resource on how aromatherapy affects animals.

Is Aromatherapy Safe for Children?

If you intend to use aromatherapy with your children, keep in mind that most recipes and guidelines currently available with aromatherapy are intended for normal, healthy, average-sized adults under the supervision of a medical professional. Any recipes intended to be used with children should have a significantly lower dosage than the normal recipe would call for. Certain oils should not be used with children at all. It is better to be careful in this instance and you should always use precaution and care when using aromatherapy treatments with children.

Some oils that are usually ok with children in small doses include neroli, rose, sweet orange, tea tree, lavender, and roman chamomile. Children need to have specific considerations made for age, size, weight, and needs so it is best to consult a qualified person in these matters.

Should Pregnant Women use Aromatherapy?

This is a highly debated subject. Many people do not feel aromatherapy should be used with pregnant women as the possible side effects are unknown in some cases and there is little desire to "test" this out to see if fetuses will be affected by aromatherapy in a negative manner. Some people advise that certain oils are ok to use and it is definitely certain that some oils should never be used by a pregnant woman.

Some oils can cause spontaneous abortions or uterine contractions. Other oils cause problems because they are bad for diabetics – and some pregnant women will become diabetic during pregnancy. It is unclear, however, whether these oils were used appropriately and properly when the incidences occurred.

Much of this research has been conducted on animals, as it is unsafe to do this type of testing on human beings. However, researchers have managed to identify some oils that are known to cause complications during pregnancy. These include:

Benzoin	Lemon	Sandalwood
Bergamot	Neroli	Spearmint
Grapefruit	Orange	Tea Tree
Lavender	Patchouli	Vetiver

Avoid these oils if you are pregnant or at risk of becoming pregnant. It is much better to find alternatives and be safe, rather than sorry later down the road.

However, some aromatherapy oils are good for pregnant women. For instance, jasmine, clary sage, and rose tend to be very beneficial during the actual delivery even though they are not recommended for use during the actual pregnancy. It is best to have a qualified aroma therapist create a blend just for you to use during your delivery to help ease the pain, stress, and difficulties.

Chapter 8: Carrier Oils

What are Carrier Oils?

Carrier oils are another part of aromatherapy treatment. While they are generally considered as base oils or vegetable oils, they have a more generalized purpose. Carrier oils are used to dilute essential oils, CO2's, and absolutes before you apply them onto your skin. This allows you to take a diluted essential oil, combine it with a base oil or carrier oil, and it will then be considered as diluted. This will make it safe for you to put it on your skin.

Different carrier oils offer different types of properties and can have therapeutic benefits of their own or increase the therapeutic benefit of the essential oil you are using. They are usually made from cold pressed vegetable oils that are made from the fatty portions of certain plants. They do not evaporate or add their own aroma to the essential oils. Interestingly, carrier oils can go bad. While essential oils can last almost indefinitely common carrier oils will expire. You want your carrier oils to be natural or to have natural vitamin E. added as a preservative.

Examples of carrier oils and their uses?

There are many different types of carrier oils. Here are some of the more commonly used to carrier oils.

Olive oil

Olive oil is often used in cooking. Its natural aroma is very to the close to that of the oil used in cooking; by which I mean that it smells like olives. Its texture is heavy and rather oily and it has a light to medium green color. It is very important to use a minimal amount or an appropriate amount in dilution as it may overpower the blend.

Peanut oil

Peanut oil has an extremely light aroma with a faintly nutty quality. Its texture is thick and leaves a very oily film on the skin and its color is almost clear. Use caution with peanut oil as it should not be used on anyone who has an allergy to peanuts. It is often a very good choice to use with massage oils or in a massage blend because of its oily texture and can help with arthritis.

Sweet Almond oil

Sweet almond oil has a light and slightly sweet and nutty aroma. It is slightly oily and will leave an oily feeling on the skin, but it absorbs quickly. It is virtually clear but with a tinge of yellow. Sweet almond oil is an all-purpose carrier oil which can be used with almost any

essential oil and is moderately priced, making it an excellent choice for most essential oils.

