



ALL ABOUT AROMATHERAPY

FOR MASSAGE THERAPISTS

Continuing Education E-book



T E X A S
M A S S A G E C E U

Melissa Wood, ND, MTI, LMT



12-HOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT CLASS

Approved CE Provider by Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR)

ALL ABOUT AROMATHERAPY 12-HOUR CE

Class Objective: This online class was developed to educate Licensed Massage Therapists on aromatherapy and essential oils to best serve their clients. It is my hope that this material will be interesting, educational, and a valuable resource to assist you with your massage therapy clients and help you maintain a long and rewarding career in this industry.

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About the Instructor

My name is Melissa Wood and I am a Naturopath, Massage Therapy Instructor and Licensed Massage Therapist located in Sherman, Texas. I have been studying alternative and natural medicine for over 25 years.



My mission is to enable everyone on this planet to be healthy and to be actively involved in their health and healing; to take responsibility for their own wellbeing by constantly questioning, investigating and seeking out truth when it comes to their health. To facilitate that vision, my goal is to offer information that will provide you with new insights that are useful in your path to wellness. I envision a time when everyone will seek out herbs, essential oils, vitamins, minerals, nutritional supplements, and whole foods (not processed food!) to help heal themselves, as these are very powerful tools for enhancing your health and wellbeing.

TDLR APPROVED MASSAGE THERAPY INSTRUCTOR & CE Provider

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Disclaimer

I am a Naturopathic Doctor (N.D.), Massage Therapy Instructor (MTI), Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT), Approved CE Provider in the State of Texas, and an Approved Provider for NCBTMB (National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork). I am NOT a Medical Doctor (M.D.). I have been trained in holistic and natural therapies for the body and do not diagnose any medical condition nor prescribe any medications. Should you need immediate medical or psychiatric assistance, please telephone 911 or seek immediate treatment at an emergency room hospital. Nothing listed within this e-book class should be considered medical advice for dealing with a given problem. You should consult your healthcare professional for individual guidance for specific health problems. It is understood that the author is solely responsible for the content of this work and is **NOT** responsible for your usage of said information, either personally or professionally, with your clients. In addition, you should ALWAYS encourage your clients to see their healthcare professionals for help with any medical issues they are having.

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Melissa M. Wood, ND, MTI, LMT



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"Smell is a Potent Wizard
that Transports us Across
Thousands of Miles and All
the Years We Have Lived."

- Helen Keller.



T E X A S
M A S S A G E C E U

By Melissa Wood, ND, MTI, LMT

A Note From Melissa

Over the past 15 years, many of you have taken my online continuing education (CE) classes on essential oils, which included both 6-hour and 12-hour CE Classes. In those earlier classes, I was an enthusiastic supporter of Young Living Essential Oils. Before 2016, I used their products personally, recommended them to my naturopathic clients, and represented the company for nearly 16 years.

However, in 2016, I uncovered troubling information about the company that profoundly affected my perspective. Among the key issues were:

1. Evidence of synthetic oils being sold and disappointing handling of that situation.
2. Lead contamination discovered in several nutritional supplements, leading to a settled lawsuit.
3. Refusal to share GC/MS testing results (they still will not share).
4. Misrepresentation of oils sourced from China and other countries as being grown on Young Living farms.



These revelations prompted me to conduct thorough research. As a result of that research, I made the decision to stop using and recommending their products to my clients.

Over the past eight years, I've delved deeply into the fields of aromatherapy and essential oils, as well as the practices of Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) and Direct Sales companies like Young Living. Through my research, I've uncovered systemic issues within the MLM model, including insufficient training for representatives—many of whom lack any health-related knowledge at all—the promotion of unsafe essential oil usage and synthetic oils being produced and marketed as “therapeutic grade.”

This new Aromatherapy CE class reflects my journey of research and learning. It is designed to provide unbiased, evidence-based education about essential oils, free from the influence of any one company. As a helpful resource, [Appendix F](#) includes a list of trusted aromatherapy and essential oil companies (non-MLM).

To those of you who attended my earlier classes, I want to express my regret for previously endorsing Young Living. I hope you find the material in this class to be a significant improvement—more accurate, useful, and grounded in sound principles.

Thank you for your pursuit of knowledge!

Let's begin!

All About Aromatherapy

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TEXAS
MASSAGE CEU

By Melissa Wood, ND, MTI, LMT

Chapter 1

Introduction to Aromatherapy

Fragrances surround us constantly, yet we don't really consider them that important or, even worse, we take them for granted. Our sense of smell doesn't get as much respect as it should!

