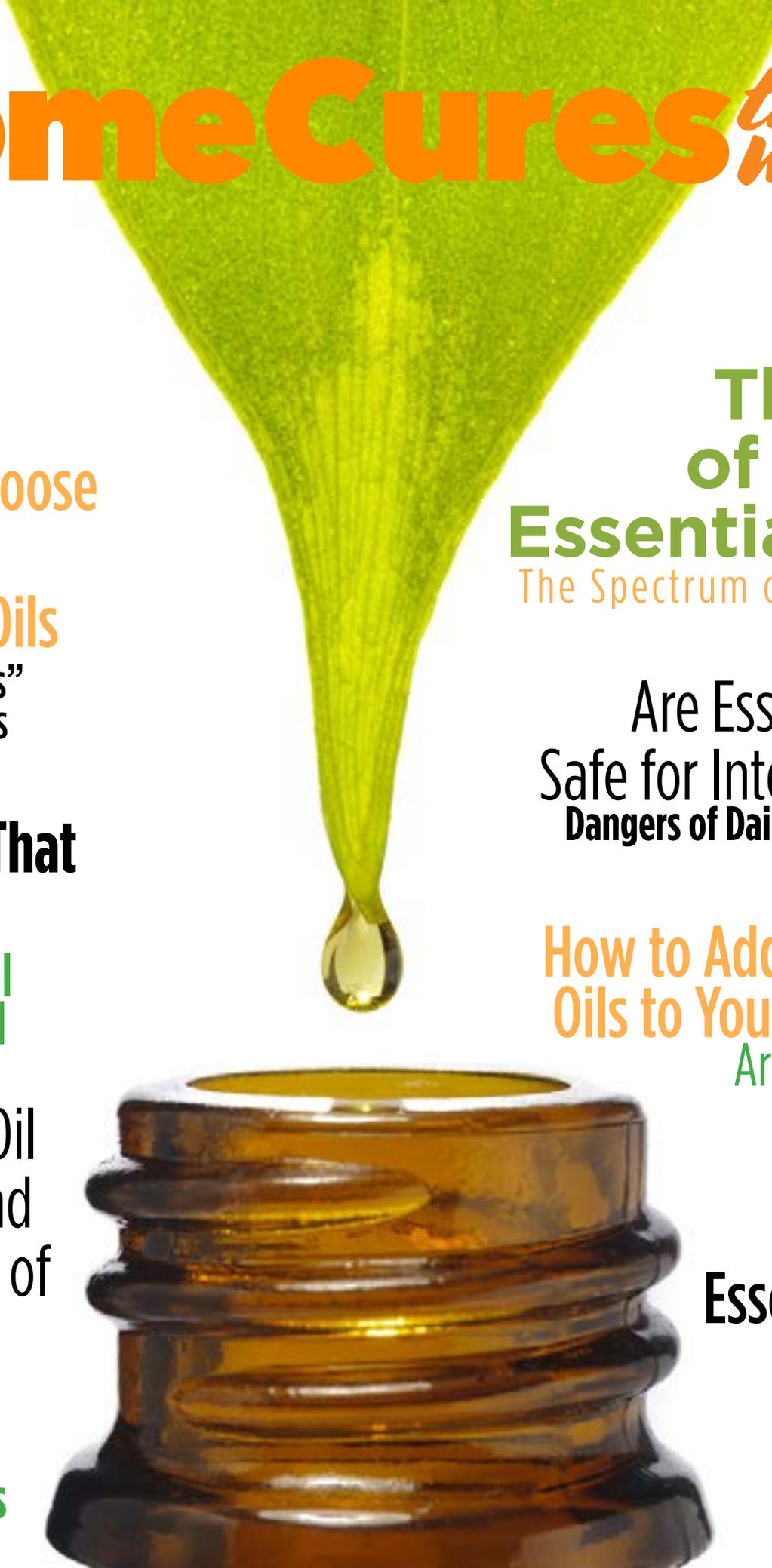


# HomeCures *that work!*



April 2015

## How to Choose Quality Essential Oils

Making “Scents”  
of Essential Oils

## Oils Well That Ends Well

The Essential  
Nature of Oil

Essential Oil  
Studies and  
The Sense of  
Smell

Aroma  
and  
Effectiveness

## The Art of Using Essential Oils

The Spectrum of their Uses

Are Essential Oils  
Safe for Internal Use?  
Dangers of Daily Internal Use

## How to Add Essential Oils to Your Workout

Aromatherapy  
and Fitness

## Top 10 Essential Oils

Beginners  
First Aid Kit

# Table of Contents

<b><u>The Art of Using Essential Oils</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Essential Oil Basics</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Safety of Essential Oils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How Essential Oils are Used</b>	<b>5</b>
<b><u>Are Essential Oils Safe for Internal Use?</u></b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Hazardous Uses of Essential Oils</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Dangers of Neat Application</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Dangers of Daily Internal Use of Essential Oils</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>When Essential Oils are Safe</b>	<b>11</b>
<b><u>Top 10 Essential Oils</u></b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Inhalation of Essential Oils</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Topical Use of Essential Oils</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Internal Use of Essential Oils</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Top 10 Essential Oils</b>	<b>17</b>
<b><u>Oils Well That Ends Well</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b>The Value of Oil</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Essential Joy</b>	<b>20</b>
<b><u>Essential Oil Studies and The Sense of Smell</u></b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Studies on Essential Oils Exist, but are Difficult to Stage</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>A Natural Remedy Approach to Essential Oils</b>	<b>23</b>
<b><u>How to Add Essential Oils to Your Workout</u></b>	<b>24</b>
<b>How does Aromatherapy Play into Fitness?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>How to Add Essential Oils to Your Workout</b>	<b>26</b>



# The Art of Using Essential Oils

by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

Have you ever had the experience of smelling something that causes you to relive an old experience? You actually feel the old feeling as if you were living it again -- not just a memory. Maybe your heart races, or you feel hot all over.

When I was in college, I took a date to a Chinese restaurant. I ordered my favorite Chinese chicken salad, and subsequently spent most of the night kneeling in front of the toilet. For years, every time I smelled sesame oil my stomach would turn and I couldn't eat. Interestingly, I could tolerate all the other ingredients: chicken, lettuce, green onions, and so forth. It was just the distinctive smell of sesame oil that caused nausea.

Our sense of smell can have powerful effects on the body through our feelings and memory. The link occurs because you process smell in the hippocampus and amygdala, parts of the limbic system, or the "emotional brain" -- the same area where memories are processed. This is the same part of the autonomic nervous system that controls blood pressure, heart, hormones, breathing, stomach, organs and so forth. Because of this, essential oils have the potential to have far-reaching effects on the body.

## Essential Oil Basics

Essential oils have been called "the life blood of a plant." Oils are called "essential oils" when they are pure extracts of the plant. They are named "essential" because they bear the very essence of the flower, petals, peels, berries, leaves, bark, wood or roots from which they are derived. All substances can be broken down into an array of molecules and atoms, and essential oils are no different. Each essential oil can be broken down into a collection of different natural chemical constituents. These oils consist of a multitude of different substances:

- Aldehydes
- Fats (lipids)
- Terpenes
- Ketones
- Alcohols
- Phenols
- Esters

Essential oils are used by plants in somewhat the same way they are by humans. Essential oils:

- Fight infection
- Contain hormone-like compounds
- Initiate cellular regeneration
- Work as chemical defense against fungal, viral, and animal foes

Each plant's oils have a unique makeup as a result of the plant's own physiology, natural environment, and its potential microbial invaders. Despite their plant origins, essential oils have a similar structure to some compounds found in blood and tissues. This allows them to be compatible with our own physiology and easily absorbed into the human body. Essential oils pass through cell membranes, then further on into the bloodstream due to their "lipophilic" nature (a structure in alignment with the lipid components of our cell walls).