Cocoa Butter Oil

Cocoa butter oil has a rich and sweet aroma that definitely smells like chocolate. This type of butter remains solid and hard at room temperature and breaks into pieces. However, it is a good oil for heating and easing at a lukewarm or warm temperature. It's coloring is faintly tan. Cocoa butter oil should be blended with other materials or oils in order to be usable. It is an excellent oil to mix in for lotions and creams.

Hazelnut Oil

Hazelnut oil has a light, nutty, and somewhat sweet aroma. It is thin and leaves a very slightly oily feel. It is particularly good to use for people who have oily skin as it does not leave nearly as oily a residue as other carrier oils can. Not leaving an oily residue means the people using it will not have to suffer from breakouts of acne quite as often, which affects a large amount of the population in the United States and worldwide due to oil make-up's and oil residue leaving products.

Pecan Oil

Pecan oil has a faintly fatty and nutty aroma and has a medium thickness, leaving only a slight oily film on the skin. Its coloring is nearly clear but it is said to go bad fairly quickly. It needs to be stored in a dark colored bottle in a dark area in order to protect it from exposure to sunlight, which will cause it to go bad.

There is a wide variety of other carrier oils that you can use and each one has its particular purpose, aroma, texture, and color. This list is not exhaustive, but does give you a good understanding of potential oils that you can use to dilute your essential oils.

Chapter 9: Other Materials

Absolutes?

Absolutes are very similar to essential oils. They are highly aromatic liquids, which have been extracted from plant material. However, the difference between essential oils and absolutes is that absolutes are extracted using a very complex method. It does require the use of chemical solvents that will later be removed during the final stages of production.

Absolutes tend to be more highly concentrated than their counterparts the essential oils are. This is why it is important to use essential

healing oils in your own treatment, if you are using aromatherapy as a medical treatment or as a method to relax.

The major disadvantage of using absolutes or creating absolutes is that there may be trace elements remaining of the chemical solvent in the final product. This simply cannot be helped, as there is no way to ascertain that all of the chemical solvent has been removed from the absolute before it reaches the final project stages. This is why many people use absolutes only sparingly because they are not 100% natural since they had to be extracted using chemical solvents.

One other major difference between essential oils and absolutes is that, with the essential oils it is not recommended that they be taken internally except by someone who is educated, trained, and experienced enough to do so. However, this is even more severe in the case of absolutes, which should never be taken internally no matter who you are. The trace chemical material in the absolutes makes this a certainty.

Hydrosols?

Hydrosols are another ingredient that can be used in aromatherapy treatments. Hydrosols are the waters that remain after extracting an essential oil from a plant material. This is often referred to as the floral water or distillate water. When extracting essential oil from plant material, the water itself will become infused with the beautiful aroma and some of the therapeutic properties of the oil itself. However, hydrosols are byproducts of the distillation process.

Resins?

You may be familiar with the term of resins already. Resin is a substance that occurs naturally when a tree is damaged. If the bark is pierced, trees will produce a thick, solid, sticky substance that is called resin. This resin is used for a number of different things, such as to make figurines or other collectible items.

Resins produced naturally from trees do provide therapeutic benefits. However, it can be difficult to work with these resins because of their thick and sticky nature. Liquid forms of resins can be found that have been extracted using a solvent or alcohol extraction technique.

CO₂s?

CO₂s are oils that have been extracted through a different method. This method includes the use of carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is pressurized until it becomes a liquid. It is then capable of being used as a solvent on natural plant material and the content of the plant that would have made essential oil dissolves into the liquid CO₂. Later on,

the concoction is drawn back up to its natural state and the CO₂ particles evaporate into a gaseous state, leaving the resulting oil.

Typically, CO₂s are also interpreted as being just like essential oils because there is no trace of any kind of harmful solvent or chemical product left in the end product. This method does not diminish the potency of the oil either. CO₂s are generally thicker and more closely resemble the natural aroma of the original plant material. They are often sought out as a better product.

