

Emotional Applications of Essential Oils



Think of the last time you walked into a room and smelled something that ‘just took you back’. You remembered a time in your life, a scene, perhaps a person. For an instant all the feelings and emotions were present as you inhaled the aroma. Certain scents make us feel good, while others have the opposite effect. But why is there such a powerful association between what we smell and how we feel?

When you inhale an essential oil, the aroma travels up through the nose and into the limbic portion of the brain. This is what’s known as the “old” brain – the brain that developed first in humankind and has been active for over seventy million years. The limbic system plays a huge role in our emotional states, our ability to learn and our memory. Studies have shown that odor can, therefore, have a direct impact on how we feel at an emotional level. Any method of using the oils will result in some of the aroma being inhaled, hence the unmistakable feeling of well being after an aromatherapy treatment. But if, you want to specifically target the limbic system, then direct inhalation methods are preferable, such as steam inhalations, diffusers, sprays, or simply smelling a couple of drops of oil from a tissue.

Aromatherapy Basics: Methods of Essential Oil Application

Topical Application of Essential Oils

Massage: dilute essential oils in carrier oils or lotions and rub into the skin (use 10-25 drops essential oil per ounce of carrier oil); sweet almond oil, grapeseed oil, or even olive oil are all good carrier oil choices

Alcohol rub: add essential oils to ethanol or rubbing alcohol and rub into a sore or injured area; dilute essential oils 1-3% in the alcohol rub preparation

Salt rub: add 2-5 drops essential oils to a handful of Epsom salts and gently massage over the body to exfoliate and stimulate circulation; add several drops of a carrier oil to the mixture to moisturize as well as exfoliate

Compress: add 1-4 drops essential oils to hot or cold water, saturate a cloth, and apply to an area of the body

Bath: add essential oils to bath salts, bath oils, or bath milk, and pour into footbath or full body bath; use 1-3 drops essential oils for footbath, and 2-5 drops essential oils for full-body bath

Lotion & crème: add essential oils to pre-made or homemade lotion or crème bases; use 10-20 drops essential oils per ounce of lotion or crème

Inhalation of Essential Oils

Steam inhalation: add 1-4 drops essential oils to steaming water, tent a towel over the head, and inhale the vapors

Vaporization: add essential oils to a lamp ring, oil burner, or aromatic vaporizer

Direct inhalation: drop essential oils onto a tissue or cotton ball for inhalation, or a couple of drops between the palms, then cup over the nose and mouth

Diffusion: use a nebulizer to spray a very fine mist of essential oils into the air

Below are some common emotional states. Our emotions are such complex experiences and there are many facets to consider, so, in some ways, this chart is simplistic, but we have found these oils very helpful, each in their own way.

EMOTIONAL STATE AND AROPATHERAPY USE:	
Anger	Ylang-ylang, chamomile
Anxiety	Lavender, chamomile, neroli
Clarity	Lemon, basil
Closed/wounded heart	Rose
Concentration	Rosemary, basil, peppermint
Confidence	Jasmine
Confusion	Lemon, frankincense
Courage	Black pepper, ginger, thyme
Depression	Bergamot, clary sage, rose (depression due to grief)
Grief	Rose
Grounding	Frankincense, ginger
Fear of the future	Frankincense
Inner child	(drawing out/befriending) - Mandarin – very childlike oil
Irritation	Orange, sandalwood
Jealousy	Rose, chamomile
Joy	Neroli, mandarin and any of the citrus oils
Lethargy	Rosemary, black pepper
Panic	Chamomile, ylang-ylang, rose
Peace	Chamomile, frankincense, lavender