Smell is one of the first senses to emerge—even before we're born! Fetuses will crinkle up their faces or cringe when the mother encounters bad smells. Newborns orient themselves by smell more than any other sense¹, and smells can trigger strong emotions. A whiff of pumpkin pie, crayons, or fresh-cut grass can immediately immerse you in memories from your childhood and change your whole mood. But just because a fragrance smells pleasant does not make it inherently therapeutic. People mistakenly think that “aromatherapy” refers to anything that smells good, like scented candles, potpourri, flowers, perfume, or even food; however, we're going to learn how aromatherapy is focused on the therapeutic benefits of natural plant-based aromas.

Aromatherapy is exactly what the name suggests: a therapeutic modality using aromatic essences (essential oils) to promote health. As an art, a science, and—most importantly to you as a therapist—a service, aromatherapy is a therapy that uses extracts from plants called essential oils to promote harmony and improve healing. Throughout this e-book CE class, I will be using the terms aromatherapy and essential oils interchangeably.

Aromatherapy is a natural and non-invasive approach to wellness. The healing powers of essential oils extracted from aromatic plants, flowers, leaves, woods, fruits, and spices bring better balance to the physiological and psychological functions of the body. When combined with massage techniques, aromatherapy can create harmony and balance for the body, spirit, and mind.

The aromas experienced during aromatherapy deliver dynamic effects. When applied strategically, scents can make a huge difference, not only to your personal health but to the clients who support your massage therapy business.

The History of Aromatherapy

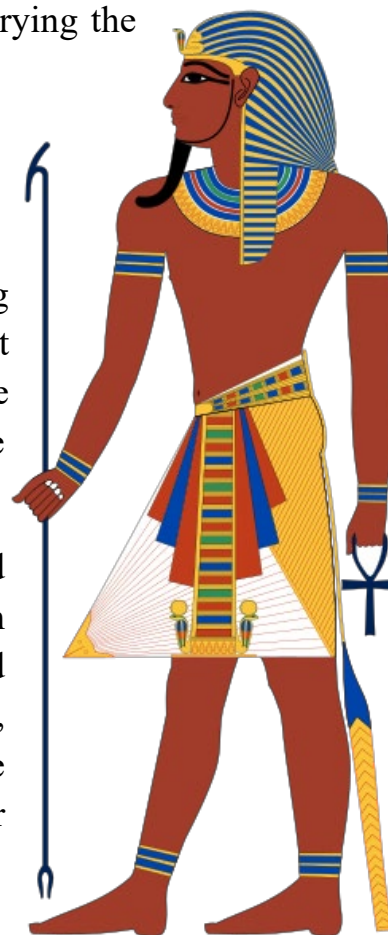
Aromatherapy is one of the fastest growing healing modalities of our time, yet the roots of this healing method can be traced back to around 3,500 BC.² The records are inexorably associated with the development of aromatic medicine, which was linked with magic, mysticism, and religion.

It is believed that the Egyptians were the ones who first developed aromatics and essential oils for healing—and, thus, introduced the beginnings of aromatherapy as a concept, theory, and practice.

As their religious beliefs were intertwined with their methods of healing, they burned incense created from aromatic woods, spices, and herbs to honor their gods and for life-enhancing benefits. According to their traditional beliefs, the smoke that resulted from the burning of the woods rose up to the heavens, carrying the wishes and prayers of these ancient people.³

It is also believed that Egyptians were the first to invent the distillation equipment—albeit rudimentary—for creating oils infused with plants and herbs for use in rituals, medicine, perfumery, and cosmetics. The oils were obtained by placing flowers, roots, and other plant material into a “fatty oil of best quality,” submitting the container to the warming influence of the sun and finally separating the odiferous oil from the solid constituents.⁴

Between 2650 BC and 2575 BC, mummification and embalming were developed by the Egyptians in their search for immortality.⁵ To attest to their belief in powers beyond medicine, the presence of cinnamon, juniper berry, cedarwood, spikenard, galbanum, myrrh, and frankincense were found in burial tombs to preserve the bodies of their royalty for mummification in preparation for their afterlife.



The ancient Egyptians are also considered the masters of perfumery and are known for their health, spirituality, body care, and beauty.⁶ They used fragrances for special occasions as well as during their daily lives.

Records show that scented body oil for daily use was one of the basic supplies issued in the form of wages to workers.⁷ At celebrations and festivals, women wore perfumed cones on their heads that would melt in the heat and release an aroma. They also used infused oils on their bodies after bathing to rejuvenate their skin and protect it from the effects of the blazing sun.⁸ Pharaohs even had their own blends for meditation, love, war, and so on, that were very valuable.⁹

As their value and usage increased, the oils, spices, and herbs were traded between the pharaohs of Egypt and the kings of India as ayurvedic medicine in exchange for gold and other precious goods. They were laboriously transported across the large deserts for distribution by merchants to China, Assyria, Greece, Babylon, Persia, Rome, Greece, and Egypt.