Infused Oils?

Another type of oil that is commonly used in aromatherapy is called infused oil. Infused oil uses a different method to extract the oils from plant material. In this method of extraction, a carrier oil is permeated with one or more herbs. This type of oil has the properties of the carrier oil but it also contains therapeutic properties of both the oil and the herbs that are infused into the oil.

While many plants contain healing or therapeutic properties, not all of these plants have the ability to be turned into the essential oils. This is because they do not have enough oil material in them to have it extracted for an essential oil. However, this is why you would infuse that particular plant or herb with a carrier oil to making infused oil.

Infused oils are generally very oily depending on what the base oil was. They are clearly diluted as they have been combined with the carrier oil and they can go bad over time. You can even make infused oil at home with a crock top at a very low heat setting. It is easy to overheat the oil so you have to be extremely careful when creating your own infused oil.

Chapter 10: Using Aromatherapy to Promote Emotional Well-Being

Introduction

Aromatherapy, particularly in the use of essential oils can be extremely useful in promoting strong emotional well-being. It can help promote positive emotional states of being and can assist in dealing with issues such as grief, anger, or frustration. People who experience stress on a daily basis should consider the use of essential oils daily to help promote a less stressful environment to assist them to calm their nerves.

One reason why aromatherapy works so well in this particular situation is that essential oils are comprised of chemicals that occur naturally in plant material and that can be introduced in synergy with each other. Their molecules are easily inhaled which allows them to be fast acting and be absorbed into the body quickly.

The molecules released through aromatherapy will stimulate and affect portions of the brain. The triggers that it provides to the brain can produce specific types of emotions or can mask other types of emotions. Naturally, not all the essential oils will affect everyone in the same manner. Other memories that are associated with particular types of aromas may affect how the aroma will impact their emotional state of being.

For instance, if you have a particularly strong emotional response to a certain type of oil or scent, this will affect its ability to positively influence your emotional well-being. If cinnamon, normally a warm and comforting scent, has become associated with the death of a family member, you are less likely to be positively influence by cinnamon.

What essential oils influence emotional well-being?

It is believed by those who practice aromatherapy that it can greatly influence and improve upon a person's emotional well-being. We, as human beings, experience a wide variety of emotional states and we need to address these emotional states in order to continue functioning in society. It is hard to deal with other people when stricken with grief – even more when stricken with anger.

Therefore, some people turn to aromatherapy as a method to deal with these strong emotions. Different oils have properties that deal with different emotional states.

The list below covers most human emotions that we wish either to suppress or to enhance.

Anger

Bergamot, Jasmine, Neroli, Orange, Patchouli, Petitgrain, Roman Chamomile, Rose, Vetiver, Ylang Ylang

Anxiety

Bergamot, Cedarwood, Clary Sage, Frankincense, Geranium, Lavender, Mandarin, Neroli, Patchouli, Roman Chamomile, Rose, Sandalwood, Vetiver

Confidence

Bay Laurel, Bergamot, Cypress, Grapefruit, Jasmine, Orange, Rosemary

Depression

Bergamot, Clary Sage, Frankincense, Geranium, Grapefruit, Helichrysum, Jasmine, Lavender, Lemon, Mandarin, Neroli, Orange, Roman Chamomile, Rose, Sandalwood, Ylang Ylang

Fatigue, Exhaustion and Burnout

Basil, Bergamot, Black Pepper, Clary Sage, Cypress, Frankincense, Ginger, Grapefruit, Helichrysum, Jasmine, Lemon, Patchouli, Peppermint, Rosemary, Sandalwood, Vetiver

Fear

Bergamot, Cedarwood, Clary Sage, Frankincense, Grapefruit, Jasmine, Lemon, Neroli, Orange, Roman Chamomile, Sandalwood, Vetiver

