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Essential Oils for Beginners

Introduction

The Power of the Entire Earth in One Bottle

Our planet is a complicated system, made up of intricate ecosystems, endless molecules, and powerful elements.

Over the span of 4.5 billion years, the Earth has formed colossal mountains, green valleys, leafy jungles, and vast forests, providing a home for countless plants and animals. On the 196,900,000 square miles of the planet's surface, scientists estimate that there are 390,000 plants—with new species being discovered all the time.

The hundreds of thousands of plants actually perform a number of important functions for the planet. Plants help control the climate, process carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air to help us breathe, keep living organisms alive, and can be used for food and health solutions, among many other practical uses.



With so many benefits, it is no surprise that plants have been used since the beginning of time to help humans perform everyday tasks.



Ancient times

People of ancient civilizations used entire plants, extracts, and various plant parts to make life easier, transforming the gifts of the earth into everything from textiles to remedies. Ancient people believed that the earth gave them everything they needed to solve all of their problems.



Present day

Fast-forward to modern day. Plants are still everywhere around us, yet with new inventions and technology, we've grown accustomed to using synthetic products rather than the gifts of nature to solve everyday challenges. Technology has made life easier, but along with technological advancements, we've seen a decline in many areas of quality of life.



In our modern, industrial world, we're exposed to a variety of toxins in our daily lives through pollution, personal hygiene products, cleaning agents, and even our own food. Because of these high levels of toxin exposure, we have turned to equally synthetic answers for our health problems.

Annual global healthcare spending is anticipated to reach

\$8.7 trillion

by the year 2020¹

Did you know?

Despite the money that's spent in the pursuit of health, many of us are not truly better off. Research shows that, while the United States spends more than other countries on healthcare, the nation still ranks low for mortality and life expectancy indicators when compared to other countries.²

New research and technological advances aren't all bad, of course. Thanks to innovation and technology, we've been able to harness the power of nature to help us solve some of our problems—and we're now able to do it more safely and effectively than any generation before.

Though it has become the norm, we don't need to turn to synthetic chemicals to improve our lives or solve our problems. We can use what nature has already given us to live healthy, happy lives. Taken straight from the earth, essential oils allow us to capture the full power of nature and bring it into our homes, combating toxins and giving our bodies what they truly crave—gentle, natural solutions to our problems. Building on ancient traditions, we now have the scientific research and technology needed to put that power into a bottle.

Throughout this book, you'll learn about the history of essential oils, their unique benefits, how to use them safely, and the power that comes from using these gifts of the earth to transform your life. Our ancestors relied on the natural world to care for themselves, create livelihoods, protect their families, and move human civilization forward. If we embrace the power of nature to do the same today, just imagine what we can achieve.



(1) World Industry Outlook, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals, the Economist Intelligence Unit, June 2017.

(2) United Health Foundation, America's Health Ranking Report, 2016.

The Case for Essential Oils Today

In recent years, essential oils have become increasingly popular and commonplace; however, the use of essential oils actually dates back to ancient times. Essential oils were used by ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, among others.

Not just a fad, or the latest trend, essential oils are powerful plant extracts that can be used to promote well-being—just as they did centuries ago.

While many regions of the world have moved away from using natural products and turned instead to synthetic solutions, essential oils are just as useful today as they once were. The people of these ancient civilizations had the right idea—using potent, natural plant materials to provide the body with cleansing, soothing, preserving, or fortifying benefits.



Our lives today are drastically different compared to the people of ancient Rome. Are plants and plant extracts really a relevant way to approach our modern problems?

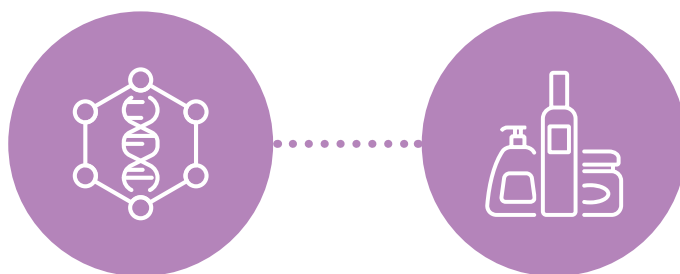
On any given day, we use a lot of products. We cook, clean, play sports, sleep, work, and complete a wide variety of activities. When you want to add flavor to your food, you go to the store to buy spices. When your child isn't feeling well, you go to the pharmacy. When you need to get a stain out of your shirt, you buy laundry detergent.

Beyond a simple trip to the store, we often don't take the time to think about the items we are buying, what they are made of, and where they really come from.



When was the last time you stopped to think, What am I putting on (or in) my body? or Where do my products come from?

As you're unloading the groceries, you might see a long, complicated label on the back of your cereal box or dish soap, filled with words you cannot pronounce or chemicals you've never heard of. But you think, "Oh well." Because while you may have different brands to choose from, most of the other products you find on the shelves will also have long lists of mysterious ingredients. So instead of thinking about alternatives, you just keep going back to the store to buy the supplies you need to keep cooking, cleaning, sleeping, working, and so on. Without even thinking about it, we expose ourselves to the harmful chemicals that lurk in everyday products like shampoo, household cleaners, and perfumes. The truth is that most of the time we don't even know they are there.



Despite the increasing industrialization of our world, many of us are still searching for natural ways to care for our bodies and our families. Though it requires a lot of work to maintain a healthy body and healthy home, synthetic products aren't the only way to take care of ourselves and our families; essential oils provide a natural alternative to chemical-ridden products, giving you a safe option for protecting your body and home from toxins.

Think about your daily routine



1



You wake up, maybe you shower and get ready, brush your teeth, go into the kitchen or bathroom, and pop a few vitamins into your mouth.



2



Throughout the day, you complete tasks like laundry, pouring a capful of bleach into the washing machine.



3



Then wipe down your kitchen counter with a cleaning chemical.



4



Maybe you light a synthetic candle to bring an inviting smell into your house while you clean.



5



In the afternoon, you might feel a little sleepy, so you get a coffee or soda to give you a jolt.



6



In the evening, you go through your nightly routine after a long day: wash your face with a harsh cleanser, brush your teeth again, and perhaps you turn on a sound machine that plays ocean waves to help you fall asleep.

You might not realize it, but essential oils can be used to improve nearly any activity of the day. Here's how your day might go if you used essential oils.



1

You wake up feeling a little groggy, so you inhale Grapefruit oil for an energizing aroma.



2

You turn on the shower and use a little Tea Tree oil on your scalp to help your hair look fuller, or an essential oil-infused soap that will cleanse and smooth your skin.



3

As you prepare for the day, you swallow a drop of Frankincense oil for cellular health.



4

You wipe down the sticky kitchen counter with Lemon oil and a rag, breathing in the clean, refreshing aroma as it permeates throughout the entire room.



5

When you're dragging in the afternoon, you add a drop of Peppermint to your water to wake yourself up.



6

As you get ready for bed at night, you place a few drops of Lavender on your pillow to create a luxurious, relaxing experience that helps you drift off to sleep.

Essential oils have gained popularity in recent years because they provide a natural alternative for many everyday tasks.

They are safe and effective. Plus, they have unique and beautiful aromas. Like we talked about, people of ancient civilizations used essential oils for things like cooking, bathing, beauty, health, and more. Essential oils are still applicable for those things today, and thanks to years of research and proven usage, they can be used for much, much more.



Everyday tasks like cleaning, supplementation, boosting immunity, sleep, and personal hygiene (the list goes on) become much easier with the help of pure essential oils.



Cleaning



Supplementation



Boosting immunity



Sleep



Personal Hygiene

Some people are put off by essential oils because they seem difficult to use or understand. While a basic knowledge is required, you don't need to have a degree in chemistry to safely and effectively use essential oils. Even with a limited knowledge, you can experience the benefits of oils through small and simple ways. After all, the reason so many people have adopted the use of essential oils today is because they provide a natural way to make everyday life easier.



Chapter one

What are Essential Oils?

We've established that essential oils can be a useful tool for those looking to escape synthetic chemicals and live a more holistic, natural lifestyle. But what exactly are essential oils? Where do they come from? How do we get them?

If you're thinking to yourself that essential oils are complicated, you're not wrong. They do have extremely intricate and complex chemical properties. However, essential oils aren't a complete mystery. In fact, they're all around us. Unseen by the naked eye, essential oils hide within the seeds, stems, roots, barks, flowers, needles, fruits, and plants that we see every day. Not all plants produce essential oils, but in plants where essential oils are found, the oil typically resides in microscopic, specialized glands of the plant. This is why essential oils aren't easily seen at first.

Plants produce essential oils for a number of reasons, all of which are important for supporting plant life.

For many plants, an essential oil is what gives the plant its aroma. Beyond making the plant smell nice, the aroma can help deter predators like insects or herbivores. Essential oils also play a vital role in the reproductive processes of plants and are useful during plant pollination. As mentioned,

not every plant produces an essential oil, and not every essential oil found within a plant has significant benefits. But if you consider how many different plant types exist (and are still being discovered), there are plenty of powerful essential oils to go around. Just as plants use essential oils to protect themselves, we too can use the powerful, natural properties of essential oils to protect ourselves and promote a healthy body.