When using essential oils to treating illness, it's important to take the individual person into account. One may negatively respond to an oil that will help another. Thus, there is an art to their use. The way we heal from illness is correlated to our internal function, much more than to the chemistry.

For example, of a hundred people exposed to the flu virus, only about 30% actually get an illness. If your balanced immune system is functioning, you may not get sick in the first place. If you do, you will be able to overcome and fight the infection. Antibiotics are really for people with a suppressed or non-functional immune system. Essential oils can be an adjunct to helping your body function properly to prevent and treat illness.

Essential oils can protect us from microbes in many different ways. From keeping the space around us naturally microbe-free, to readying our immune system for defense, to actually destroying the microbes once they've entered our bodies.

The two primary effects happen through olfactory reactions, or sense of smell, and the chemical reactions from applying oils to the skin.

Besides the effects caused from the odor, as the oils are absorbed, each substance further affects the body through action on hormones, receptors, the immune system, and energy production. These are generally absorbed readily through the skin, but some are volatile, meaning they evaporate, so they are taken orally.

Essential oils absorbed through the skin go directly into the lymph system before they reach the blood, producing more immune system effects. This also allows more regional application since the lymph system is more local. This is why topical essential oil application is done for more localized effects.

When oils are ingested through the intestines they go straight to the liver, which can affect detoxification mechanisms as well as energy production. From there, they have access to cells and blood, and then to the rest of the body.

## Safety of Essential Oils

While quality oils are non-toxic and safe, they are highly concentrated. Because they can have powerful effects on the body, you only need very small amounts. This is not one of those, "If some is good, then more is better," treatments. When ingesting them internally it is often better to put them into capsules.



Someone told a friend of ours to use a couple of drops of pure oil of oregano for her 4-year-old son's sore throat. He had been in bed for 2 days and was quite ill. She didn't know how to administer pure oil of oregano. So she told her son to open his mouth and she shook a few drops of pure oil out of the bottle onto his tongue. The child immediately turned red and went screaming down the hall, running around the house throwing up, gaging and crying.

The mom didn't understand what all of the fuss was about. After all, it was just an oil from a spice she used frequently in her cooking, so she put a drop or two on her own tongue. She said her tongue instantly felt like it was on fire. She turned red, her eyes watered up and ran through the house screaming and gaging, and finally to the kitchen for a glass of water! She apologized to her son profusely! However, 15 minutes later her son was well, laughing and playing. He was fully and permanently recovered from his illness!

## How Essential Oils are Used

Using essential oils is an art that takes some time to master. Oils are not like drugs, which primarily enhance or retard the body's natural functions. Where there is dysfunction and the body is not able to compensate, the oils will not change it.

For example, a person with diabetes may be told that lavender and cinnamon oils help to regulate sugar. But if there is no change in diet and exercise oils will make little difference. Oils are best used as part of a program, especially in the case of chronic illness.

That said, it is important to understand how our medical system uses drugs:

- To block or stimulate receptors in the body
- To kill bacteria or viruses
- To effect chemical reactions

But, essential oils work differently. Their aromas are a sensory experience, on top of the physiologic effects, which make them much more effective than just relieving symptoms.

Let's look at some common ailments, and some simple regimens that can be useful for specific problems. These examples will provide some of the spectrum of the uses of essential oils.

### Toenail fungus

Lavender orange and vanilla essential oils for anxiety Oil of oregano, tea tree oil (melaleuca), or eucalyptus oil applied directly to the nail daily stops the fungus from growing.[1] As the nail grows out, cut the infected area off. It's also important to keep the nails as dry as possible by wearing sandals or open-toed shoes.

### Anxiety

To relieve symptoms of anxiety and promote calm, mix one or more of lavender, wild orange, and vanilla essentials oils with a little coconut oil and rub onto the face.

### Depression

To lift moods, use lavender, tangerine, and/or lemon balm oils. These can be put in a diffuser, or directly on the palms and rubbed onto the face.



## Upper respiratory infections (colds/flu)

Apply a few drops of oregano oil to the palm, rub on both hands and apply to cheeks over the sinuses.

## Indigestion or Nausea

Apply a couple of drops of peppermint oil to the abdomen to soothe nausea. This oil can work very quickly just by opening the bottle and smelling the oil. Many pregnant women use it this way. Peppermint oil has been shown to be effective in treating irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).[2]

## Headaches (including migraines)

Apply lavender oil to the palms and rub on back of neck to relieve headaches and migraines.[3]

## Cold sores

Menthol extracts have been shown to inhibit the HSV-1 virus that causes cold sores.[4]

Jennifer Luccion, a specialist in essential oils and distributor for Young Living oils, states that most oils are safe and effective, even for babies. She keeps a supply of oils to be used for her family instead of using drugs.

## Allergies

3 essential oils for sinus congestion“There are three oils that can relieve symptoms of seasonal allergies such as congestion, and sinus pressure.

- Lemon helps to drain the sinuses.
- Lavender stops the runny nose.
- Peppermint opens the airways to breathe better.

By using a diffuser, the combination of oils in the air can help everyone in the room.” Ms. Luccion recommends, “You can also combine equal drops of the three in a small amount of coconut oil and rub it on the neck and chest.”

As you may have noticed, lavender is one special oil that you should include in every home first aid kit. Ms. Luccion is big on Lavender oil. “Lavender has been called the ‘Swiss army knife’ of oils because of its many uses,” she states. “It’s also a gentle oil and can safely be used on young children. It is used on cuts and scrapes to ease discomfort and speed healing, and to keep bruising down. Lavender is also soothing to burns, including sunburn, and has the ability to promote tissue regeneration. It also encourages relaxation and eases stress when inhaled. If you’re going to have one oil then this is the one, just make sure it’s pure because it’s also the most adulterated oil on the market.”[5]

In a study on rats, lavender was shown to protect the heart against myocardial infarction, or heart attack.[5]

Since one oil may have many different uses, and a single problem may respond to different oils, there is an art to using them. Sometimes a combination is best, other times either one or the other will work, but not both. There are whole books on the use of essential oils for health, which may include both acute and chronic problems.

Essential oils have been used to treat all sorts of illnesses successfully for thousands of years. Having essential oils in your home can improve your health, and lessen the need for medical treatments. The amazing thing about them is they work so well, but don’t have the side-effects of drugs. They work with the body’s own healing mechanisms which keeps balance in the body. They are safe, and effective, and as you use them, you can learn the art and skill of healing with oils.



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## Are Essential Oils Safe for Internal Use?

by Amanda Box, N.D.

When it comes to essential oils, the phrase, “Too much of a good thing” even applies to them, as wonderful as they are. There are hundreds of articles that speak of the amazing benefits of these natural medicines called essential oils.

- Rub peppermint oil on your temples for a headache.
- Sniff lavender oil to induce sleep
- Drink grapefruit oil in water to curb appetite.

The recommendations are truly endless.

Most people are ready and willing to follow these recommendations because essential oils are good and natural. And if they are all-natural, then they can't hurt you, right?

Wrong! Unfortunately, few people are addressing the safety concerns and proper uses of these powerful remedies.

I'm not against using essential oils. I love my oils and I use them often! I promote their use to others and I am excited to see them skyrocket to popularity. What disturbs me is that among the growing essential oil subculture, there is an enormous amount of misinformation about how to use essential oils.

Many who use essential oils have little information on how to employ them safely. The extent of their essential oil knowledge is often limited to what they have learned from a friend who uses them or what they read in a blog post written by an essential oil consultant.

In my experience, many who promote unconventional applications of essential oils have minimal aromatherapy training and represent multi-level marketing companies who themselves are promoting these controversial methods..