Grief

Cypress, Frankincense, Helichrysum, Neroli, Rose, Sandalwood, Vetiver

Happiness and Peace

Bergamot, Frankincense, Geranium, Grapefruit, Lemon, Neroli, Orange, Rose, Sandalwood, Ylang Ylang

Insecurity

Bergamot, Cedarwood, Frankincense, Jasmine, Sandalwood, Vetiver

Irritability

Lavender, Mandarin, Neroli, Roman Chamomile, Sandalwood

Loneliness

Bergamot, Clary Sage, Frankincense, Helichrysum, Roman Chamomile, Rose

Memory and Concentration

Basil, Black Pepper, Cypress, Hyssop, Lemon, Peppermint, Rosemary

Panic and Panic Attacks

Frankincense, Helichrysum, Lavender, Neroli, Rose

Stress

Benzoin, Bergamot, Clary Sage, Frankincense, Geranium, Grapefruit, Jasmine, Lavender, Mandarin, Neroli, Patchouli, Roman Chamomile, Rose, Sandalwood, Vetiver, Ylang Ylang

How does Aromatherapy help Depression?

In most cases, depression is caused by hormonal or chemical imbalances or through situational triggers. A "situational" trigger includes the death of a loved one, physical or verbal abuse, financial hardships, moving, loneliness, retirement, unemployment, divorce, or pressure in life. For most people, depression is short-lived and passes quickly, but other instances of depression may linger much longer.

If you believe that you have depression, it is always best to consult a qualified physician to address these issues. He or she will probably recommend therapy to you and you may need to start taking medications. It is best to deal with depression under a physician's supervision.

If you decide to use aromatherapy to help with your depression, remember that it is only complementary. Aromatherapy can be particularly helpful in improving your overall mood and outlook on life, but it is no substitute for medical treatments to address your depression issues, particularly when they are caused by hormonal or chemical imbalances.

However, you can use aromatherapy to enhance your sense of well-being. Try using a diffuser (such as a reed diffuser where the oils climb a reed and diffuse into the air) during the day, an air freshener or room spray with aromatherapy ingredients, a massage with aromatherapy lotions (even a self-massage using aromatherapy oils can be so refreshing), skin, and hair aromatherapy products. Various instances where your senses are exposed to the therapeutic properties of the oils will help make your day easier and will help relieve your stress and anxiety. You can also use bath oils and bath salts.

Chapter 11: Can Aromatherapy help with Weight Loss?

Aromatherapy has been a highly debatable topic when it comes to weight loss. With everyone seeking a quick fix solution for obesity, every avenue has been turned to as a possible method for weight loss. Like with all aspects of aromatherapy, there has been some degree of success but that is according to variables.

Like all weight loss programs, you need to consult a medical doctor or practitioner prior to setting up any weight loss plan for yourself. It is best to work with someone who is knowledgeable in this field to make sure that a plan will be set up that clearly addresses your specific needs.

Naturally, the use of essential oils will not make you shed pounds miraculously. Nothing will make you shed pounds miraculously, no matter what it says. However, aromatherapy can help to reduce your need to eat by decreasing your hunger and reducing your desire to eat more food. It can also help provide greater energy when you are working out and reduce your tiredness so that you feel more inclined to get up and exercise.

Any weight losing program requires eating the right food and plenty of exercise, make sure to keep this in mind when you are setting up your own work out plan as it is very important to stay on a schedule when trying to lose weight. All other items added to your diet plan are simply complementary to help you work towards your overall goal.

Chapter 12: What is Essential Oil Blending?

Introduction

One unique and very interesting thing about essential oils is that they can be blended in order to evoke specific responses in those who will be exposed to the oils. You can easily create your own essential oil blend in order to create a beautiful aromatic blend both for your own enjoyment and for room fragrancing. Essential oils can also be blended for therapeutic reasons to help ease muscles, reduce stress, or increase happiness. There are two major reasons for blending essential oils: Aromatic and Therapeutic.