In Greece, Hippocrates (circa 460 – 377 BC) was a physician who claimed that,

“a perfumed bath and a scented massage is the way to health.”



Hippocrates: The Father of Medicine--Wikimedia Commons

He dismissed the Egyptian beliefs in superstitious magic, and that illness was a result of a curse caused by supernatural forces.¹⁰ Instead, he based his medical practice on observation and the study of the human body by using a scientific approach.

He carefully examined and observed patients to determine their symptoms and diseases. Known for his teaching as much as his healing abilities, he became known as the **Father of Medicine**.¹¹ The treatments suggested by Hippocrates revolve around employing mild physiotherapies, massage with infusions,

baths, or the internal usage of natural herbs, including valerian, hypericum, parsley, or fennel.

He is famous and respected for the fact that he did not limit his research and studies only to the treatments he suggested. In fact, he went on to study, document, and research more than 200 different herbs.

After Alexander the Great invaded Egypt and overtook the Egyptian empire in 332 BC,¹² , the use of perfumes, herbs, and aromatics became much more popular--especially in Greece--spurring greater interest in healing techniques that were more fragrant. About that time in Athens (circa 370-287 BC), Theophrastus--a student of Plato and the successor of Aristotle--was a scholar, botanist, biologist, and physicist.¹³ During his research and study, Theophrastus wrote various books and volumes covering botany (the study of plants) and was known as the **Father of Botany**.¹⁴ He led his students to study how plants could be put to various uses, including how their fragrances impacted human well-being and emotion.¹⁵



Further advancements in aromatherapy (and hygiene!) were plunged backward into the Dark Ages from 500-1500 AD. Aromatics and perfumes were deemed as decadent and, thus, a sin, and the use of herbs and essential oils for healing were labeled as witchcraft.¹⁶ When Europe was struck by the plague, frankincense resin was burned to help reduce the smell of rotting flesh and, while they didn't understand microbiology at the time, the aromatic compounds in frankincense somewhat helped detoxify and purify the air containing the disease.¹⁷ Over time, the use of essential oils was overtaken by the introduction of antibiotics and pharmaceutical drugs.

Fast forward a few hundred years to the 1920s when a French chemist named René-Maurice Gattefossé experienced an explosion in his perfumery lab, causing painful burns on his hands. In a panic, he picked up the nearest liquid he could find and applied it to the wound. It was Lavender oil. He wrote: *“both of my hands were covered with a rapidly developing gas gangrene. Just one rinse with lavender essence stopped the gasification of the tissue. This treatment was followed by profuse sweating, and healing began the next day.”*¹⁸

Not only did the instant relief amaze Gattefossé, but he was also surprised that the burn healed quickly and did not leave a nasty scar behind. This amazement piqued his interest, which led to his own research and, eventually, his own definitive work that explained the beneficial role of essential oils--and aromatherapy techniques--in promoting human health.

Gattefossé is credited with coining the term *aromatherapy* and is remembered as one of the pioneers. If not for the discovery of penicillin, his research on the impact of oils on wounds and their antiseptic and healing powers might have caused essential oils to be more widely used during the Second World War.

Essential oils were still used in the war to a degree. Convinced of the benefits of medicinal plants, Dr. Jean Valnet, a French physician who was practicing in Paris during World War II, started utilizing pure essential oils in dressings to heal soldiers' injuries. He had great results relieving pain and combatting/counteracting infections, which saved many lives. He devoted his life to studying the therapeutic virtues of essential oils clinically and developed an unprecedented knowledge of aromatherapy. Later, he successfully treated patients with psychiatric issues and found the oils had physiological AND psychological healing properties. He is considered one of the architects or even a founding father of the development of modern aromatherapy.

Today, the world is blessed with many talented and skilled aromatherapists. They study the subject not only as a part of their service but as an art to better understand the therapies' natural medicinal properties for physical treatment as well as to promote improved well-being.



Why is Aromatherapy Still Used for Natural Health and Healing?

Aromatherapy has been a trusted practice for thousands of years among cultures spanning the globe. Natural healers rely on the many antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, anti-stress, and analgesic effects of aromatic essential oils to *restore wellness*. They know how valuable it is to have better cognition and memory recall, better mood, better sleep, and increased energy to *nourish wellness* without unpleasant side effects. Aromatherapists know the power of essential oils to *protect wellness* with stronger immunity, improved circulation, healthier skin, better digestion, and less anxiety. Aromatherapy has taken what natural healers have known for millennia and expanded upon it. In a world where medicine has become so symptom-based (not holistically treating the body as one interconnected body) with artificial, adulterated, and synthetic treatments, aromatic healing is highly valuable and needed more than ever. Today, there are dozens of pure essential oils widely available, each with its own remedial purposes. Some are listed in [Appendix A](#).