An individual selling essential oils in a multi-level marketing scheme does not possess the same knowledge or background on the safety of essential oils that a licensed aromatherapist does.

I place no blame on the consultants who sell the oils and have created an income for their families by making a business for

themselves. These well-intentioned consultants trust and believe in the companies they work for. Furthermore, they have no doubt experienced positive health improvements from using essential oils.

Unfortunately, a multi-level marketing company's quest to sell more oil often motivates them to blur the truth and exaggerate benefits. I believe that these companies produce quality oils, some of which I personally use. But, I cannot agree with all of their suggested uses.

## Hazardous Uses of Essential Oils

There are two hazardous applications of essential oils that are currently promoted as safe. These two unorthodox methods have never, in the history of aromatherapy, been promoted by certified aromatherapists.

The two questionable methods of using essential oils are:

- Neat (undiluted) application
- Daily internal use (specifically of undiluted oil)

## The Dangers of Neat Application

Neat application is the use of essential oils that are not diluted. This method of application is rarely, if ever used in aromatherapy. If neat application is performed, it should be:

- Supervised by a qualified professional.
- Used for a very short period.
- Administered for an acute and very traumatic situation.

Most of the time neat oils can be applied without any apparent issues. However, stronger is not always better when it comes to essential oils. Undiluted oils are extremely potent and concentrated. "Hot" oils like cinnamon and oregano are so potent, that they can cause second degree burns if applied undiluted![1]



The recommended dilutions are as follows[2]:

- **1% dilution (1 drop per tsp of carrier oil)** – For children under age 6, pregnant women, elderly adults, those with sensitive skin, compromised immune systems, or other serious health issues. This is also the dilution you want when you are massaging over a large area of the body.
- **2% dilution (2 drops per tsp of carrier oil)** – Ideal for most adults and in most situations. This is also a good dilution for daily skin care.
- **3%-5% dilution (3-5 drops per tsp of carrier oil)** – Best used short-term for a temporary health issue, such as a muscle injury or respiratory congestion. Up to 10% dilution can be used depending on the health concern, the health and age of the person, and the oils being used.
- **25% dilution (25 drops per tsp of carrier oil)** – A dilution of this strength is occasionally used for things such as muscle cramps, bad bruising, or severe pain.

Oils that are not consider “hot” may not irritate the skin immediately, but over time, their use in neat form can cause something called sensitization. A sensitization reaction is an allergic reaction to the oil. The body’s immune system reacts to the oil and causes a rash on the skin. A sensitization reaction can also cause inflammation, difficulty breathing, nausea, headache and even anaphylaxis.

*Caution: Once sensitization occurs, it is permanent! The oil causing the reaction can never be used again without the same response!*

The good news is that avoiding sensitization is easy! Appropriately dilute essential oils and only use them when needed. The bonus in diluting essential oils is that they last much longer and in the end will save you hundreds of dollars!

## **Dangers of Daily Internal Use of Essential Oils**

My biggest essential oil concern is using them internally. Daily or casual use is unnecessary and potentially harmful to the body. Just as you would (or should) exercise caution and research when using pharmaceuticals, you should practice the same careful research when using essential oils. Essential oils are profoundly powerful, which makes them capable of both great good and great harm.

Essential oils are medicine, not a vitamin or essential nutrient for the body. If someone takes antibiotics when they don’t have an infection or an antidepressant when they’re not depressed, these medicines will cause harm, not help!

The same principle applies to these powerful medicines known as essential oils. Though these natural oils have tremendous healing potential, used when not needed and they cause harm. Remember...The word Pharmacopoeia has two meanings: medicine and poison. With the power to heal comes the power to harm, if used incorrectly.

Taking essential oils daily or preventatively is completely unnecessary. They can cause harm to internal organs in the body.

- Essential oils are extremely concentrated and can cause unneeded stress on the liver.[3]
- They can also cause burns to mucous membranes of the digestive tract!
- Some oils can also cause serious drug interactions with medications such as blood thinners.[4]

I’ve seen many people claim that only “therapeutic” grade oils are safe for internal consumption. Unfortunately, this is another marketing ploy invented by certain essential oil companies to promote their oil as superior and safer than other oils.

Essential oils are not regulated and there is no process that a company can go through to become certified as “therapeutic grade.” The companies that claim they have therapeutic grade oils are behind the push towards internal use. Using essential oils internally means more they sell more oil, which increases their profits! Let’s get one thing straight: the term therapeutic grade provides marketing clout rather than signifying that the oils meet a regulated quality standard.

I’ve read articles that promote internal ingestion of many different essential oils. Although many of these oils may not cause

immediate harm, the long term effects of these oils taken internally has not been studied. The FDA does have a list of essential oils, which are “generally recognized as safe” for use as food or drink. It is always best to try inhalation and topical application before resorting to internal use.[5]

Many suggest putting drops of essential oils in water to drink. This is the absolute worst way to ingest essential oils! Oil and water do not mix! Therefore, the oil is not diluted with water. The oils remain in their concentrated state and can cause burning and irritation to the very sensitive mucous membranes in the throat and through the entire digestive tract.

If you choose to take essential oils internally, please do so when needed and not on a daily basis. Also remember that dilution is very important. You only need 1-2 drops in a capsule full of an edible carrier oil like coconut oil or honey.

Oils like peppermint, ginger and oregano have benefits when taken internally for very brief periods of time. However, there aren't enough studies about the effects of essential oils on the flora of the intestinal tract or other organs to adequately determine their safety long-term. Another concern is the possible interaction between certain essential oils and certain medications (drug interactions).

For those who are taking pharmaceuticals, it is important to know how using natural “remedies” might interact or contradict their effect. Although there is very little research on actual drug interactions with essential oils, we are aware that some individual components of essential oils may slow down a process or potentiate it. The following information on just a few essential oils in an effort to help you make an informed, responsible decision about whether or not to use essential oils alongside allopathic medications.

- For example, wintergreen oil also has blood-thinning effects similar to aspirin. People who take blood thinners such as warfarin, or those who are sensitive to aspirin are advised against taking wintergreen essential oil. Ingestion could be fatal.[6]
- Essential oils containing farnesene and alpha-bisabolol such as balsam poplar, german chamomile, blue tansy and tarrow inhibit some metabolizing enzymes (CYP2D6) and may possibly potentiate the actions of some antidepressants.[7]
- Peppermint is a calcium channel blocker and may alter the effect of medication taken orally.

I have used diluted oregano oil internally for many years to treat infections like sinusitis. However, I was always taught that this powerful antibacterial oil can also kill off beneficial gut bacteria. I only use it briefly and follow it up with a strong probiotic. As a holistic practitioner who believes our gut flora is the most vulnerable and significant factor governing our health, I believe it is far easier to kill beneficial bacteria than to replace it.

Sadly, I don't see many “use with caution” recommendations on essential oils. Rather, I see the opposite.

I once saw a picture of a lady in an essential oil Facebook group. She had 15 bottles of essential oils alongside a pile of empty capsules. The caption read, “My daily routine.” Not one person in the group gave her a warning of caution or asked her why she was taking so many oils. Instead, the comments encouraged her dedication and applauded her commitment to health!

The woman swallowing 15 essential oils a day believed she was doing something healthy for her body. Those in her “essential oil community” believed she was solving her problems. This is just one example of the gross misrepresentation of the use of essential oils!

When it comes to conventional medicine and natural remedies alike, first, do no harm. That's why ingesting essential oils should be at the end of your natural remedies list. Start with options that have no potential for harm!

## **When Essential Oils are Safe**

If you are considering internal essential oil use, there are oils that are much more safely ingested than others. Remember, ingestion is not completely contraindicated. It is frequent and large doses that pose the biggest danger. Every time you chew gum, eat confectionary, and even brush your teeth, essential oils were the flavoring agent. Every time you eat food simmered

with dried or fresh oregano, basil etc. the characteristic flavor from the essential oil contained in the plant lingers on. When you cook with an essential oil you are diffusing the oil into the food and typically only a few drops are needed. These are safe doses of oils that don't cause complications in the body.