In aromatic blends, the focus is on the aroma of the final product. While some aromatic blends will create therapeutic effects, the focus is to create a certain type of scent or smell for a particular purpose. Only natural ingredients should be used such as absolutes, grain alcohol, carrier oils, essential oils, water, or herbs.

Most people work to produce a type of aroma such as a woody, earthy, spicy, citrus, floral, medicinal, minty, spicy, or Oriental aroma. Be careful to analyze the aromatic properties of the essential oils you are using to make sure that they will not contradict each other too much. This will also be a good way to determine which essential oils are spicy, minty, or woody.

However, you do not need to stay within the same type or qualification of aroma in order to produce an excellent set. For instance, spicy and Oriental oils tend to go very well with floral, Orientals, or citrus oils as long as they are not overpowering. Floral oils tend to blend very well with spicy, citrus, and woody oils as well, keep this in mind when you are making a oil combination as these oils could help you relax more and provide you with better treatment. There are many different combinations that can be used, to figure out which one of these work best for you it is best to check many different aromatherapy combinations before deciding which one of these would work best for you.

In therapeutic blends, the focus is on the therapeutic effect of the blend. These blends are designed to help a physical condition or emotional state. You want to blend oils which have the desired therapeutic uses (such as, to treat asthma). You can combine multiple essential oils together that have recommended pieces as treating asthma. This is not to be used as your regular treatment for asthma, when having an asthma attack it would be important to use your inhaler as the first piece of treatment along then with aromatherapy

which will help calm down the asthma attack and future asthma attacks.

You can also blend essential oils together that have different properties in order to treat something like a combination of asthma, hypertension, arthritis, and insomnia. Just be careful not to also combine it with any kind of essential oil that will have a negative effect on your health and be very careful if you are pregnant or allergic to peanuts.

Consider as well that some essential oils are energizing oils while other oils will cause sleepiness. If you intend to use your oil before the start of your day, do not use oils that are likely to make you fall asleep. This also works in reverse, so make sure that you are not using energizing oils right before you go to sleep, as this can cause you to stay up most of the night and leave you not rested enough to return to work as an active and production person while you are visiting work the next morning.

Blending oils together in order to treat various illnesses or medical conditions is an excellent way to specifically address your requirements. Just be careful as you make your blends and try not to use too much of any overpowering type of oil which will cause it to be difficult for you to feel the effects of the other oils in the mix.

How do you blend?

There are no generally accepted rules to blending essential oils in order to produce a particular aroma or therapeutic combination. However, there are some important tips that you might want to consider when you are working on blending your oils. It is best to start using a small number of drops of each type of oil because a smaller amount will help you to prevent wasting any oil unnecessarily. It also will help you to determine if more is less or less is more and figure out which one would be right for you.

You should first start your blend with just essential oils, absolutes, or CO2s. You can then dilute it with other carrier oils or alcohol if you need to and this will help you to prevent from wasting any of your carrier oils or alcohol. Make sure that you keep a careful list of the each oil you are using along with the number of drops that are used for that oil. It is too easy to get carried away and forget to take down these careful notes, but you will need these notes in order to duplicate your work later on or if you want it and change it and make the recipe better.

Label all of your blends very carefully so that you know exactly what they are, what they are for, and what they have in them. You may also

consider putting some other kind of identification to your blend and in keeping that identification with the recipe in some type of notebook.

Make sure that you are very careful about using oils that have an overpowering aroma. Certain aromas are going to be stronger than others and may overpower the rest if not used in the appropriate combination. You may want to consider experimenting with the oils prior to combining them with others so that you are aware of how strong the scent is and how strong its effect might be.

Even if you do not like your blend right away, it is not a good idea to destroy it. You should hang onto the blend for a little while and revisit it at a later date. Sometimes, the ingredients in your blend will need time to settle in order to invoke the right aroma. Besides, you may get used to it! You might also have been exposed to too many strong aromas before your 'questionable' product was complete, thereby making it difficult to get a good sense of the real aroma.

Chapter 13: Diffusers?