The Benefits of Aromatherapy

It's important to recognize the common benefits aromatherapy offers. While there are many, let's start with the **Top 10 Benefits** your clients can experience as you learn how to master the synergy of essential oils.

Relieving Stress: Stress is one of the most common medical conditions you will address as a massage therapist. The good news is that people already consider aromatherapy to be highly effective for stress relief. Many people use essential oils at home and go to massage therapists for stress relief massages.

The best essential oils that can help your clients achieve optimal relief from stress include Lavender, Roman Chamomile, Peppermint, Lemon, Bergamot, Ylang Ylang, and Vetiver. When activated by the central nervous system, aromatherapy powered by essential oils can be very effective in relaxing and calming your clients.



LAVENDER (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Lavender is likely the most popular essential oil. It is extracted from a flower and its name stems from the Latin word *lavera*, meaning “to wash.” In addition to stress-relieving properties, Lavender is a healing aid against colds, flu and migraines. Other uses are for headaches, pain, depression, digestion, minor burns, itching, and cellulite. Lavender has the following therapeutic properties: antiseptic, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, decongestant, deodorant, diuretic and sedative.

Caution: Possible allergic reaction.

Lavender is likely the most researched essential oil with its bounty of benefits. Many studies have proven Lavender to not only be effective at decreasing current stress and anxiety levels but preventing them as well. Specific clinical studies provided evidence of the relaxing effect of inhaling Lavender oil prior to getting injections,¹⁹ during labor and postpartum,²⁰ and during collegiate exams.²¹ Furthermore, in a study published in the journal of *Phytomedicine*, Lavender oil was shown to be just as effective as the pharmaceutical drug Lorazepam (Ativan) for treating signs of anxiety. More importantly, Lavender oil showed no harmful side effects in those treated, and it had no potential for drug abuse or dependence.²²

Additionally, studies have revealed how Lemon can have an amazing impact on mood and reducing outbursts of anger.

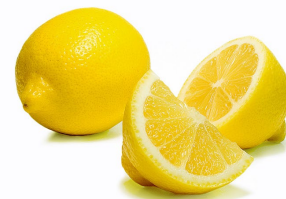
In the studies, simply smelling Lemon for a few minutes significantly decreased “total mood disturbance” (a global measure of affective state for tension-anxiety, depression-dejection, anger-hostility, and confusion).²³ Your clients will like feeling less stressed!

Eliminating Depression: Essential oils used for aromatherapy purposes are considered highly beneficial for fighting depression and sadness, even for clients who may be experiencing these problems as side effects from taking some pharmaceutical medications.

One important caution for massage therapists: Learn as much as you can about your client’s condition and current medications before starting or suggesting an aromatherapy massage.

Jasmine, Lavender, Chamomile, and Peppermint are the best choices among essential oils to use for clients who might be depressed; many combinations of these work well, too.

Boosting Memory: Memory loss is one of the most common and scary health problems that often plague older people. Although Alzheimer’s disease and dementia are frightening and incurable, aromatherapy is often recommended as a supplemental or alternative treatment method for patients fighting memory loss. In a study done on the effect of aromatherapy on patients with Alzheimer’s disease, “All patients showed significant improvement in personal orientation related to cognitive function after the therapy.”²⁴



LEMON (*Citrus limon*)

Lemon is also a favorite essential oil because of its clean, fresh smell and numerous healing properties. Lemon essential oil is extracted from the fruit’s peel. Lemon improves concentration, eases stress, uplifts mood, strengthens the immune system, aids in digestion, alleviates arthritis, reduces cellulite and clears acne. Many household products can be made from Lemon to utilize its antiseptic and antibacterial properties.

Caution: Using Lemon oil in open cuts or acne can sting. Also, when applied topically, Lemon causes skin sensitivity to the sun.

In addition to these great results among patients with existing memory loss, studies have also shown how aromatherapy may increase the capacity of memory among younger clients, offering them a refreshing boost that could help them improve focus and enhance memory storage and recall.

The most popular essential oils used for improved memory are Sage, Rosemary, and Lavender. Each contains chemical components that are known for their memory-boosting benefits. Remember, scents can make strong connections with memories!

Enhancing Energy: All of us yearn for more energy that we can use throughout the day so we can work, play, run errands, and spend as much time with our loved ones as possible. That said, relying on stimulants like coffee, energy drinks, pills, and cigarettes, not to mention illegal substances, offer only a temporary boost and are fraught with an array of side effects.



While regular exercise and a good diet can help you and your clients elevate energy levels, aromatherapy is another healthy option.

A number of essential oils are known for increasing energy levels and circulation without causing harm. Some of the most commonly used energy-boosting essential oils include Grapefruit, Sage, Rosemary, Tea Tree, Angelica, Clove, Cinnamon, Cardamom, and Black Pepper.