Though using essential oils internally for medicinal reasons is controversial, there are particular oils that if used in diluted form and for short periods of time can treat certain acute health issues.

Some examples of these safer internal uses of essential oil use include:

- Oregano oil or an antimicrobial blend such as Thieves oil diluted to 10% with carrier oil, then put into a capsule or mixed with a tsp of honey. This is often used for sinus infections, respiratory infections and the flu. Take no longer than 3 days.
- 1 drop peppermint or ginger oil mixed with 1 tsp of honey for nausea.

When I spent some time in Paris in my early twenties, I quickly realized that floral flavors, like rose and lavender, were quite popular in Parisian candies and desserts. Being the unconventional person that I am, I found myself enjoying these unique flavors in my foods. However, once returning to the states, I couldn't find the floral flavored desserts I was craving.

However, with the help of essential oils, I am now able to make my own floral flavored foods! Used sparingly, they can add intense flavor and aroma to candies, chocolates, frostings, baked goods, soups and marinades.

For this recipe, adding the essential oil to the honey first helps to distribute the oil in the water like an emulsion. Remember, less is more. It takes only a drop or two of oil to flavor an entire pitcher!

Because only one drop of oil is used in this lemonade recipe, it is quite safe to consume. Lavender is calming, making this lemonade great for anxiety. It makes a perfect drink at the end of a hot summer day.



## Calming Lavender Lemonade

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cups freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 cup local honey + 1/2 cup water for sweet syrup
- 1-2 drops pure lavender essential oil
- 6 cups of water

### Directions:

1. Squeeze lemons and put into a glass pitcher {always use glass with essential oils and citrus juices}, including the lemon pulp.
2. In a small saucepan, combine the honey and 1/2 cup of water. Heat honey mix over a very low heat, stirring until the honey has combined with the water, creating a syrup.
3. Add 1-2 drops of lavender essential oil to the honey syrup.
4. Pour the honey syrup into the lemon juice and add 6 cups of water.
5. Stir well and serve over a bit of ice.

Tip: Essential oils are a great substitute for artificial flavorings. Try a couple drops of peppermint in your next batch of hot chocolate, or lemon or orange oil in your frosting to add natural flavor without any chemical additives.

Another handy use of essential oils in cooking is substituting an essential oil when you don't have lemon, lime or orange on hand. Below are some substitutions using essential oils:

- 1 tsp citrus extract (lemon, lime, or orange) = 8 drops essential oil
- 1 tbs citrus zest (lemon, lime, or orange) = 3 drops essential oil

Below is a recipe for orange creamsicle cookies that are gluten free, white sugar-free and use orange essential oil for flavor!

## Gluten Free Orange Creamsicle Cookies

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup raw, unfiltered honey
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup coconut flour
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 15 drops orange essential oil

### Directions:

1. Whisk together the salt and coconut flour.
2. Add the honey, butter, eggs, vanilla extract, and orange essential oil and mix for 2 minutes.
3. Let the dough sit for about 5 minutes then drop tablespoon size scoops onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.
4. Use your fingers to flatten the dollop down and shape in a circle. (You should put some butter or olive oil on your finger so the dough doesn't stick.)
5. Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes
6. Let cool on sheet for 2 minutes before placing on a cookie rack to cool completely.

Yield 36-40 cookies.



Remember, just because essential oils are natural, doesn't mean they can't harm you. Essential oils must be used safely, especially when it pertains to internal use. The primary intended use is in the name "aroma" + "therapy." These oils' healing aromas are meant to be smelled or inhaled. Be wary of those who suggest daily internal use of essential oils.

If you use essential oils internally do so minimally or use them in a recipe now and then. Using essential oils safely and effectively will maximize the health of you and your family. Add essential oils to your medicine cabinet and naturally fight infection, lower stress levels, boost brain power and more!



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# How to Choose Quality Essential Oils

by Amanda Box, N.D.

## Making “Scents” of Essential Oils

Essential oils have been around for thousands of years. Used by ancient Egyptians, these precious oils were some of the world’s first medicines! Essential oils are even mentioned 188 times in the Bible, referenced as anointing oil and used to heal the sick.

Today, essential oils have become one of the hottest products on the market... and rightly so!

As a traditional naturopath, I am delighted that people are using essential oils rather than pharmaceutical drugs to heal their ailments. Just 10 years ago, most people had no idea that the frankincense and myrrh given to baby Jesus were gifts of medicinal essential oils! Today, thousands of people regularly use these ancient oils in their own homes!

Even with all the excitement surrounding these therapeutic oils, I must voice some concerns.

When a natural product escalates in popularity, the excitement can lead to extravagant health claims. I’ve seen this happen with many MLM (multi-level marketing) companies. They produce great health shakes, skin care products and diet products with hundreds, if not thousands, of success stories! Unfortunately, in the quest to sell more product, people make statements that just aren’t true! This dynamic can make sifting through the propaganda to find the truth about essential oils a daunting task!

Although my degree in naturopathy required a course in aromatherapy, I am not an aromatherapist and by no means an expert. However, I have been around essential oils and aromatherapy for nearly 15 years. I used the popular Young Living brand oils and experienced their Raindrop Technique® long before they became the monumental company they are today.

I use essential oils, but I also believe in using a holistic approach towards health. I eat a healthy diet and use a combination of not just essential oils, but also vitamins, supplements and herbs. I also don’t promote any one brand or company as the “holy grail” of essential oils. I believe there are several essential oil companies that produce quality oils that can bring about health and healing in the human body.

My goal in this article is to help you feel more comfortable with essential oils. I hope I can open your eyes to their safe and effective uses. Essential oils aren't just some sort of gimmick, but a legitimate method to bring about whole body health! If you use essential oils but would like additional information, or if you're apprehensive about their uses and effectiveness, then I encourage you to read on. May you gain clarity amidst the massive amounts of misinformation about essential oils.

## What are Essential Oils?

Essential oils originate from highly fragrant substances found in specialized cells or glands of certain plants.[1] When this aromatic substance is contained in the plant, it is called an essence. These fragrant substances are then extracted from the part of the plant that contains the aromatic essence. For example orange oil comes from the rind, rose oil from the flower, peppermint oil from the leaves, and cinnamon oil from the bark.

Once extracted, this fragrant oil is called an essential oil! The plants used for essential oils are harvested all over the world. Certain geographical regions provide the best soil conditions, climate and altitude for the plants to grow. It takes hundreds or even thousands of pounds of plant material to make a pound of essential oil! For example, it takes 150 pounds of lavender to produce just 1 lb of lavender oil![2] Thus, essential oils are extremely potent!

The methods used to extract the essential oils can separate quality from cheaper, less pure oils. There are four common methods of essential oil extraction:

1. Steam distillation
2. CO2 extraction
3. Cold pressing
4. Solvent extraction



Steam distillation is the most common form of distraction, and creates very pure oil. In this method, pressurized steam is circulated through the plant. The heat from the steam opens the specialized aromatic cells or glands and releases the essential oils. The oil then travels with the steam molecules through a tube into the still's condensation chamber. As this mixture cools, it condenses into oil and water. Here, the essential oil naturally separates from the water.[3]

CO2 extraction is similar to steam distillation, but instead of water, liquid CO2 is used. After the oil from the plant is extracted, the CO2 returns into gas. This method is sometimes preferred because of its pleasant aroma.

Cold pressing is using a non-heating pressing method to squeeze out the juice and essential oils from the plant. This is typically used with rinds of fruit like orange, lemon and lime. When pressed, the essential oil rises to the top and separates from the juice in a centrifuge.