So, we know that essential oils are found in many types of plants, but what are essential oils really?

From a scientific perspective, essential oils are small organic molecules that change quickly from a liquid to a gas state when they reach room temperature. This is why bottled essential oils are so powerful. A bottle of essential oil contains tiny molecules in a liquid state. When you unscrew the cap and open the bottle, the molecules change quickly from a liquid to a gas, which is why you can smell the oil immediately—even from a distance.



Essential oil molecules are often referred to as “volatile aromatic compounds.”

These molecules are considered volatile because of how quickly they change from a liquid to a gas. Because they're so volatile, the chemical compounds in essential oils can move quickly through the air until they come into contact with special sensors in the nose.

Each essential oil has its own unique chemical makeup.

The benefits of each essential oil are largely determined by the kind of plant it comes from and the chemical properties it contains. An oil might be cleansing, refreshing, or boosting to the immune system—among any number of other benefits—depending on its chemical profile and origin plant.



How, when, and why did people start using essential oils?

As discussed, the use of plants and plant extracts dates back to almost every ancient civilization in the world. While some think that essential oils are a new trend, we know that using plants to promote a healthy body is a time-honored tradition that's been a part of societies for centuries.



Ancient Egypt

The use of plant-based products has been recorded as far back as 3000 BC with the Egyptians, who used plant extracts for dozens of tasks. When analyzing the mummy of Ramses V, an ancient Egyptian pharaoh, the aromatic compounds of juniper, camphor, and myrrh were discovered, confirming their usage in sacred burial rituals. Precious plant compounds such as peppercorn, cinnamon bark, frankincense, and myrrh fed the thriving trade routes that snaked through the arid deserts of the region. The reverence that this ancient culture had for plants is even evident in the botanical depictions found in hieroglyphics and other Egyptian art.



Early oil scholars in India

Ayurvedic practice has developed over the span of 5,000 years in India—it consists of using the Earth's elements to find balance in the body. Today, the majority of people in India follow the Ayurvedic tradition exclusively or combine it with Western practices. Though the methods vary widely, the Ayurvedic use of plants and aromatic compounds is currently taught in over 100 accredited universities in the country.



Experimentation in ancient Greece

Around 2000 BC, Europe's first civilizations were emerging in Greece, bringing with them an interest in perfumery and other plant-based treatments. Men like Homer and Hippocrates took the traditions of the Egyptians and explored more about aromatics and plants. Their research permeated throughout Greek culture, influencing the practices of the time. Written documentation exists of solvent extractions using wine and fat sources to pull the volatile compounds from plants.



Essential oils in the Roman Empire

In ancient Rome, aromatic compounds were a vital part of both culture and health. Romans were known to use plant extracts for things like scented baths, massages, and perfumery. Bathing became something of an art, with perfumes and oils playing an important role. Roman men and women would visit elaborate bathhouses to relax, socialize, or recuperate after a large feast. Scientific literature from this time period shows that plant extracts and aromatic compounds were widely used for their various benefits.



Historic Chinese health practices

Traditional Chinese practices have incorporated the use of plant materials to promote wellness for centuries. Between 500 and 1300 AD, China was a leading world power, with advances in science and technology that superseded any other civilization at the time. Extensive research was conducted, leading to many advances in the usage of plants and plant parts.

Chinese legend speaks of a man named Shennong, an emperor and teacher. Though legend tells us that Shennong understood the effects of plants due to having a transparent body—allowing him to ingest many different herbs and directly “see” how they affected his body—he also left behind texts that described his research on hundreds of different types of plants. Protocols based on his experiences and research have been passed down through generations and still influence modern healthcare to this day.



Medieval Persia and essential oil distillation

In medieval Persia (known as modern-day Iran), people regularly used and traded resins and spices that were prized for perfumery and for helping maintain health. A Persian doctor known as Avicenna wrote extensively on health and wellness and is credited as the father of aromatherapy as we now know it. He also left a lasting mark in the field of chemistry for his experiments with distillation. He attempted various distillation methods using flowers, eventually isolating the scent of the rose and producing rose water.

The quintessence of life

During the Middle Ages, early chemists were desperately searching for what they called the “quintessence” of life—an elusive fifth element in addition to earth, fire, water, and air. Building on the discoveries of Avicenna, these alchemists experimented with plant distillation. While experimenting, they discovered a substance rising to the surface of the water during the distillation process. At this point in history, any substance that didn't mix with water was classified as an oil. With this discovery, the alchemists believed they'd found the quintessence they had been looking for—the essence of all life. This is how the term essential oil was born.

The birth of aromatherapy

A major historical shift began in the nineteenth century, when new developments in chemistry increased the sophistication and understanding of essential oil extraction methods. During this time, Rene Gattefosse (a chemist and perfumer) coined the phrase aromatherapy. Medical doctors in France dispensed essential oils in their places of practice—and they still receive some medical school training regarding safe usage today.

As you can see from this brief history of essential oils, many cultures have used plants for centuries to care for their bodies. So, for those who think that essential oils are simply a fad that will soon pass, it's important to know that they've already been around for hundreds of years.

Many attempts have been made through the years to capture the essence of plants.

How are essential oils made?

Many attempts have been made through the years to capture the essence of plants. How exactly do you capture the sweet smell of a rose or bright aroma of a lemon? How does an essential oil go from inside a plant to inside a bottle? While it's relatively easy to know where to find essential oils, it requires a delicate, scientific process to grow and care for an aromatic plant, extract its oil, and process that oil properly in order to make it useful.

How does a plant become an essential oil?

The exact process of producing an essential oil varies depending on what type of plant the oil comes from. However, the basic idea is to separate the oil from its original plant part. This is done using specialized machinery. As mentioned earlier, essential oils can hide within different parts of plants, often in microscopic amounts. Specialized machinery helps separate the microscopic oil molecules from their delicate plant parts.

While several methods exist for successfully extracting essential oil from a plant and preparing it for use, each

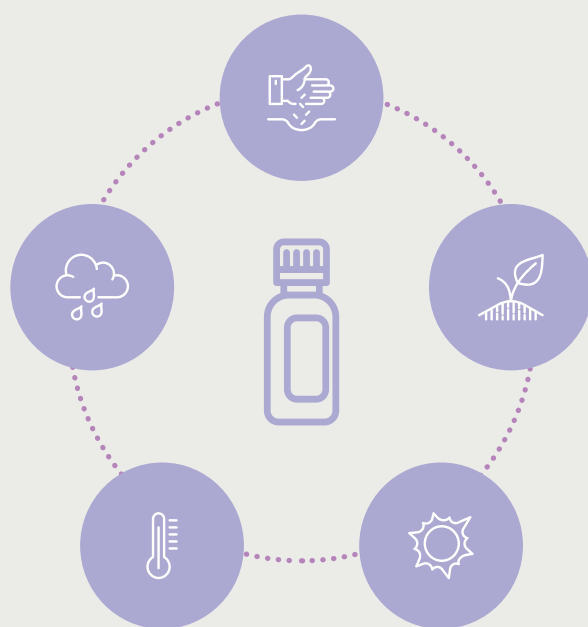
method has one thing in common—it requires extreme caution and care. Because plants are so delicate, careful planning and precision are necessary to extract high-quality essential oils. Producing quality essential oils also requires a thorough knowledge of the plants being used and proper extraction methods. Most importantly, it requires substantial care and attention to detail at every stage of the process, as cutting corners at any phase in the process will result in a lower-quality essential oil.

Several uncontrollable factors can influence the quality and composition of an essential oil, but many things can be done to preserve the potent aromatic compounds in the plant parts.



Planting and cultivating aromatic plants

Producing a pure essential oil is a detailed process that starts with choosing quality land, soil, and seeds. The composition of an essential oil is influenced by environmental factors like weather conditions, the amount of rainfall, and temperature. Because of this, carefully choosing the geographic location, specific climate, and time of year for planting, growing, and harvesting plants will influence the quality of its essential oil.



For example, the region of Reggio Di Calabria, Italy, has long been a sanctuary for growing bergamot fruit because of its unique climate and soil. In fact, this area is so optimal for growing bergamot that it's one of the primary areas in the world where the fruit is grown. Because Reggio Di Calabria is close to the ocean, the acidic soil and fresh air from the sea help to strengthen the trees, which allows them to produce the best fruit for Bergamot essential oil.

Similarly, the bitter orange tree—which produces twigs and leaves used to create Petitgrain oil—has been grown in Paraguay for centuries because of the country's abundant rainfall and vast amount of optimal land. Because of the heavy rainfall and room available for bitter orange trees to grow wild in the jungle, Paraguay is an ideal country for producing plant parts that'll eventually become Petitgrain essential oil.