One caveat: Since these essential oils are known for being energizing, you should apply them at the end of your massage to send your clients out the door feeling relaxed but with a spring in their step!



HELICHRYSUM

(Helichrysum orientale)

Helichrysum is often called the Immortal Flower (Wikipedia, n.d.), and is frequently used for making skin healthier. Helichrysum is extracted from the flowering head clusters. Its calming nature is used to balance mood and speed up healing and recovery.

The therapeutic properties of helichrysum oil are anti-allergenic, anti-inflammatory, astringent, and analgesic.

Caution: Possible skin sensitivity

Promoting Recovery and Natural Healing:

Essential oils contain chemical constituents that can help the body function better and boost the rate of natural healing, primarily by promoting increased circulation and oxygen flow. This helps internal healing processes and accelerates the healing of wounds. Additionally, some essential oils are also loaded with anti-microbial properties that protect the body during the recovery process.²⁵

Experts suggest using these particular essential oils for healing and recovery: Sea Buckthorn, Helichrysum, Rosehip, Calendula, and Lavender. They are ideal for reducing discomfort.

Treating Headaches: If your clients are complaining about headache-related problems, in addition to the other massage therapies, aromatherapy is one of the most effective alternative treatments for headaches. If you promote

headache relief on your list of massage services, be ready to welcome a flood of clients. Why?

First of all, headaches are very common, but severe ones – think migraines – bring a screeching halt to your clients' daily routines and tasks. Instead of going for pharmaceutical solutions, an increasing number of potential clients are turning to massages and other alternative treatments to find relief.

Aromatherapy is an effective solution, not only for eliminating existing headaches but for treating the underlying causes (anxiety, stress, poor sleep) that trigger them.

The most common and effective essential oils for treating headaches include Rosemary, Sandalwood, Eucalyptus, Lavender, and Peppermint.

Getting More and Better Sleep: Because the inability to sleep well and get proper rest can exacerbate existing medical problems, leading to more serious health issues, be prepared to hear a lot of clients complaining about their lack of snooze time.

If sleep is a problem for them, promoting the use of aromatherapy during their weekly or monthly massage can be the best solution you can offer them. Aromatherapy is not only great for creating a more balanced sleep, but it can also do wonders for establishing the perfect sleep routine. Potentially, aromatherapy may realign the circadian rhythms that enable the body to feel tired at the right time and feel restful during the sleep cycle.

Some of the most effective essential oils you can use to help your clients enjoy a good night's sleep include Ylang Ylang, Marjoram, Sandalwood, Rose, Neroli, Jasmine, Roman Chamomile, and Lavender.



Enhancing the Immune System: Using essential oils and aromatherapy on a practical level will help your clients improve the functioning of their immune



EUCALYPTUS
(*Eucalyptus Globulus*)

Eucalyptus is a tree native to Australia and is the tallest known flowering plant on Earth. (Wikipedia, n.d.). The essential oil is effective at helping relieve pain, fevers, migraines, inflammation, sinus congestion, coughing, asthma, bronchitis, and arthritis. It helps boost immunity and can be used for minor burns, blisters, cuts, and insect bites.

Caution: Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid using Eucalyptus, as should individuals who suffer from epilepsy.

systems. This means their body systems will start to work more effectively, and they'll feel better and be more energized too.

One underlying benefit you can help your clients realize is when it comes to enhancing their immune system, **preventing a problem is a much better option than treating a disease.** Aromatherapy can be a wonderful therapeutic solution that can offer your clients a serious immune boost, provided you use appropriate caution. Please note that “cautions and contraindications” will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

The underlying benefits of essential oils and aromatherapy – antimicrobial, antibacterial, and antifungal effects – can help you protect your clients from infections and illnesses that are damaging to their systems.

Currently, researchers and health care professionals are discovering the therapeutic medicinal properties of essential oils for use against bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. Studies done at Weber State University²⁶ have indicated that many of these organisms cannot live in the presence of essential oils, particularly the oils high in phenols, carvacrol, thymol, and terpenes; Eucalyptus, Peppermint, Clove, Cinnamon, Thyme, and Tea Tree to name a few. The constituents found in these essential oils help to protect the body and the immune system from invaders.

Relief from Pain: Relying on analgesics for pain relief isn't a great idea, as taking them can cause trouble for the body in the long run. Over time, frequent use

of pain medications (either Over-the-Counter OTC or prescription) can lead to unintended consequences for the body, such as liver or kidney strain, gastrointestinal issues or even reduced effectiveness as the body builds up tolerance. Additionally, masking pain without addressing the underlying cause can delay necessary treatments or interventions, potentially worsening the condition over time.



Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen and aspirin, for example, can cause gastrointestinal issues such as stomach ulcers and bleeding. Additionally, prolonged use of acetaminophen can lead to liver damage, while NSAIDs may impair kidney function. Other serious issues with relying on analgesics include the risks of

developing physical dependence and tolerance, which can lead to a dangerous cycle of increasing use, ultimately resulting in dependence and addiction., while masking the root cause of the pain--causing the pain and its cause, to persist or worsen.

However, aromatherapy combined with massage is highly effective for relieving many different types of pain: neuropathic pain (nerve damage), nociceptive pain (tissue damage), inflammatory pain, chronic pain, and menstrual pain, for example.

Essential oils for pain relief have been tested extensively with positive results. A meta-analysis done in 2021 of nearly 2500 database search results, including 46 scientific studies of over ten different essential oils, showed their efficacy at reducing pain.



PEPPERMINT (*Mentha piperita*)

Peppermint is an herb from which the essential oil has a cooling, refreshing effect. It is known for its relief of stress, nausea, depression, headaches, and pain. Peppermint aids digestion, freshens breath and can soothe sunburn. It is an invigorating scent with the ability to also combat congestion, respiratory ailments, rheumatism, and muscular and menstrual pains.

Caution: Peppermint can be a skin irritant to some people and should be kept away from eyes, small children, and pregnant women.

“Based on the obtained results, several EOs showed analgesic activity in acute nociceptive tests.”²⁷

On a more specific basis, a 2019 study for the Department of Veterans Affairs showed that essential oils were effective at reducing dysmenorrhea, birthing and labor pains.²⁸ Dysmenorrhea is moderate to severe pain that occurs during menstruation. Also, a 2014 study to assess the effectiveness of essential oils for patients with neck pain concluded that the group who received essential oils topically “had improved pain tolerance” and “also showed significant improvement” compared to the control group that received an unscented placebo treatment.²⁹

Aromatherapy is non-invasive and even gentle enough to help children with pain. One study showed that children who inhaled lavender essential oil after having a tonsillectomy were able to significantly reduce their daily dose of pharmaceutical pain relievers post-surgery as compared to the control group that did not breathe lavender.³⁰ What a blessing to be able to help your clients feel less pain! Combine the power of touch with the power of aromatherapy for a double dose of natural but effective pain relief!

The most effective essential oils that can help to relieve pain include Chamomile, Lavender, Juniper, Clary Sage, Rosemary, Wintergreen, Helichrysum, Peppermint, and Eucalyptus.

Digestion: While digestion isn’t an area well-researched for aromatherapy benefits, digestive issues can certainly be helped with this alternative treatment method. Aromatherapy is a natural and effective approach to easing digestive issues such as bloating, indigestion, and constipation. By utilizing essential oils known for their therapeutic properties, aromatherapy can help relax the digestive system, reduce inflammation, and improve overall gut motility.

Some studies have found citrus oils – including Orange, Peppermint and Lemon – have shown maximum benefits for treating issues related to digestion. Apart from citrus oils, other essential oils that can ease digestive pain include Dill, Ginger, Clary Sage, Chamomile, Peppermint, Fennel and Lavender.

Chapter 2

What Are Essential Oils?

While we've established aromatherapy and its historical significance as a natural alternative treatment, we have only touched on the basic characteristics of essential oils.

Essential oils are the fragrant, highly concentrated natural constituents that are found in plants. They are what give the plant its scent and vibrancy as a living thing.

Essential oils are found in various parts of plants such as leaves (Eucalyptus), berries (Juniper), grasses (Palmarosa), flowering tops (Lavender), petals (Rose), roots (Angelica), zest of fruit (Orange), resins (Frankincense) and wood (Cedar).



The original term from which the word *essential oil* has been derived is "quintessential oil." The idea stems from the premise proposed by Aristotle that matter is composed of four elements: air, fire, water, and earth. There is also the presence of a fifth element – or quintessence – which is the life force or spirit.³¹

Essential oils circulate throughout the plant's tissue, tasked with carrying essential nutrition to the plant cells and flushing waste products out. Thus, essential oils are more like oxygen for plants. They are the "essential" part of the plant, without which the plant would die.

However, modern science has allowed us to recognize essential oils as physical in nature, comprised of different and complex mixtures of various chemicals.

This is significant to note because as essential oils have become commonly marketed, the quality is often compromised to pad the profit margins.

So, at this juncture, it is important to know **all essential oils are not created equal**. Different production standards yield varying kinds of quality with additives and artificial compounds.