Solvent extraction dissolves the essential oils from the plant. The result is a solid product that must then be filtered and purified. Solvent extraction produces a stronger scent called an absolute. But, the toxic chemical solvents used can leave residues in the final product. These residues can lead to skin irritations and compromise the healing capacity of the oil.[4] The perfume industry loves this method because of the strong fragrance it produces. However, aromatherapists do not recommend the use of absolutes because they have little medicinal value.

## Quality of Essential Oils

Many essential oil companies will use terms such as "therapeutic grade, aromatherapy grade, or certified" to promote their oils as superior. However, these are nothing more than marketing terms coined to promote their oils as superior to the rest. Currently, there is no organization that certifies the quality of essential oils. Oils tested by a third party do not grade the

oil as being therapeutic or not. The benefits of third-party lab testing reveal contaminants and variations in the chemical composition of the oil. A quality company will have their oils third-party tested on a regular basis. This assures that their customers are truly getting what they are paying for!

Don't let marketing claims made by essential oil companies sway you. Two companies, doTerra and Young Living, market their oils "certified" and "therapeutic grade." Though I don't feel comfortable with their marketing choices, I do believe these companies produce quality essential oils. I am a huge fan of some of their blends.

- I wear Young Living's Stress Away daily.
- I also use Valor, Grounding, and Thieves.
- DoTerra's Deep Blue and In Tune are two of my favorites as well.

Unless you are benefiting from the MLM structure of these companies, you can purchase quality oils from other companies at lower prices. Again, I hold no allegiance to one company. I wish those who make their incomes through multi-level marketing companies the best. However, for those like myself, who are only using essential oils for personal use, finding quality essential oils at the best price is important!

When looking for a quality essential oil company, it is important to look for these attributes:

1. Undiluted, unadulterated pure essential oils
2. The common and botanical name
3. The extraction method
4. The country of origin
5. Safety warnings
6. Recommended uses
7. List of other oils it blends well with
8. Lab testing for quality

Though everyone has their opinions on the best oils on the market, below are the essential oil companies I trust and believe to produce lab tested, quality essential oils.

- Aromatic International
- Essential Oil Exchange
- Heritage Essential Oils
- Nature's Gift
- Mountain Rose Herbs
- New Directions Aromatics
- doTerra
- Young Living

There are far more than two essential oil companies on the market. When purchasing single essential oils, the prices will vary between companies. I encourage you to try oils from different companies. Many of them offer small sample sizes for a very low price point for you to try. You will soon find aromas you prefer and seem to work best for you and your family!



Amanda Box is a Traditional Naturopath and a graduate of Clayton College of Natural Health. She's been in the health and wellness industry for over 12 years and currently practices naturopathic consulting in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. If you don't have a good local naturopathic practitioner to turn to for your personal needs, Amanda does phone consultations! She can help you with weight loss, detox/cleansing, acute and chronic illnesses, skin and body care, grocery shopping, pantry overhauls, and more! Visit her blog "My Life in a Healthnut Shell" at <http://amandabox.blogspot.com/> for contact info.

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## Top 10 Essential Oils

by Amanda Box, N.D.

The use of essential oils is based in a practice called aromatherapy. Aromatherapy uses volatile (quick to evaporate) aromatic plant oils to bring about spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. Essential oils provide healing in many ways including:

- Strengthening the immune system
- Penetrating cell walls to deliver nutrients and oxygen
- Neutralizing free radicals with antioxidant properties
- Killing bacteria, viruses and fungi[1]
- Detoxifying cells in the body
- Passing the blood-brain barrier to treat neurological issues
- Increasing ozone and negative ions in the air
- Raising the frequency of the human body. This fights disease and brings balance the physical, emotional, and spiritual health.[2]
- Acting on the central nervous system. Oils can relieve depression, anxiety, and stress and also bring focus and alertness.
- Bringing relief to pain and inflammation

Essential oils are not the same as fragrance or perfume. They are naturally potent medicines with constituents based in chemistry. Made of hydrocarbons and oxygenated compounds, essential oils have the potential to be as powerful as pharmaceutical drugs. This is why safely using these powerful and effective oils is so important!

There are three primary and safe methods of essential oil use:

- Inhalation
- Topical
- Internal

### Inhalation of Essential Oils

The inhalation of oils is most effective on the central nervous system. When inhaling essential oils, the volatile molecules become a vapor. This vapor travels to the top of the nasal cavity and meet the olfactory mucous membrane. The olfactory membrane has thousands of sensory receptors to:

- Identify the smell.
- Convert the smell to an electrical charge.
- Send the frequency to the olfactory bulb.

The olfactory bulb then sends those charged impulses to different parts of the brain, including the limbic system. The limbic system includes parts of the brain that control emotional and psychological responses. Once the charge reaches the limbic region, it stimulates the hypothalamus and continues to the autonomic nervous system or pituitary gland. Once the charge reaches the autonomic nervous system, it can affect body functions such as heart rate and digestion. Its effects on the pituitary gland can initiate hormonal activity in the body.

Through the process of inhalation, essential oils have the capacity to:

- Heal emotional trauma
- Stimulate memory
- Enhance focus and learning
- Decrease stress levels
- Balance hormones
- And much more!

The entire process from inhalation to response from the brain takes place in a matter of seconds![3] The oils also reach the bloodstream during inhalation via the nasal mucosa and the alveoli in the lungs. Certain oils, eucalyptus for example, can also have a direct effect on the lungs. When inhaled, eucalyptus acts as a natural anti-inflammatory and expectorant.

Inhalation can be performed using an essential oil diffuser or an inhaler. Another way that essential oils enter the body is inhalation through the nose or mouth. Diffusers are also an excellent way:

- To neutralize odors
- Kill airborne bacteria and viruses
- Increase ozone in the air

I recommend using ultrasonic diffusers. They are the most effective at creating a fine mist of aromatic molecules. This inexpensive diffuser from NOW is a great introductory diffuser for a great price!

Applying diluted essential oil to the skin through a body oil or lotion is also a great way to incorporate the benefits of both inhalation and topical application.

## Topical Use of Essential Oils

Topical application quickly gets the oils into the bloodstream by bypassing the digestive system. When applied to the skin, essential oil molecules pass through dermis of the skin, into the capillaries and then into the bloodstream.

Essential oils can be quickly absorbed through the feet. The feet contain bundles of nerve endings. These nerve endings act as neuro-electrical pathways to different organs throughout the body. Applying oils to the corresponding points on the feet allows healing to reach the particular affected organ.

- For example, if you are nauseous, then apply peppermint to the stomach and intestinal locations on the feet.
- To induce sleep and relax your mind, apply lavender to the brain's location on the big toe.

Applying certain essential oils, such as peppermint, close to the chest or face of a small child is strongly discouraged due to risk of bronchospasm. Applying essential oils (always diluted) to their feet instead is a great, safer way for small children to get the topical benefits of essential oils.

Using a Reflexology or Vitaflex chart gives you a visual mapping of where to apply the oils on the feet to treat a particular organ.

Other great application points are:

- The back of the neck
- Inside the wrist
- The temples
- Sternum
- The area that the pain originates (back, leg, stomach, etc).

One of the most important safety concerns when using essential oils is NEVER to apply undiluted (also called neat) essential oils to the skin. I constantly see recommendations for undiluted application from non-professionals. However, aromatherapists do not recommend this practice! Certain essential oils companies recommend undiluted application only so they can sell more oil!

When oils are not diluted, sensitization can occur. Sensitization begins with a skin rash or skin irritation. Once this occurs, this oil can never be used again without the same reaction! This reaction is an allergic response that can even lead to respiratory distress or anaphylactic shock! Diluting oils not only protects you from sensitivity reactions, it also saves you money!