Regardless of the geographic location, plant type, or oil being produced, plants must also be carefully planted, cared for, and closely watched by knowledgeable growers and farmers. When the best methods for planting, growing, and sustaining healthy plants are used, they contribute to a high-quality essential oil.

The composition of an essential oil is influenced by environmental factors like weather conditions, the amount of rainfall, and temperature.

Optimal harvesting practices

After plants have been carefully planted and cultivated, they must be harvested at the optimal time to preserve the delicate chemistry of the essential oils in the plant. Just as fruits and vegetables taste best when picked at the peak of ripeness, plants used to produce essential oils must be harvested at just the right time in order to optimize the chemical profile of the oil, and to produce as much oil as possible. Preserving the chemical composition during harvesting helps the essential oil retain potency and power.

Preserving the chemical composition during harvesting helps the essential oil retain potency and power.

Peak harvest time varies with the plant. It takes years for harvesters to determine the perfect window for essential oil production, but after enough observation and research, they can narrow down the peak harvest time to the optimal season—and even the preferred time of day.

For example, Jasmine essential oil is derived from the delicate petals of jasmine flowers. Once the flowers blossom, it doesn't take long for them to lose their volatile aromatic compounds, so it's crucial that they're harvested at the right time in order to preserve the chemical profile. The flowers must be harvested early in the morning, before the buds have had time to fully open—even waiting just an hour too long will cause important chemical compounds to be lost.

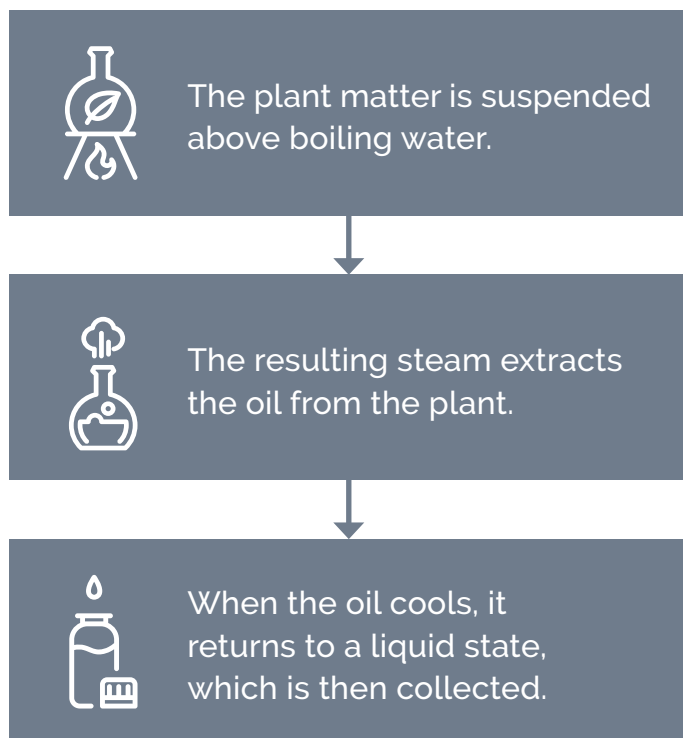


Extracting essential oils

After proper harvesting, plant parts are transported to a facility, where the oil is extracted. No matter how carefully or expertly a plant is selected, cared for, and harvested, the quality of an essential oil can either be preserved or ruined during the extraction process. There are two main methods for extracting essential oils: distillation and expression.

The main objective of each of these methods is to separate the essential oil from the plant part to make it a useable product. Distillation and expression are organic processes that allow aromatic compounds to be gently separated from the rest of the plant, while also preserving the potent and delicate chemical components of the essential oil.

Distillation is the process of separating the oil from the plant material using heat.

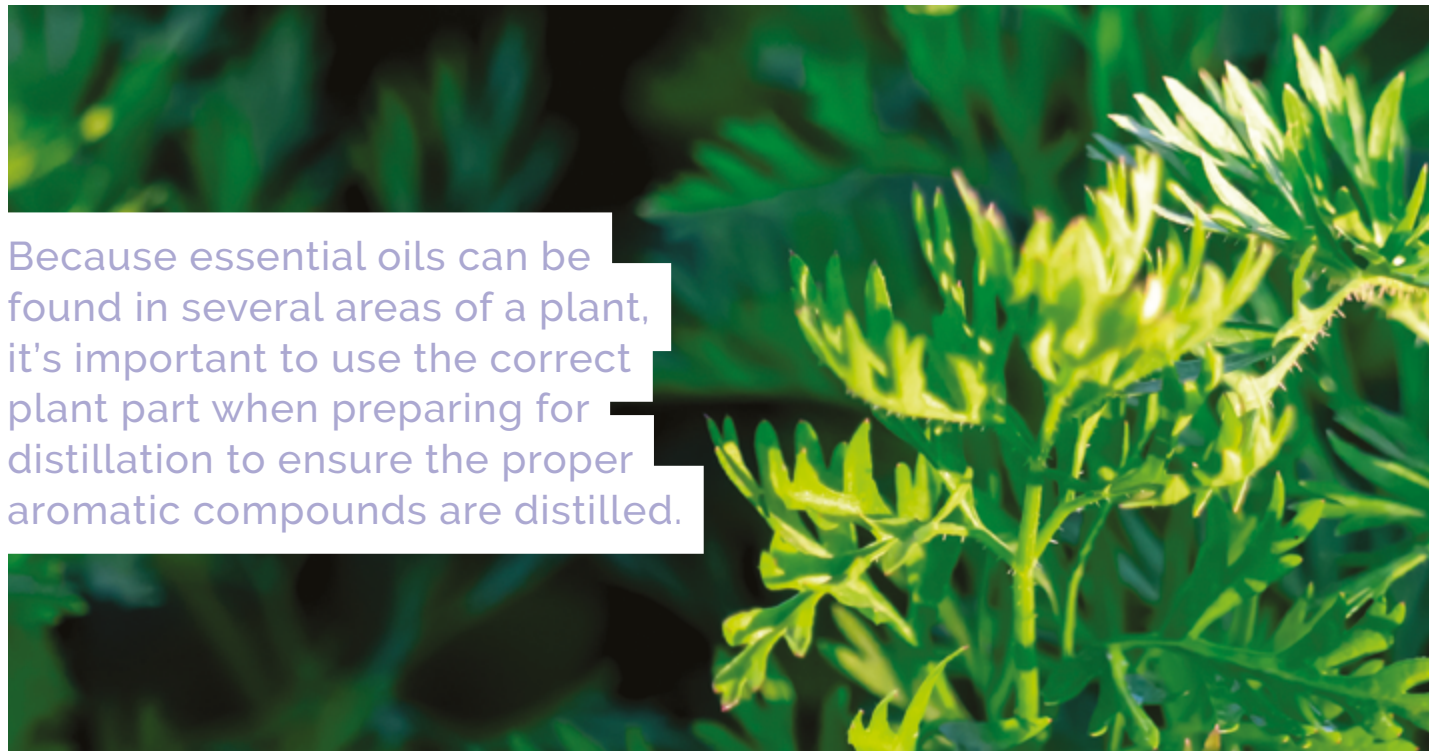


During this process, distillers must be precise, paying careful attention to temperature, time of distillation, the amount of pressure used, and so on. Because of this attention to detail, it becomes almost an art form.

Sandalwood essential oil is created using steam distillation.

To retrieve the oil from the Hawaiian sandalwood tree, the outer layers of the wood are stripped away from the heartwood, or the wood located in the center of the tree. The heartwood is chipped into fine pieces, filtered, and then chipped even further to create incredibly fine pieces. The wood then undergoes a 36-hour steam distillation process, using high heat and pressure to extract the Sandalwood oil.





Because essential oils can be found in several areas of a plant, it's important to use the correct plant part when preparing for distillation to ensure the proper aromatic compounds are distilled.

For example, the *Coriandrum sativum* plant produces two kinds of essential oils: Cilantro and Coriander. Cilantro oil is derived from the leaves of the plant, while Coriander oil is taken from the seeds. Cilantro and Coriander oils have a completely different chemical makeup, different properties, and varying benefits. Some oils require the distillation of the entire plant, while others simply come from a specific part, like the leaves, roots, bark, or flowers.

Expression or "cold-pressing"

The second oil extraction method, expression, is often called "cold-pressing." This is because it doesn't involve the use of heat. It's frequently used for producing citrus essential oils like Lime, Lemon, and Tangerine. For example, Grapefruit essential oil is extracted from the peel of the grapefruit.



The peel is removed and placed in expression machinery.



Rough cylinders in the machine grate the peel, releasing microscopic sacs that contain essential oil.



Using the expression process, it takes roughly 50 grapefruit peels to make a 15 ml bottle of Grapefruit oil.

Chapter Two

The benefits of essential oils

If you are wondering, “Do I really have a need for essential oils in my normal, everyday life?”, think back to our earlier example of what your life might be like if you used essential oils in nearly every part of your day.