A diffuser is a 'tool' which you can use as a method of helping diffuse the molecules of an essential oil into the air. The diffuser enables you to best use the affects of the aromatherapy treatment as you breath in your ordinary air.

Tissues

One of the simplest methods of diffusion is through a tissue or handkerchief. The tissue has several small drops of the oil placed onto it but this tissue will carry the molecules wherever you take the tissue. It is extremely portable and can be tucked into a pocket and taken with you through your day, unobtrusive and portable.

Steam Diffusion

Steam diffusion is another method. You can boil a few cups of water and pour it into a bowl. Several drops of the oil will be placed into the bowl. The fact that the water is already hot will keep the water releasing steam into the air. However, this steam will now carry the essential oils with it, this is a relaxing why to try to use Aromatherapy and can be a perfect compliment to a spa treatment or a massage treatment.

Candle diffusion

In this method you light a candle and allow it to burn for a few minutes. After a little while, put out the candle and place a drop of the oil into the melted wax and then relight the candle. Be very careful, as essential oils are extremely flammable! You want to keep the oil in the wax and not near the flames to prevent them from catching on fire.

Reed diffusion

This is an increasingly popular method of diffusion. In this method, a reed is place into a bowl of diluted essential oils. The reed soaks up the oil material and the liquid runs upwards along the reed itself. As the liquid moves, it diffuses the oil particles into the air.

Fan diffusion

This can also be quite effective. In this method, a fan diffusers uses the fan to blow the essential oil into the air. The fan blows across a disposable pad or tray that is placed within the overall system. The air blown from the fan carries across the tray, lifting particles of the oil into the air.

Other methods

There are many other types of diffusers in the market. They vary in size, complexity, and in the strength of the aroma released into the

room. Some are more personal for you to carry on your person while others easily handle an entire room. Some will produce a greater concentration than others and so it is best to review the different types of diffusers to make up your mind as to which one is best for your use.

Chapter 14: How should Essential Oils be Stored?

One important key fact to note about essential oils is that they do not go bad. Therefore, storing them can be quite simple with some careful precautions. They are commonly sold in small bottles but if you are making your own blends, you can find different sized bottles to use (keep in mind that if your blend has a perishable oil in it, this limits your ability to store it).

While essential oils do not go bad, they can lose their effectiveness and deteriorate. Some oils may even oxidize and lose both aroma and therapeutic benefits, but this is not true for all oils. It is best to keep your oils in a translucent (but not transparent) bottle.

Amber or blue bottles are best for this because they will diffuse the light that will try to get in to the oils. Dark glass is always best for storing all of your aromatherapy items, particularly those, which can cause photo toxicity as they are more susceptible to the adverse effects of light.

In fact, it is such an issue that you use dark glass that you should not purchase an oils sold in clear containers. You will not be able to ascertain how long this oil was in a clear container and it could have been exposed to light and lost its potency already. Look out for containers that use rubber stoppers as well. While this may seem to be extremely convenient, a rubber stopper can get turned gummy from the highly concentrated oil and should always be kept out of the bottle itself. Keeping this oil in a bottle will ensure that you do not get access oil breakouts.

Another key thing to be aware of is that aluminum bottles can be used for storing as long as they are lined on the interior. Anything that is not lined should not be used.

Keep your essential oils in a dark, cool location where they are away from the sunlight and kept in a relatively low temperature (not refrigerated or frozen). This is the best way to ensure they will last as long as possible. Heat is likely to accelerate deterioration as is sunlight, and this can cause your oils to go bad.

Chapter 15: Conclusion

Aromatherapy has become a very popular treatment method in the world of alternative medicine. It has become particularly popular and effective in areas where there are problems relating to the emotions – such as stress and depression.

Within the detail of this book, I have told you about many of the different aromatic products available, and what to avoid, and the many different methods of applying these materials.

It is my hope, that armed with this information, you will now be able to enjoy the benefits that aromatherapy can bring to your life.

Good luck!