“Pure” essential oils are a very specific classification to indicate the essential oil is extracted in a controlled environment and then tested to verify it does not contain any impurities or additives. This process ensures that the essential oils are either steam-distilled or cold-pressed to preserve their natural integrity. They are considered the highest-quality of essential oil. The process and classification are crucial for oils we breathe, apply to the skin, or otherwise take into our bodies.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation that classifies and sets global standards for products and processes. According to the definition by ISO: essential oils are a physical product made by distillation with either steam or water or through a mechanical press. In their Vocabulary of Natural Materials, ISO also explains that after the distillation process has been completed, the essential oil is separated from the steam or water phase³²

Whether through steam distillation or the mechanical process of maceration, also called cold pressing or expressing the odiferous extract is separated from the plant.

While history once considered these processes to be the removal of the "spirit" or “life force” of the plant, today, science has afforded us the opportunity to see essential oils as a viable alternative product with the potential to help people achieve a better quality of life.



ROSEMARY
(*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Rosemary is a woody herb that means “dew of the sea” in Latin and has been considered sacred throughout history (Wikipedia, n.d.). The essential oil is great for stimulating mental clarity, improving memory, and relieving migraines. It’s also used for relaxing stiff muscles and to improve the skin, hair and scalp.

Caution: Pregnant women and those diagnosed with epilepsy and high blood pressure should avoid Rosemary.



Beware of Terminology

-  Natural
-  Grade A
-  Therapeutic Grade
-  Medicinal Grade
-  Pharmacy Grade
-  Top Grade
-  Aromatherapy Grade
-  100% Authentic

There are no strict regulations or penalties governing the use of these terms to describe essential oils. Any company may call their oils any of these terms for marketing purposes, regardless of the ingredients or if the product is impure.

When you apply high-quality essential oils to your client's skin, the role the products play is similar to what their roles had been inside the plant. These oils effectively permeate the cell walls of your skin to provide necessary nutrition and help with removing waste.

The purity of an essential oil is difficult to trust without knowing about its source. Labs can certify purity based on the chemical composition to ensure an oil is free of additives or impurities. To be classified as "pure" means that everything in the product is entirely composed of the plant and nothing else. Pure essential oils are those that have not been adulterated or mixed with synthetic additives, ensuring that they retain their full therapeutic properties. As far as true and pure essential oils are concerned, this is the only grade that retains all of the essential oil's compounds, so you and your clients can experience the complete health benefits that Mother Nature intended.

Adulterated or diluted oils may not only be less effective but can also cause adverse reactions due to the presence of unknown or harmful chemicals.

In other words, **always** choose the highest quality essential oils. Essential oil quality is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.



What's in these Miracle Oils?

Have you ever wondered why plants with essential oils in them have significant odors? There are two reasons: Self-defense and attraction.

Every part of a plant – including the bark, roots, leaves, stems, and blossoms – has a distinctive smell. Some smells (especially bark and stems) can deter insects and animals from destroying them, while others (especially flowers) have more fragrant odors to attract insects and animals to spur reproduction and pollination.

Just as the odors of each part of the plant are different, the essential oils are different, too. Their composition depends on what part of the plant is used and how the essential oil is produced. The different oils offer various benefits to the plant—and thus, various benefits to us--such as nourishment, protection, circulation, waste-elimination, etc.

Our bodies recognize and respond to the chemical constituents in essential oils because our human chemical makeup and essential oils are very similar in nature. Pure oils contain chemical structures that allow the small oil molecules to rapidly penetrate cell membranes, all the way into our bloodstream and cellular function. When essential oils are present in our bloodstream, they offer us great health benefits like fighting infection, bringing nutrition and oxygen to the tissues, and helping the body get rid of toxins and waste, just like they did in the plant.

The Chemistry and Structure of Essential Oils

The appearance, viscosity, volatility, and chemistry profile of an essential oil can give valuable insights into their chemical composition, potency and potential use.

Some essential oils have distinctive physical features such as color. Lemon, Peppermint, and Lavender are some common examples of lightly colored oils, while Cinnamon and Patchouli oils are generally darker in color.

Color

Light-colored essential oils are often clear or pale because they contain fewer pigments and heavier compounds that might otherwise alter their color. For instance, lemon oil, which is usually pale yellow, is derived from the peel of the fruit by cold-pressing, capturing the light, fresh essence of the lemon. Similarly, peppermint oil, which is often colorless to pale green, is distilled from the leaves and contains volatile compounds like menthol and menthone that are light in color. The light color of these oils signifies that they have not been overly processed or adulterated, retaining their natural therapeutic properties. This clarity also suggests proper storage, as exposure to light and air can lead to oxidation and darkening of the oil.



Darker essential oils typically contain heavier, more complex compounds such as resins, tannins, and pigments, which contribute to their deeper hues. For instance, cinnamon oil is derived from the bark of the cinnamon tree and has a rich, warm brown color due to its high concentration of cinnamaldehyde and other aromatic compounds.