From washing your hair and cleaning your kitchen counter to ingesting oils for digestive health and beyond, essential oils can become a regular part of your day. Essential oils have changed daily routines for millions of people around the world, who, like you, want to reduce the amount of toxins in their lives.



The Health Benefits of Essential Oils

Because essential oils have the power to soothe skin irritations, promote healthy digestion when ingested, create feelings of clear airways, and more, they've become a popular solution for those wanting to experience and maintain good health.

Everyone has his or her own reasons for using essential oils. They've become a widespread alternative solution to other health practices because they can be tailored to fit specific preferences and needs. This means that rather than settling for a generic solution, you can be in control of your own health. Because you have so many different oils to choose from, even those with specific health concerns and sensitivities can enjoy the benefits essential oils have to offer.

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Promoting feelings of clear breathing

Research suggests that essential oils with chemical constituents alpha-pinene, limonene, and eucalyptol—among others—can help support respiratory health. These constituents are found in essential oils like Peppermint, Lemon, and more.

When used properly, these essential oils and several others are effective at promoting feelings of clear airways and easy breathing. Peppermint, for example, has a strong cooling and soothing vapor, which can be especially helpful for creating the sensation of open airways.



Caring for your environment

Many essential oils, such as Oregano and Thyme, contain molecules with antioxidant benefits. Taking these oils internally can support your body's immune system. Additionally, a good number of people find it helpful to take certain essential oils internally because they have cleansing properties, helping protect your body against environmental threats.*

You can also use the aromatic benefits of oils to care for the environment around you. Scientific studies have demonstrated that diffusing essential oils can purify and cleanse the air, providing added protection and supporting a cleaner area around you. Lemon and Tea Tree essential oils are especially popular choices for cleansing both the air and surfaces in the home.



Cultivating a healthy gut and proper digestion

Digestion makes it possible for your body to get the nutrients and energy it needs to keep you healthy, happy, and strong. Select essential oils can help support healthy digestion and ease occasional discomfort when taken internally. For example, Fennel, Ginger, and Peppermint oils are popularly used around the world for their digestive benefits when ingested.

Though the digestive system is often associated with just the stomach and intestines, it's actually a lot more complicated than that. To function at optimal levels, the digestive system requires peak performance from all parts of the GI tract (including the stomach and intestines), as well as the liver, kidneys, and gallbladder.

Internal use of essential oils can aid in digestion, soothing occasional stomach discomfort, reducing gas and indigestion, and easing the effects of motion sickness. Peppermint, thanks to the chemical constituent menthol, is recognized for its positive effect on the digestive system, helping maintain a healthy gastrointestinal tract when ingested. Ingesting Ginger is a prevalent choice for easing feelings of nausea and motion sickness. Fennel is a go-to oil to take when dealing with digestive complaints, such as feelings of bloating and sluggishness that come after a big meal.



Creating a restful bedtime environment

Essential oils have been used for centuries to create relaxing environments. The unique chemical properties found in certain essential oils make them effective at promoting an environment that's conducive to restful sleep.

When essential oils contain chemical properties of a soothing, calming, or relaxing nature, they cause positive responses within the brain and body. Upon inhaling an essential oil with a calming aroma, the brain processes the aroma, and an effect will follow. Once you experience a restful night of sleep after using the calming oil, the brain makes what's called a positive association with that aroma. This means that the next time you smell that particular oil, your brain will have a similar reaction—prepping for bedtime. After successfully using an essential oil at night, that oil can be continually used as part of a healthy sleep regimen because of the positive connection your brain has made between the smell of the oil and a good night's rest.

Lavender, Roman Chamomile, and Bergamot essential oils are useful for creating a restful environment at bedtime. By creating a restful atmosphere, essential oils can be used as powerful tools that assist your sleep routine.

Once you experience a restful night of sleep after using the calming oil, the brain makes what's called a positive association with that aroma.



Beautifying skin, hair, and teeth

Among their many uses, essential oils have vast applications for personal care, including beautifying the skin and hair and cleansing the mouth, gums, and teeth, among other general hygiene uses. After all, essential oils were some of the first beauty products in ancient history.

Not only do their natural cleansing, soothing, and purifying properties make essential oils an ideal choice for personal care, but they also have lovely and inviting smells.

Essential oils with gentle soothing properties—like Rose, Sandalwood, and Helichrysum—can be helpful to soothe skin irritations and promote a healthy-looking complexion. Others such as Tea Tree and Rosemary help to cleanse the scalp and promote an abundant-looking head of hair. You can even use oils with cleansing properties like Clove and Cinnamon to clean your teeth, gums, and mouth, as well as to promote fresh breath. Because Cinnamon and Clove are considered strong oils, it's a good idea to dilute them in toothpaste before brushing or in a cup of water before gargling.



Soothing skin

Did you know some essential oils contain properties that can warm and soothe the body when applied topically? Likewise, certain essential oils are cooling and can help create a cooling sensation when applied to the skin. While these oils don't change the actual temperature of the body, they're referred to as "warming" and "cooling" oils because their properties interact with nerve receptors on the skin to provide a warming or cooling sensation. This is the hot and cold feeling you experience after applying sports rubs and topical creams.

People tend to use these types of warming or cooling oils to soothe the body after physical activities like exercise or manual labor. One of the best things about using essential oils to soothe muscles and joints is that they can be applied to targeted areas for focused comfort.

While participating in activities throughout your day, you may encounter some muscle or joint discomfort, resulting from overuse, stress, or other concerns. This can impede movement and discourage you from exercising and enjoying an active lifestyle. Essential oils like Wintergreen and Cassia have warming properties that can be soothing, while cooling essential oils like Peppermint, Lemongrass, and Blue Tansy can give your body cooling comfort.

Some essential oils can warm and soothe the body when applied topically.

The Emotional Benefits of Essential Oils

In addition to health benefits, essential oils have many valuable applications far beyond the body. Some oils have soothing, calming, and grounding properties, while others are energizing, uplifting, or renewing. In a single day, we experience a wide array of emotions. Essential oils, with their various emotional benefits, can help us manage and maintain well-being.

So what makes the aroma of an essential oil calming, energizing, uplifting, and so on? The chemical design of an essential oil is what gives it specific benefits. For example, with a high concentration of ketones, mint essential oils typically hold significant energizing, invigorating, and uplifting properties. Floral oils are composed mostly of monoterpene alcohols and esters, which are known to promote toning and calming properties. Rich in monoterpenes like limonene and beta-pinene, citrus essential oils typically have strong uplifting characteristics.

While the chemical profile of an oil plays a big role in your emotional response, your experience also has a lot to do with the way the brain works.



Did you know?

The aroma of an essential oil elicits emotions and internal responses. This is because aromas go directly to the brain's olfactory system. The olfactory system is responsible for processing smells—essentially giving us the ability to perceive scents.

Once processed by this system, information is delivered directly to the limbic system, where your emotions and memories live.

That means when you inhale an essential oil, the limbic system creates a response based on the memories you associate with that particular aroma. Because responses in the limbic system are based on memory, each person experiences something different from a scent.

We have all experienced the rush of memories that comes with the smell of fresh-baked cookies, for instance, or the smell of the soap at grandma's house. As you breathe in a scent—and essential oils have particularly powerful scents—your limbic system evokes emotions and memories to accompany the aroma.

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With so many different oils, chemical components, and benefits, it makes sense that essential oils have become commonplace in today's world. Understanding the chemistry and basic functions of oils will be helpful as you begin using them to improve your health and well-being. Keep reading to learn how to integrate essential oils into everyday life.

Chapter Three

How to use Essential Oils

If you still think learning to use essential oils is complicated, you might be surprised at how easy it can be. In this chapter, you'll learn several uses for essential oils, but their application is not limited to these suggestions only.

Thankfully, you don't need to be an expert to enjoy the wide variety of benefits that essential oils hold. All you need is a basic understanding of how to safely and simply use essential oils during your daily routine. There are millions of people throughout the world who, while they are not chemists, are passionate about using natural products to protect their families and live a healthy lifestyle. If they can do it, so can you!

When it comes to using essential oils, there are three basic application methods—aromatic use, topical use, and internal use.





Using Essential Oils Aromatically

Using essential oils aromatically is as easy as breathing. If you use an oil “aromatically,” it means that you’re experiencing the aromatic properties, the aroma of the oil, through the air. Aromatic use typically includes breathing in or inhaling an essential oil, allowing the scent to interact with your senses.



have the ability to disperse through the air quickly. You’ll also remember that essential oils are considered volatile, meaning they change quickly from a liquid to a gas. This allows us to experience an essential oil’s aroma quickly and easily—even from the exact second a bottle is opened.

Using essential oils aromatically offers many benefits. As already discussed, essential oils can have a significant influence on emotions. You can train your brain to respond in specific ways to an oil. This is a powerful mood-management tool. If you pair an oil with a relaxing or calming action, such as meditating, journaling, or deep breathing, smelling that oil later helps your mind recreate the calm you experienced the first time. Your mind starts to associate the state of calm with the essential oil you chose.