Some say that lavender and tea tree oil can safely be used without dilution. But all other oils must be diluted with a carrier oil to avoid damaging consequences to the skin.

topical essential oil dilution recommendationThe recommended correct dilution for topical application is:

- 1% for children and pregnant women
- 2% for adults
- 3%-5% for medicinal use

The most effective way to dilute essential oils is in carrier oil. Some great carrier oils to use for blending include:

- Fractionated coconut oil: Fractionated coconut oil is a “fraction” of regular coconut oil. The unsaturated portions have been removed to create very shelf-stable oil. It is a light, non-greasy and absorbs better than regular coconut oil. It is also liquid at room temperature making it better for mixing.
- Jojoba
- Almond oil
- Grapeseed oil
- Apricot oil

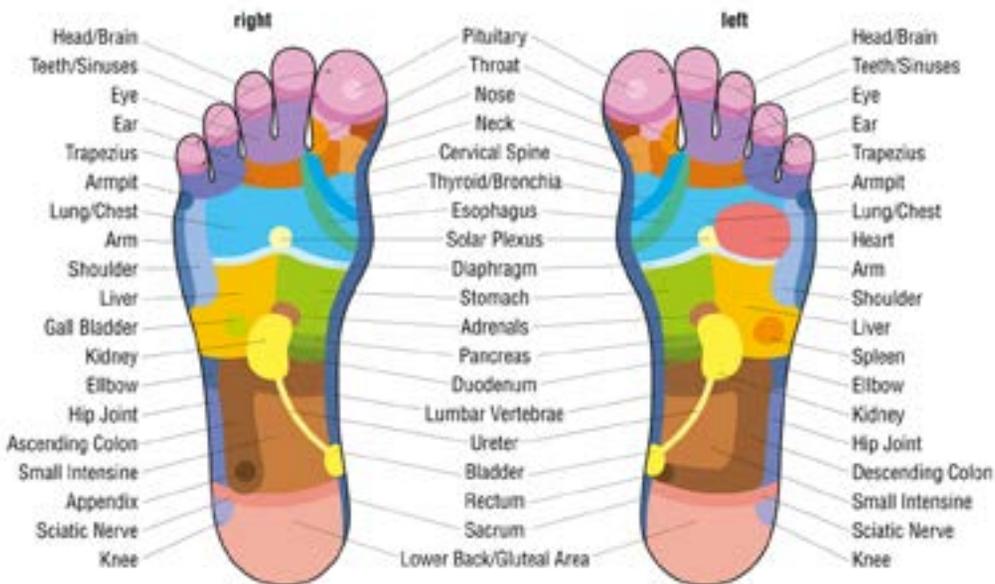
Use this reference for easy dilution:

- 1 tsp carrier oil + 1 drop of essential oil = 1% dilution
- 1 tsp carrier oil + 2 drops of essential oil = 2% dilution
- 1 tsp carrier oil + 3 drops of essential oil = 3% dilution
- 1 tsp carrier oil + 5 drops of essential oil = 5% dilution

## Internal Use of Essential Oils

Internal use of essential oils is highly controversial. I encourage you to read my article *Are Essential Oils Safe for Internal Use?* for a complete breakdown of safe and unsafe internal use. Internal use of essential oils should be used very sparingly. Though some internal supplementation of oils can be beneficial, daily use can cause damage to the body's internal organs. Inhalation and topical applications are the safest and most effective application methods.

## Foot Reflexology Chart



## Top 10 Essential Oils

You know now what essential oil are, from which reputable companies to purchase them and how to use them. Now, you might be wondering, where do I start? Below are my top essential oils that are great for beginners. These oils work on a variety of ailments and make a great “first aid” essential oil kit. The uses listed are just a few of the HUNDREDS of medicinal uses of these oils! I also recommend purchasing a small essential oil manual to read about each oil’s use and application recommendations.

- **Frankincense:** Used for depression, inflammation, mental fatigue, warts, wrinkles, skin infections, allergies, and asthma.
- **Myrrh:** Treats thyroid problems, eczema, impetigo, wounds, chapped and cracked skin, and stretch marks.
- **Lavender:** Used for anxiety, allergies, high blood pressure, headaches, burns, insomnia, and poor concentration.
- **Melaleuca (Tea Tree):** Used for acne, cold sores, dandruff, ringworm, rashes, yeast infections, athlete’s foot, toe fungus, and thrush.
- **Grapefruit:** Used for appetite suppression, postpartum depression, weight loss, fatigue, gallstones, jet lag, and cellulite. Add 30 drops of grapefruit essential oil to 1 cup of coconut oil for an amazing cellulite cream. Deeply massage this mixture into areas of cellulite twice a day for smoother skin!
- **Lemon:** Used for air purification, disinfection (added to cleaning products), constipation, gout, kidney stones, and varicose veins.
- **Eucalyptus:** Used for asthma, bronchitis, carpal tunnel, hypoglycemia, pain, sinusitis, sore throat, and neuralgia.
- **Oregano:** Used for bacterial and viral infections, fungus, parasites, pneumonia and staph/MRSA.
- **Peppermint:** Used for bad breath, alertness, energy, hemorrhoids, headaches, intestinal gas, and nausea.
- **Roman Chamomile:** Used for dry skin, bee stings, diaper rash, tooth abscess, emotional balance and muscle spasms.



There are numerous essential oil blends offered by different companies. These blends vary amongst different brands. I recommend starting with a few and trying new blends with each order. However, your staple oils will likely be the 10 singles above. Their uses are almost endless!

The recent trend of essential oil in the West is far more than just a fad or money making scheme. Essential oils have been used for thousands of years giving them a rich history of medicinal benefits. Essential oils have the capacity to bring about holistic health of the mind, body, and spirit. If you haven’t jumped on the essential oil bandwagon yet, I encourage you to do so! Start with the top 10 essential oils and go from there! The next time you’re in pain, exhausted, sick, or in a lousy mood, grab your oils and sniff! Inhale the aromas of essential oils and watch your health transform!



Amanda Box is a Traditional Naturopath and a graduate of Clayton College of Natural Health. She’s been in the health and wellness industry for over 12 years and currently practices naturopathic consulting in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. If you don’t have a good local naturopathic practitioner to turn to for your personal needs, Amanda does phone consultations! She can help you with weight loss, detox/cleansing, acute and chronic illnesses, skin and body care, grocery shopping, pantry overhauls, and more! Visit her blog “My Life in a Healthnut Shell” at <http://amandabox.blogspot.com/> for contact info.

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## Oils Well That Ends Well

by Michael Tyrrell

### The essential nature of oil

Oil is a topic of nearly universal application. Oil is used in transportation, marinating, lubrication, and elimination, etc., depending on the type and viscosity of the oil! Can you imagine your car, your skin, or even your salad without some form of oil?

I am reminded of a scene from the film, *The Wizard of Oz*. Exposure to the elements has left the Tin Woodsman unable to move, rusted and frozen in a forest. But Dorothy revives him with a few drops of oil. No doubt, those of you living in an arid climate have a trusty oil can nearby to silence the squeaky hinges of your doors and cabinets.

We can surmise that all oil is essential! But in article, we will focus on the therapeutic, or healing, nature of oils.

### The Value of Oil

“There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling place of the wise.” Proverbs 21:20

Since ancient times, the wise have known about the healing and therapeutic value of essential oils. Believe it or not, the Bible contains a wealth of information on our topic. It mentions no less than 33 essential oils and oil-producing plants within its pages.

When you visit the Holy Land (Israel) you can easily understand why oils are so important. Even with all of its beauty, Israel has an arid, desert climate, which causes your skin to lose moisture quickly. That’s why the Israeli diet contains a lot of olive oil. The nomadic shepherds of Israel, to this day, anoint or rub olive oil on the skin of their animals to keep their skin supple and safeguard them from insects, inflammation and infections.