You can enhance this by using oils with relaxing chemistry, like Lavender or Roman Chamomile. The same can be done with energizing oils. Try inhaling Tangerine or Peppermint before exercise. Applications for this are only limited by your creativity.

Our sense of smell is a powerful tool. Think of what it feels like when you inhale the lovely aroma of a favorite flower, or when you enjoy the nostalgic smell of bread baking in the oven. Think of what happens in your heart and mind when you take in the scent of a Christmas tree, breathe deep while standing near a salty ocean, or inhale as you walk past freshly cut grass.

The sense of smell can produce significant emotional and physiologic responses, depending on the aroma. Think back to chapter 1—what really are essential oils? We established that they’re aromatic compounds, which means they

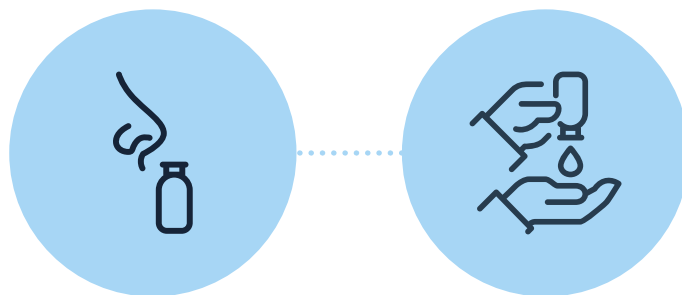
Not only are essential oils useful for managing your internal emotions and mood, but they can help you change your external environment. Perhaps you want to create a feeling of calm tranquility in your bedroom. Or maybe you’d like your home to feel uplifting as soon as someone walks through the door. You can even transform a dreary cubicle into an oasis with the lovely aromas of essential oils.

Another major benefit of aromatic usage is that essential oils can purify the air. By using oils with purifying properties, you can dispel unwanted odors and replace them with pure, pleasant aromas. Many of the air-purifying products on the market—like candles or air fresheners—contain toxins and synthetic chemicals, which makes using essential oils even more desirable. If you use high-quality oils that are free from contaminants and fillers, they provide a safe, natural way to purify the air in any room, avoiding having to inhale harmful toxins. Essential oils like Tea Tree, Lemon, and Eucalyptus are particularly known for their cleansing and purifying properties.

What's the best way to use essential oils aromatically?

Diffusion is one of the most effective ways of enjoying essential oils aromatically and is most efficiently accomplished with an essential oil diffuser. An essential oil diffuser takes an oil and transforms it into a mist—or microscopic droplets—so you can experience the aroma of the oil for an extended period. It's important to remember that essential oils have delicate chemical structures, so you never want to use a diffuser that could alter the chemical profile of the oil by using heat. It's best to stick with diffusers that use water or cold air to diffuse.

While diffusers do make it easy to use essential oils aromatically, you can also experience the aromatic benefits of an oil without a special diffusing device. Simply inhaling an essential oil straight from the bottle or placing a drop in your hands, rubbing the palms together, and inhaling will allow you to receive its benefits.



Consider placing an essential oil diffuser in your kitchen and diffusing uplifting or cleansing essential oils such as Spearmint, Lime, or Grapefruit. When you're getting ready for bed at night, diffuse oils like Lavender or Sandalwood to create a relaxing environment. If your teenager's room is starting to smell a little . . . stale, try diffusing refreshing essential oils like Wild Orange, Lemongrass, or Douglas Fir. You can even place several different oils in the same diffuser to create a custom blend. The possibilities are endless.





Using Essential Oils Topically

Did you know?

Your skin is an organ, just like the liver or the heart? In fact, it's the largest organ in the body because of its weight and surface area.

As a major organ, the skin has many functions, including protecting against the environment, providing the sense of touch, and regulating body temperature. As you can see, the skin plays a vital role in protecting the body and keeping it healthy. This gives us a greater understanding of how topical application of essential oils can influence our health.

Applying essential oils topically, or on the skin, is a safe and effective way of enjoying the benefits that essential oils offer the skin and other functions of the body. Due to their chemical makeup, essential oils can easily penetrate the skin and provide localized benefits to the applied area. Plus, by using an oil for its topical benefits, you can simultaneously enjoy its unique aroma as it sits on your skin and you breathe it in.

While essential oils easily absorb into the skin, you can prolong the benefits of an oil by using a carrier oil to slow down evaporation, allowing it to moisturize your skin.

What is a carrier oil?

Carrier oils are lipid-based substances that can dilute essential oils. As the name suggests, a carrier oil will literally help "carry" essential oils to your desired area. Using a carrier oil like Fractionated Coconut Oil allows you to effectively apply an essential oil topically, without altering its potency. Some people worry that dilution makes an essential oil less effective; however, when you dilute an essential oil, it enhances the absorption by making it easier to disperse the oil over a larger surface area, which maximizes the topical benefits.

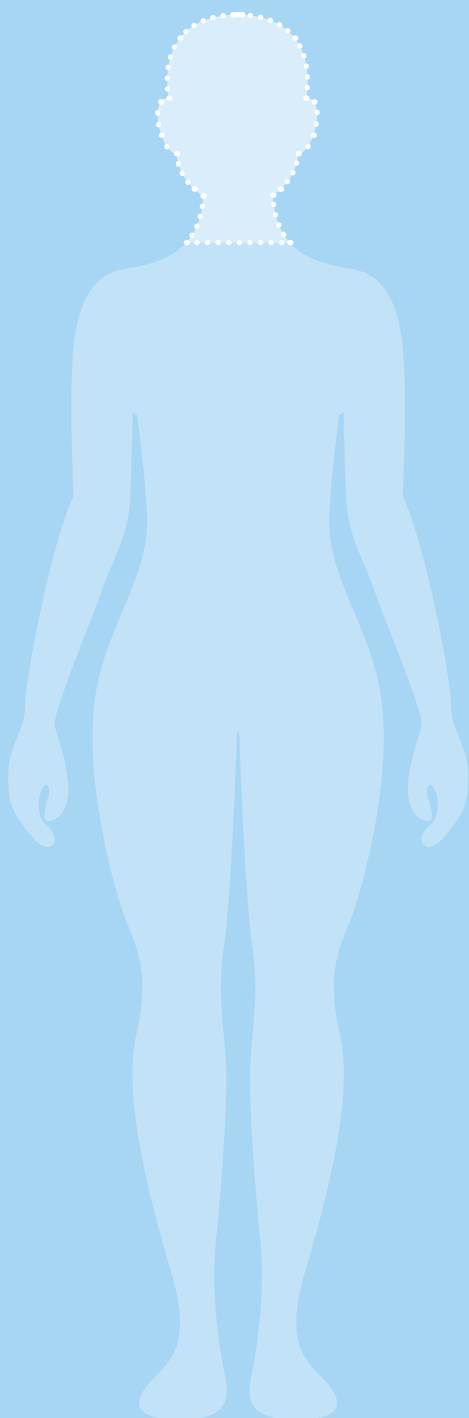
One of the most important functions of a carrier oil is preventing skin sensitivities without lowering the oil's efficacy. This is especially important if you're using essential oils on children, or other individuals with sensitive skin, or if the oil is particularly strong.

Ideally, a carrier oil should be a pure vegetable oil so that it easily dissolves an essential oil without damaging its delicate chemical profile. If the chemical makeup of an oil is altered or damaged in any way, the efficacy of the oil will be reduced, and you won't reap the desired benefits. Vegetable-based oils like avocado, walnut, macadamia nut, sweet almond, linseed, sunflower, olive, and coconut oil are all appropriate choices for dilution.



Ideas for topical application

There are dozens of topical applications for essential oils, you can virtually use them from head to toe.



Remember, deciding when and how to dilute your essential oils is a situation-specific decision that should be based on an oil's chemistry, your usage preferences, and any personal sensitivities to certain oils.

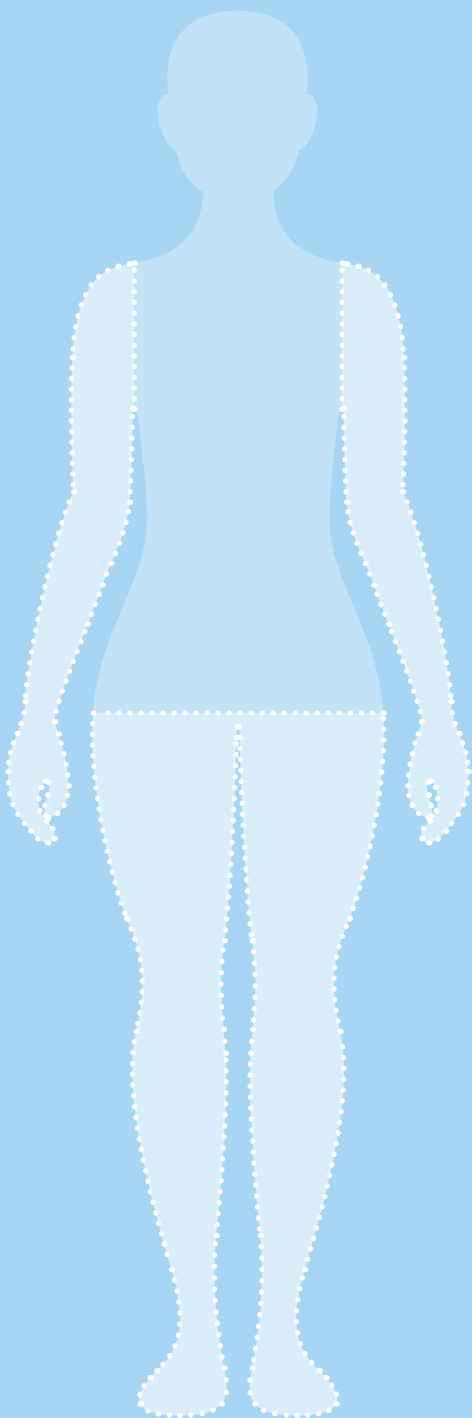
Head

Starting at the head, you can add essential oils to your daily skincare regimen in order to improve the skin and maintain a clear complexion. To incorporate essential oils to your skincare routine, simply add a few drops to your facial cleanser, moisturizer, or body lotion. You can also dilute oils with a carrier oil like Fractionated Coconut Oil and apply them directly to your face. Lavender, Frankincense, Cedarwood, and Tea Tree are all commonly used for their beautifying properties.

Applying essential oils to areas like your temples, forehead, base of the skull, and neck allows you to promote relaxation and target feelings of tension. If you tend to hold a lot of tension in your neck from working long days behind a desk, or you just need to unwind after a tense day, consider a soothing and relaxing massage on any of these areas. In particular, Peppermint oil can be helpful for a tension-relieving massage.



Ideas for topical application

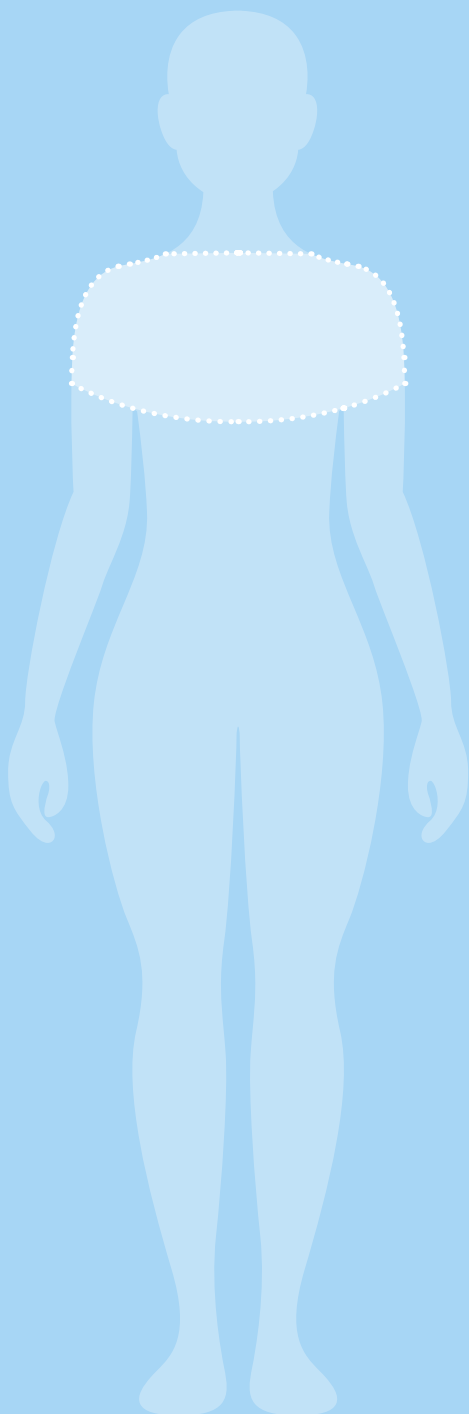


Arms, wrists, legs & feet

Massaging essential oils onto the arms, wrists, legs, feet, and back after a workout or any kind of physical activity allows you to harness their soothing properties. Many essential oils have cooling and warming properties, which make for relaxing massages after exerting your body. Wintergreen, Cassia, or Blue Tansy can all enhance the relaxing effects of massages or stretching exercises. If you use Cassia, make sure to dilute it before any topical application.



Ideas for topical application

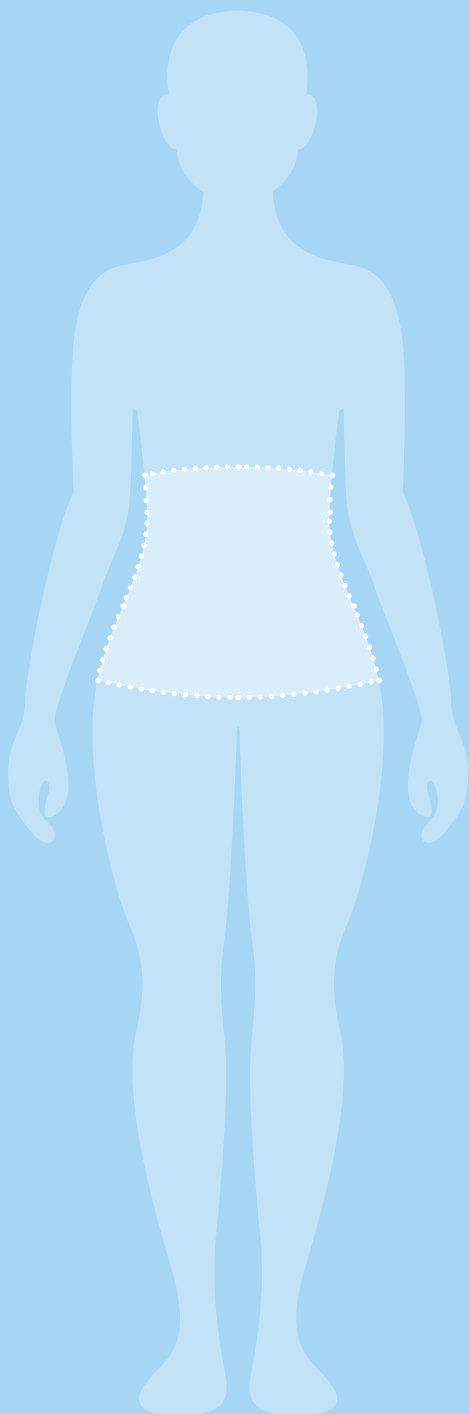


Chest

The cooling and invigorating properties of essential oils can help promote feelings of clear breathing when applied topically to the chest. Applying oils to your chest will provide quick access to aromatic benefits and can even help create a cooling or soothing vapor that promotes feelings of clear airways and easy breathing. Some good oils to use for this include Eucalyptus, Cardamom, and Peppermint.



Ideas for topical application



Abdomen

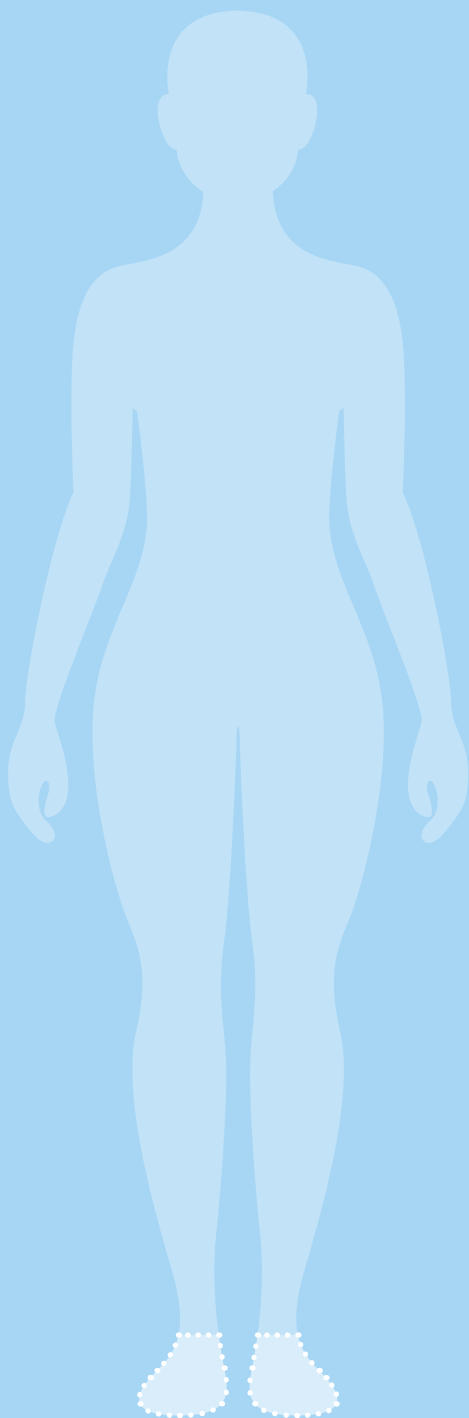
Applying essential oils to your abdomen helps alleviate occasional digestive discomfort. Fennel, Peppermint, Ginger, and Coriander are just a few oils with soothing properties.