Olive oil has a vast array of health benefits including:

- Enhanced immune function
- Powerful antimicrobial
- As an excellent carrier for other oils and salves

Here is a list of just a few of the principle oils mentioned in the Bible:

Myrrh	Frankincense	Calamus	Cedarwood	Rose Of Sharon
Cinnamon	Cassia	Galbanum	Onycha	Spikenard
Spikenard	Hyssop	Sandalwood	Myrtle Cypress	

Each oil mentioned in the Bible possesses a special application and medicinal quality, as well as a spiritual metaphor.

Interestingly, oil is widely understood as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in The Bible. Here are a couple of examples: in Luke 4:8, Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.”

The Spirit of the Lord and the anointing oil are directly linked here. The oil of anointing appears as a physical representation of Jesus being given the Holy Spirit to perform these functions for God in His love for mankind.

Here is another aspect of this symbolism. In Acts 10: 38, we read, “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

This is another reference to anointing, an act typically done with oil. But here, the anointing is done by the Holy Spirit!

In one of King David’s psalms we see the anointing oil compared with God’s people living in harmony, “For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil that was pored over Aaron’s head, that ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe.” Psalm 133:1-2

And when it came to offerings or sacrifices in the Old Testament, they often required oil as an integral part of the offering or sacrifice. “Now when anyone presents a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.” Leviticus 2:1

I am sharing these passages to emphasize the absolute importance, or essential nature, of oils throughout the Bible, as well as history.

- The apostle Paul considered the triad of basic needs to be food, clothing, and oil!
- Hosea described Israel’s basic needs in his day as, 1) bread and water, 2) wool and flax and 3) oil and drink.
- Oil filled the menorah, giving light to the temple, offerings and sacrifices.
- A cleansed leper would be anointed with oil before returning to family.
- Scented or perfumed oils were prized as much as gold and silver.
- Altars were anointed with oil.
- Kings were anointed with oil.
- Oil was sent as a symbol of treaty between warring nations.
- The list goes on and on!

In fact, before our modern electric conveniences were invented, oil was the primary source of light. Essential oil to ancient man was a necessity!

Now here’s the fun part...

What makes each plant (or essential) oil effective to a different part of the body?

It's inherent frequency!

That's right! If you have read my book, *Wholetones: The Sound Of Healing* you are already tracking with me.

You see, everything is frequency and everything possesses a resonant frequency. Our bodies are electrical. So is everything around us.

The Sun activates photosynthesis in plants, which converts sunlight into electrical, chemical energy available to us through essential oils. When essential oils are extracted from plants, they possess unique chemical components, as well as their own specific frequencies. And each frequency will affect the body in a different way. One may resonate with the lungs, while another may rid the body of infection.

Essential oils have the capacity to change the electrical frequency of the body. The electrical frequency of essential oils ranges between 52 and 320 Hz. Because they are living substances, their frequency is harmonic with the human frequency. When essential oils come into contact with our bodies, the frequency of our bodies becomes raised to a degree so that we become inhospitable hosts to pathogenic organisms.

Rose essential oil vibrates at a rate of 320MHz. The highest measured frequency of any essential oil, rose emanates love, purity, and wholeness, connecting mind, body, and spirit. It is not surprising then that there is no greater human emotion than love: the feeling of love is the highest frequency any person is able to emit. So remember, when you use essential oils, regardless of their vibrational frequencies use them with an open heart filled with love.

In God's genius, He gave us every seed bearing plant and tree as both sustenance and a veritable medicine chest - for what ails us.

This is the essence of nature from its organic origin, and it all depends on the Sun to make it work!

## Essential Joy

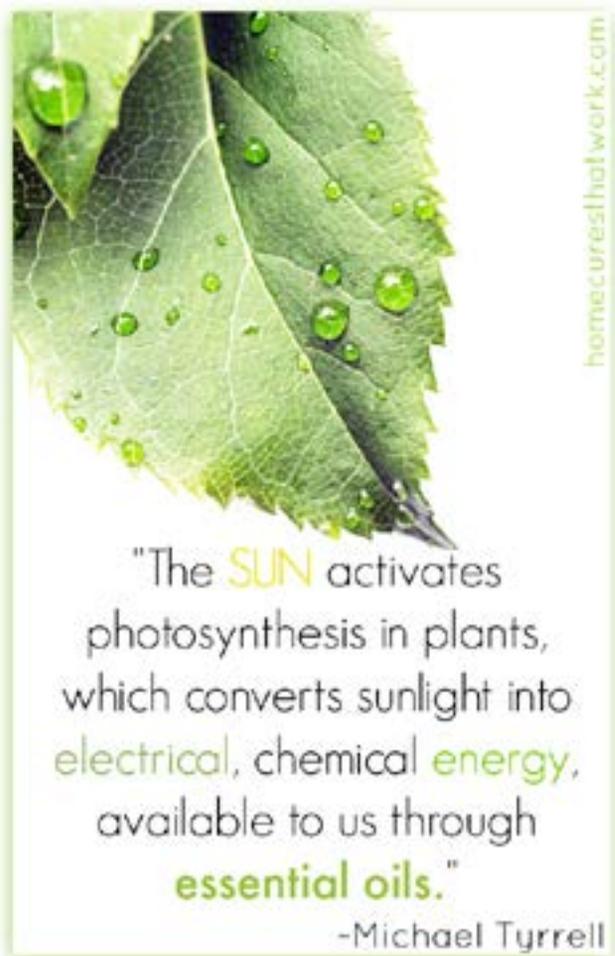
So here is a question...What is more essential...oil from plants, or the Sun that makes plants grow?

And here is yet another question...What is more essential...mankind, or God who gave us life? Now, stay with me...

I have used the word "essential" throughout this article without giving you its definition, which I will do now.

**Essential:** Absolutely necessary, vital, critical, all-important, nonnegotiable, must-have.

In my time on this "big blue marble" there is only one thing I have discovered that by definition is essential for life. This passage will describe it



in detail:

“Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of Your of Kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has set YOU above your companions by anointing You with the oil of joy.” Psalm 45:6-7

The true essential oil, the oil of joy, can only be obtained through a healing relationship with the Son of God, Jesus. There are many things in this life that are beneficial, but only one that is essential. I have received the oil of joy through the love of Jesus Christ. It is my prayer that He alone will become the one essential, must-have in your life today.



Michael Tyrrell, [www.michaelyrrell.com](http://www.michaelyrrell.com) is the founder of the Network Center Inc., a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2001 which works as an advisory agency to local churches, faith-based ministries, Para-church ministries, schools, home fellowships and music ministries in connection with their outreach ministries or missions based activities. Michael has been committed to training their key leaders and members to deliver the message of their Christian faith in order to reach the lost, the disenfranchised, the sick and the hurting through the organic roots of the Christian faith and other areas as needs arise. Michael has been in full-time ministry for the last 27 years and is a writer music producer and well-known musician.



## Essential Oil Studies and The Sense of Smell

by Rob Fischer

Apple pie fresh out of the oven, lilacs in bloom, sunbaked pine needles on a forest floor, bread baking—all these delicious aromas evoke pleasant memories and a sense of well-being for me. You could probably identify your favorite scents as well.

Of all our senses, smell has the strongest ties to memory. But our sense of smell also serves as an early warning system. Have you ever pulled a container of leftovers out of the fridge, popped the lid off, took a whiff and thought, “That doesn’t smell right!”? Our sense of smell can alert us to a natural gas leak, or assault us with the news that it’s time to change junior’s diaper.