You can also apply essential oils such as Clary Sage, Lavender, and Geranium to the abdomen during your menstrual cycle when you want a comforting massage.



Ideas for topical application



When applying oils topically to children or people with sensitivities, be aware that there are some safety considerations. We'll address these in chapter 4.

Feet

Another helpful way of applying essential oils topically is the bottoms of your feet. When trying an oil for the first time—or when using oils on children—the bottoms of the feet are a good place to start, because the skin there is thick and less prone to sensitivity.





Using Essential Oils Internally

Both aromatic and topical applications of essential oils are easy to experience. When you want uplifting, energizing, or calming aromas, aromatic usage provides a quick and simple access. When you want to soothe, moisturize, nourish, or soften your skin, topical usage can efficiently deliver the desired effect.

What then is the advantage of using essential oils internally? While internal use of oils is a mystery to some, research has found a myriad of safe, beneficial internal uses for essential oils. Plus, internal usage of essential oils offers some exclusive benefits for the body that neither aromatic nor topical can deliver.



Is it safe to take essential oils internally?

Internal use has been greatly debated in the essential oil community for years, but research continues to confirm and validate its safety. If you've never taken essential oils internally before, it might seem strange to consume something so powerful and potent. However, essential oils come from plants, fruits, and compounds found in nature; therefore, they provide a safe way of receiving internal benefits. You're likely already incorporating essential oils into your daily diet, as many of the foods we eat contain a small amount of essential oil.

Because our bodies are designed to metabolize and process natural compounds like plants and fruit, we're already equipped to metabolize essential oils. Remember, they're just high concentrations of natural compounds—what give plants their taste and smell. Because of the way they interact with the body, it's important to know that some essential oils are never appropriate for internal consumption, much like how certain plants should never be eaten. However, plenty of oils—like plants—can be safely ingested and processed by the body.

The French Model — proven historical use

The French Model for essential oil application advocates for the internal use of essential oils to achieve specific benefits. This model was backed by prominent professionals in the world of aromatherapy, like Jean Valnet, Paul Belaiche, and Henri Viaud. The French Model substantiates the idea that oils can be used internally for health maintenance and other wellness benefits, as long as correct dosages are applied.

How internal usage works

So what happens when you take an essential oil internally? When you ingest an oil, it directly enters your bloodstream through your gastrointestinal tract, where it's then distributed throughout the rest of your body. Because oils are lipid-soluble, they're easily absorbed and transported to your organs, including the brain. Though your body is designed to metabolize and process natural compounds like essential oils, it's important to remember that the body can only handle oils in appropriate doses.

Ideas for internal usage

While internal usage requires a little precaution and education, you can safely use essential oils internally in your daily life. Before you use essential oils this way, make sure to read labels and instructions, paying particular attention to oils that aren't labeled as safe for internal use.

In a given day, you probably consume a variety of products to try and strengthen, fortify, uplift, or energize your body. While things like supplements and stimulants seem to help the body function properly, essential oils provide a natural way to keep yourself healthy and energized.



Taking essential oils with water

One of the simplest ways of enjoying the internal benefits of essential oils is to add a drop or two to a glass of water. Not only will essential oils add a fun and potent flavor to plain water, but this also provides an easy way to use oils internally. Because you drink water every day, this method is one of the most efficient for taking essential oils internally on a consistent basis.

Add a drop of Lemon oil to a glass of water when fresh lemons aren't available, or when you're trying to avoid soda and sugary drinks. Consider placing a drop or two of Lime oil in your water for enhanced flavor and antioxidant benefits. You can add a drop of Cinnamon oil with honey to hot water and sip slowly to soothe your throat when it's feeling scratchy. If you like drinking tea, consider adding Peppermint, Cinnamon, Roman Chamomile, or Lemon oils to your beverage.



Taking essential oils directly

Essential oils can also be placed directly in your mouth and swallowed for internal benefits. Keep in mind that essential oils are extremely potent, so even one drop on or under the tongue will be quite powerful. For essential oils that are too powerful to take directly, dilute a drop in at least four ounces of water before swallowing. Strong essential oils like Cassia, Cinnamon, Clove, Oregano, and Thyme should always be diluted before taking internally—or even better, place these potent oils in a capsule before swallowing.



Using essential oil capsules

There are many, many advantages to using essential oil capsules. This is an effective method if you don't like the taste of essential oils, for ingesting particularly potent oils, or when combining oils with uncomplimentary flavors. Using capsules provides a quick and convenient way to deliver the benefits of oils to the body. When selecting supplement capsules, look for ones that are easy to digest and are free from preservatives.

Put a drop or two of Frankincense essential oil in a capsule to promote cellular health, or add a drop of Oregano to support your immune system. Whatever oil you choose, using capsules makes it easy to experience their benefits internally.



Cooking and baking with essential oils

Adding essential oils to your favorite dishes and beverages is a wonderful way of experiencing their flavors and their benefits for the body. The smallest amount of essential oil can enhance the flavor of any entrée, beverage, dessert, marinade, or other dish that needs extra flavor. Because oils are so potent, a little goes a long way. To begin, dip a clean toothpick into the essential oil, and then swirl into your dish. You can always add more later if needed!

Consider using essential oils like Basil, Cilantro, and Black Pepper to marinate and flavor meat dishes. Oils like Lavender, Wild Orange, and Rosemary are perfect for adding a little flavor to baked goods like breads, muffins, cakes, cookies, pies, and more.

The possibilities are endless. As you learn more about how to use oils in cooking, you can start incorporating them into any area of your cooking or baking.

As we've gone through the various uses for essential oils, hopefully you can see how simple it can be. Before getting started, it's important to learn some rules of thumb for using them safely. In the next chapter, we'll talk about precautions to help you successfully and safely use oils in your home. With a little knowledge about what essential oils are used for, how to apply them, and safety practices, you'll be ready to address your health priorities with the best that nature has to offer.

Chapter Four

Are Essential Oils Safe?

One of the first things people want to want to know about essential oils is, “Are they really safe?”

Essential oils have a long history of safe and effective usage. When you use pure essential oils in the appropriate amount, they can absolutely be safe for your home, your family, and yourself. Like anything else that you'd use in your home, essential oils are safe when you adhere to recommended dosage amounts and use them as intended.

Before using an oil, verify that it's a high-quality and pure essential oil. Only use essential oils that have gone through extensive testing to ensure purity and safety. Not all oils are created equal, and low-quality oils can have synthetic additives or impurities. If you aren't confident that an oil has been tested for purity and safety, avoid using it.

Not all oils are created equal, and low-quality oils can have synthetic additives or impurities.



How can I make sure I'm using essential oils safely?

When it comes to using essential oils, there are a few safety guidelines to keep in mind. Here are five best practices for safe essential oil usage:

1. Always read the labels

Each essential oil has certain uses and recommendations. For example, not all oils can be taken internally, and others require dilution when used topically. Pay attention to any specific warnings on the essential oil's packaging and adhere to all recommendations provided by the manufacturer.

Some essential oil labels warn against certain areas of the body that should be avoided. However, even if the label doesn't mention it, always avoid putting oils into your nose, inner ears, or eyes, as well as on broken skin or other sensitive areas.

Did you know?

Some oils increase sun sensitivity.

This is particularly true of citrus oils like Bergamot, Tangerine, Grapefruit, Wild Orange, Lemon, and Lime, as well as blends that contain these oils.

This isn't an exhaustive list, so it's important to check the labels for sun sensitivity warnings before applying essential oils topically. Avoid direct sunlight or UV rays—including tanning beds—for at least 12 hours following the use of such oils on your skin.

2. Be aware of possible sensitivity

It's important to consider your personal needs when it comes to safety. For example, if you have naturally sensitive skin, you may need to dilute certain oils. You might find that specific oils cause sensitivity when you use them, even when diluted. If that's the case, you might avoid using that oil, use a smaller amount, or alter your application method to avoid sensitivity.

Some people might wonder about essential oils and allergies. Can you have an allergic reaction to essential oils? Allergic reactions occur when the body experiences an abnormal immune reaction to a protein molecule. Pure essential oils are completely made up of aromatic compounds found in nature; they don't contain protein molecules. That means they don't cause allergic reactions in the same way that, for example, peanuts or eggs might. However, essential oils can bind to proteins in the skin and create a type of molecule that the body may recognize as an allergen, thus creating an allergic response. This is unusual and depends on many things, such as the type and amount of oil being used, the individual's protein levels, and even genetics.

If you experience an adverse reaction to an essential oil, stop using it immediately. For topical reactions, don't try washing the essential oil off with water, and do not apply additional essential oils. Apply a neutral carrier oil to the area instead. If the problem persists, talk to a healthcare professional.

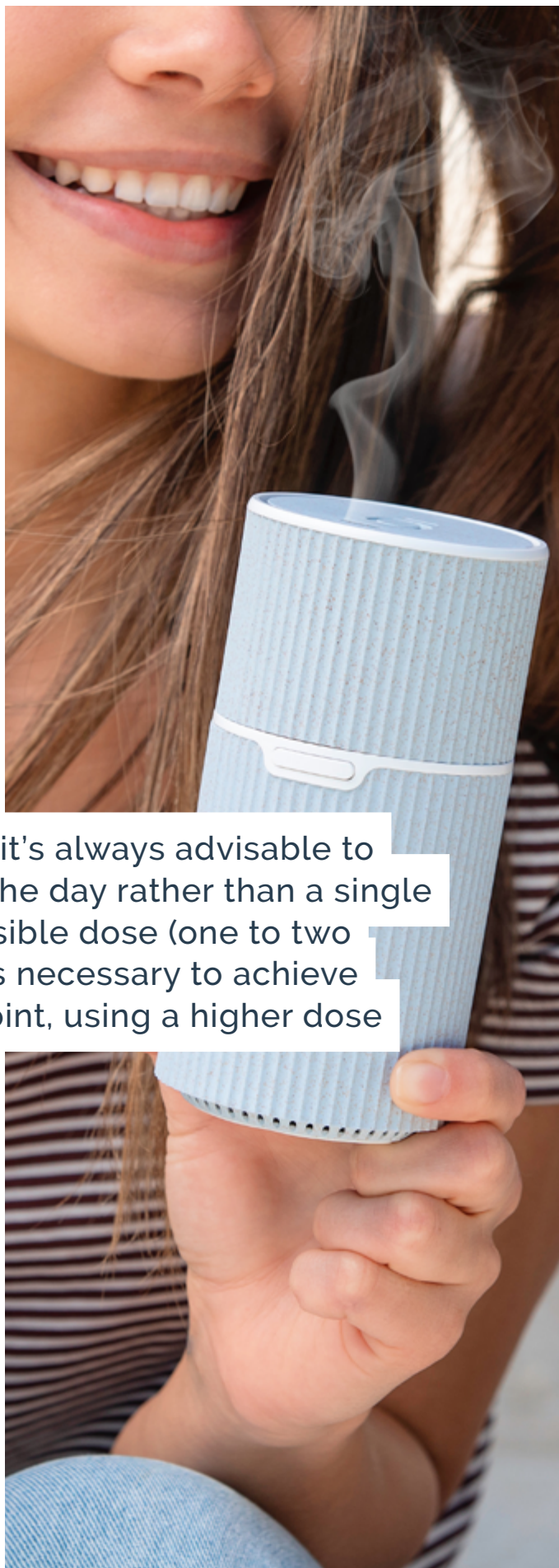
3. Pay attention to how much oil you're using.

Essential oils are safe to use, as long as the appropriate dosage and application methods are observed and followed. In the most extreme cases, exceeding dosage recommendations for oils can lead to toxicity. Toxicity is when a substance reaches a point that it becomes harmful or damaging to the body. Any substance can be toxic if used in an inappropriate dose or way. Even natural, seemingly harmless substances like water, minerals, or vitamins can become toxic when used or consumed in excess. Keep in mind, you'd have to far exceed the recommended dosage for an essential oil to reach toxic levels. As long as you're reading labels and adhering to safety recommendations, you can avoid toxicity.

Whether you're diffusing essential oils, applying them to your skin, or using them internally, it's usually best to start with smaller amounts. This makes it easy to see how your body reacts, and then you can determine how much oil to use on a regular basis.

Because essential oils are so potent, it's always advisable to use several small doses throughout the day rather than a single large dose. Start with the lowest possible dose (one to two drops), and then increase the dose as necessary to achieve the desired benefit. After a certain point, using a higher dose stops adding any noticeable benefit.

You can minimize skin sensitivity when using oils topically with one of the carrier oils discussed in chapter 3. Always dilute an oil when using it for the first time, applying it to sensitive skin, or using with children. The suggested dilution ratio is one drop of essential oil to five drops of carrier oil. Oils with a particularly strong chemistry should be diluted even further, using one drop of oil with ten drops of carrier oil. Some of these oils include Cassia, Cinnamon, Clove, Oregano, and Thyme. Always pay attention to labels with warnings about strong oils and dilute before applying them to your skin.



4. Supervise young children

Because children are smaller and more sensitive than adults, it's important to understand that the rules of essential oils are different for them. Once you educate yourself on the safety guidelines required for using essential oils with children, it's easy to help your kids reap the benefits that oils have to offer. If your children have specific health conditions or concerns, consult with a physician. While special precautions should be taken when using oils around children, parents can still be confident that it's safe for children to use essential oils.

Always supervise essential oil application with your children. Because children have more delicate skin, it's always a good idea to dilute oils before applying them topically. Try applying the oil to the bottom of a child's feet before other areas. Store your essential oils out of reach of children to prevent unsupervised use. In addition, you can also use child-resistant caps to ensure your children don't get into your collection of essential oils accidentally.



5. When in doubt, talk to your healthcare professional.

As mentioned, each person experiences essential oils differently. If you have specific health concerns, it's a good idea to consult with your doctor before using essential oils. Your doctor knows you and your medical history and can give you an informed opinion about the best ways to use essential oils for your situation. Thankfully, even if you have specific health issues or concerns, you can tailor your essential oil usage to your needs and still enjoy their variety of benefits.

Using essential oils in special circumstances

In addition to these five major guidelines, there are a few other common questions regarding essential oil safety.



Pregnancy

For example, people commonly wonder about using essential oils during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. Due to the ethical issue of testing expecting mothers and their fetuses, limited clinical studies address the safety of essential oils during pregnancy. However, there's a history of safe use of essential oils during pregnancy, and you can continue to use them while you are expecting.

Pay attention to how you feel when using the oils. During pregnancy, it's not uncommon for a woman to be more sensitive to oils. Due to these sensitivities and all of the changes that occur in the body when pregnant, it's always a good idea to consult with your doctor before using essential oils during pregnancy.



Breastfeeding

In addition to concerns about essential oils and pregnancy, many ask about using essential oils while breastfeeding. The body changes significantly during pregnancy, and these changes don't end with the baby's birth—your body continues to change as you adapt to postpartum life. Just as you should discuss beforehand the use of essential oils with your doctor for pregnancy, you'll also want to consult with him or her if you choose to nurse.

Your healthcare provider is the best resource you have for advice when it comes to your body, your baby, and any special concerns you might have.



Pets

Another topic people commonly ask about is essential oil use with pets and animals. While there is some controversy surrounding the use of essential oils on animals, they can be part of a well-rounded program when used properly to help your pets live happy, healthy lives. Be aware, however, that some oils aren't recommended for use on animals. Before using them, educate yourself on which oils are generally considered safe for your particular pet.

When first using essential oils on or around your pet, start with a small amount of diffused or diluted oil, and then observe your pet's behavior. If you're safely storing your essential oils, you shouldn't have to worry about pets accidentally ingesting them.

Pets tend to be more sensitive to essential oils than people. Before using oils topically on your pets, it's a good idea to dilute the oil—the smaller your animal, the more you'll need to dilute before topical application. If you have concerns about using essential oils on your pets, use your veterinarian as a resource to determine best practices for your specific animal.

Your healthcare provider is the best resource you have for advice when it comes to your body, your baby, and any special concerns you might have.

Never stop learning

If you feel overwhelmed by all of these safety guidelines, remember that essential oils are used safely every day by millions of people. While it's important to educate yourself about safe uses for oils, you have countless resources at your disposal to continue your education and enjoy all that essential oils have to offer.

When equipped with the proper education, you can be an ambassador for wellness in your own home and maybe even help others learn how to remove synthetic products from their lives in order to improve their health with essential oils.

Conclusion: Harnessing the Power of the Entire Earth

When you started this book, you may have felt concerned about the amount of toxins you encounter each day and wondered if there was anything you could do about it. You might have been skeptical of essential oils, wondering if they truly work. Or maybe you didn't know exactly what an essential oil even is.

Now, you've learned that essential oils are all around us. You've seen how our ancestors used the natural world to care for themselves and their families. We've even walked through the journey that a plant must take to become an essential oil. You know that when you use essential oils, you have the power of the Earth in your hands. With this knowledge, hopefully it's easy to see why people around the world have used and continue to use essential oils to improve their quality of life.

Your essential oil journey doesn't end here. Equipped with the best that Mother Nature has to offer, you're ready to harness the power of the entire Earth to transform your whole life.

Want to learn more about essential oils? Visit **dōterra.com/womenshealth** to continue your journey.