Without our sense of smell, we wouldn’t be able to taste. That’s why we don’t want to put into our mouths that we can’t get past our nose. (Limburger cheese, anyone?) The sense of smell plays into our enjoyment of life, many physical responses, our motivations, the way we learn, and mood.[1]

Is it any wonder, then, that we might benefit from aromatherapy, a complementary alternative medicine that’s so strongly tied to the sense of smell? Of course, aromatherapy extends beyond the olfactory nerves, especially when applied topically. But we could still argue that even in those applications, the aroma of that essential oil continues to play a lead role in its effectiveness.

### Studies on Essential Oils Exist, but are Difficult to Stage

Remember when your mother would massage your chest with Vick’s Vaporub to help sooth congestion from a nasty cold? Was it the aroma; the warm, gentle massage; or the loving care of your mother that you found so soothing? Probably all three!

This example begins to get at the problem of designing clinical tests to demonstrate the effectiveness of an essential oil. As

with the example of Vick's Vaporub, when evaluating a complementary therapy, it's not always easy to tell which part of the therapy played which role.

Second, when trying to determine the efficacy of a new drug, researchers will often create a "blind" study involving two like groups: a control group receives a placebo and a test group receives the drug. But with essential oils, this methodology is very difficult to pull off.[2]

Also, essential oils are not standardized in their chemistry. The region, its soil, climate, and extraction methods all play into the chemical makeup of an essential oil. At this time, the International Standards Organization has set criteria for essential oils that measure a range of acceptable concentrations for their primary chemistries.[3]

Another difficulty with testing essential oils is the fact that individuals sometimes respond differently to the same oil. This is true of synthetic drugs as well. For instance, when I was a child my father smoked a pipe for a while. To this day, when I smell a certain pipe tobacco, it stimulates fond memories of my dad. But for others, the smell of pipe smoke may dredge up unpleasant memories, rendering the odor repugnant.

Finally, funding for research on essential oils is difficult to come by. Most major drug research is conducted by major pharmaceutical companies who stand to profit from the sales of that drug. These companies have little motivation to fund a study on a plant-based substance that cannot be patented and sold as proprietary.[4]

Still, there are numerous studies available on a broad selection of essential oils. In a blog article on lemon essential oil, Dr. Axe notes that at the time of his writing, he had found 519 scientific studies referring to lemon essential oils alone![5] So the studies are out there.

**Thyme Essential Oil**  
**when mixed with a carrier-oil**  
**and rubbed onto the feet before bed**  
**STOPS SNORING**

homecuresthatwork.com

## **A Natural Remedy Approach to Essential Oils**

Granted, we all like to read that something is backed up by scientific evidence. However, I know that when a trusted relative or friend tells us about a home remedy that worked for them, we generally accept their testimonial and may try the remedy ourselves.

thyme essential oils stops snoringLet me give you an example. Until recently, I knew nothing about essential oils. However, I did know that our youngest son snores like a sailor and sometimes his snoring drives his young wife from their bed. She finally had had enough of it and began looking for a remedy.

She read that thyme essential oil, when mixed with a carrier-oil and rubbed onto the feet before bed, stops the person from

snoring. She ordered thyme oil and convinced her husband to try it. That night he mixed the oils, rubbed the mixture onto his feet and put socks on. He slept like a baby—NO SNORING! It has worked every night since. What can I say? I'm a believer.

Talk to people who use essential oils successfully and prudently. My guess is that asking an essential oil salesperson what oils to use is like asking a barber if you need a haircut. So ask someone you know, like and trust. Try out what they recommend and see if it works for you. But remember, not every solution works for everyone in the same way.

This way you can build your own experiences with essential oils and pass your knowledge on to others...but not your sense of smell. :)



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master's degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.

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## How to Add Essential Oils to Your Workout

by Rob Fischer

When it comes to exercise, there's a lot more at play than simply lacing up our running shoes and going out for a jog. There are a number of factors we need to consider to ensure that we actually follow through with our exercise plan and that our experience is positive.

We may not always consciously think about these factors, but often have them pre-built into our routines. Regardless of the particular form of exercise that we choose, we are probably concerned about:

- Developing healthy routines
- Making our workout as pleasant as possible
- Improving stamina
- Staying hydrated
- Preventing strains and sprains
- Maintaining energy and endurance
- Preventing/minimizing muscle fatigue
- Overcoming post-workout soreness
- Avoiding risk of injury

What we may not have considered before now is that aromatherapy can help address any and all of the above challenges. Because many oils have antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties they are a great addition to your exercise routine and help you stay in great form. For instance, merely introducing a pleasant-smelling essential oil into your workout routine can evoke a desire to engage in that routine more consistently. Let's consider some other ways that aromatherapy can complement your of plan and become a part of preventative medicine for any sport enthusiast young or old, blue ribbon winner or beginner.

### How does Aromatherapy Play into Fitness?

Aromatherapy, as a complementary alternative medicine, neither takes the place of exercise itself nor serves as a substitute for heeding other important factors associated with exercise like eating right, getting plenty of sleep, and not overdoing it

when we exercise. Any one of those factors can significantly impact how we feel during and after a workout. Aromatherapy won't replace any of these essentials, but it can augment them beautifully.

Consider the following applications:

## Peppermint oil

In 2013, a small study was published in the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition. Twelve healthy male students drank one 500 ml bottle of mineral water mixed with 0.05 ml peppermint essential oil for ten days. Various readings were taken before and after the 10-day period.

Researchers found that peppermint oil proved effective on exercise performance, gas analysis, spirometry parameters, blood pressure, and respiratory rate of all twelve students.[1] In other studies, peppermint essential oil used as aromatherapy has been shown to raise the pain threshold, lower perceived physical workload, effort and anxiety.

## Eucalyptus, wintergreen and cypress oils

Following a hard workout, mix these essential oils with a neutral carrier oil like coconut or grape seed oil and work the mixture into your sore muscles for relief.[2]

## Frankincense and ginger oils

Together, these two essential oils help reduce inflammation and support joints. Mix with a carrier oil and rub onto sore joints or to knead out the inflammation from a cramp.[3]

## Lavender oil

After a hard workout, you want to allow your body the rest and relaxation it needs to recover and replenish itself. Lavender oil applied aromatically, in bathwater, or topically as a lotion can help you achieve the relaxation you need.[4]

## Oregano or melaleuca oil

A downside of working out in a public gym is the likelihood of picking up a fungus in the locker room like athlete's foot. Oregano or melaleuca oil with their powerful antifungal properties can help prevent and remedy such an outbreak.[5]

## Eucalyptus oil

In preparation for a workout, mix eucalyptus oil with a carrier oil and apply it to your neck, throat and temples. This will improve circulation and help open up your airways.[6] If you suffer from asthma or allergies, eucalyptus oil can provide relief following a workout as well.

## Lemon oil

This essential oil may be the most powerful anti-microbial oil of them all. This oil assists in the breakdown of fat, stimulates lymph drainage, quenches the thirst, and protects the immune system.[7]



## How to Add Essential Oils to Your Workout

Typically, essential oils are inhaled, applied topically to the skin, or ingested, although this is not as common in the US and should only be done under the supervision of a professional.

Inhale essential oils using a diffuser, by placing oil directly on a cotton ball or tissue, via steam, or through a mist sprayed into the air.[8]

When applying essential oils topically, most oils must be diluted with a carrier oil or water, usually at a concentration ratio of no more than 3-5%. And for a whole body application (bath or massage), dilute the oil to a 1% solution.[9]

Can you exercise without essential oils? Certainly! But I've given you seven good reasons to complement your exercise routine with essential oils. These oils can provide relief from debilitating pain, boost your performance, increase circulation, and can make your workout more pleasurable.

Most of us wouldn't go out for a run without the proper equipment. Perhaps the essential oils hold a place in the category of "proper equipment!" Why not test them out and see for yourself.



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master's degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.

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