Similarly, Patchouli oil, distilled from the leaves of the patchouli plant, has a deep amber to brown color, indicative of its dense, earthy components like patchoulol. The darker color of these oils suggests a robust, intense aroma and potent therapeutic properties, which can be particularly beneficial for grounding and warming applications in aromatherapy. Additionally, the color can signify proper extraction methods that preserve the essential oil's natural essence and potency.

Consistency

The same is true about their consistency. The consistency of essential oils can provide valuable information about their composition, extraction methods, and potential uses. Some essential oils are extremely water-based and runny in their consistency, while others have a syrupy consistency and are much thicker in appearance.

For example, the thin consistency of citrus oils (Lemon, Orange, Grapefruit) makes them ideal for use in diffusers, as they disperse easily and evaporate quickly. Likewise, Peppermint oil's thin consistency allows for quick penetration, making it effective for topical applications to relieve headaches or muscle tension. The watery consistency of these oils makes them suitable for blending with other oils, enhancing their therapeutic effects, and creating custom aromatherapy blends. However, due to their volatility, they may need to be reapplied more frequently when used topically.

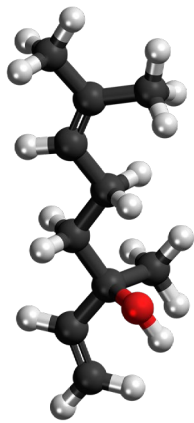
In contrast, essential oils with a syrupy consistency are thicker and more viscous, containing larger molecules and a higher concentration of heavier compounds such as resins, sesquiterpenes, and tannins. These oils tend to have a longer-lasting scent and are slower to evaporate. Thicker oils like Patchouli are denser and more slowly absorbed by the skin, providing prolonged effects that are nice for use in massage oils and skin care products. Myrrh is also thick; its syrupy consistency makes it beneficial for wound healing and skin regeneration as it forms a protective barrier over the skin.

Understanding these consistencies can help you choose the right oil for your specific needs, ensuring optimal therapeutic outcomes and enhancing the aromatherapy experience.



Chemistry

The chemical complexity of an essential oil not only comprises its unique aroma but also its therapeutic characteristics. You don't have to know all of the biochemistry



*Linalool Molecule --
Wikimedia Commons*

involved here to use essential oils, but having a better understanding of their make-up will enhance your understanding of their end effects. With that said anyone who's a practitioner or formulator using essential oils should learn some of the chemistry because it provides a foundation for understanding essential oil characteristics and why they work on a molecular level. Let's review a few of these chemical constituents.

Every oil is based on hundreds of different chemical constituents (**chemotypes**), such as **phenols, ketones, aldehydes, esters, alcohols, terpenes, sesquiterpenes**, and, of course, constituents yet to be discovered.³³

Unlike synthetic chemicals, essential oil constituents are diverse in their effects. No two oils are exactly alike.

A chemotype (CT) is a designation that tells you that the species has different chemical constituents. This usually occurs because the plant is grown in a different area of the world or a distinct climate that alters the chemistry of the plant.

One of the most effective chemical components found in many essential oils is **Linalool**. It is found naturally in over 200 species of plants, including citrus fruits, lavender, sweet basil, rosewood, birch trees, cinnamon, and mint. Although Linalool (called the "sweetness" component) gives its essential oils a pleasant smell, it does so much more. Based on numerous studies, it has been shown to reduce stress, promote better sleep, decrease aggression, reduce inflammation, help relieve pain, and have many other medicinal benefits, even assisting in killing cancer cells.³⁴

Sesquiterpenes are another of the foundational constituents that make up essential oils. They are naturally antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, nourishing and supportive of organs, stabilizing to the brain, and have the natural ability to boost oxygenation to the brain too.

Also, essential oils that naturally contain **Limonene** (a component found in lemon, grapefruit and orange) have been instrumental in slowing and preventing cancerous tumors.

Essential oils such as sage and clary sage are loaded with **Scleral**, a constituent that has the natural ability to activate estrogenic action in the body to balance and regulate hormones.

Chelators are found in other essential oils that can offer great benefits to our body by removing toxins and waste products out of our system. Some of the best-known chelators are Lemon, Grapefruit, Ginger and Helichrysum

On the most basic level, the best way to produce a high-quality, 100% pure essential oil is to preserve its chemical constituents. Chemical constituents found in an essential oil can be impacted by numerous variables. So, it is important to find out if you are using a pure essential oil and how the manufacturer produced it. The wrong type of harvesting process, incorrect growing conditions, or distillation method can destroy the fragile constituents of any essential oil.

Collecting this information before you start using essential oils for your clients is very important. In fact, these answers are some of the most important information to know before purchasing pure essential oils.



GRAPEFRUIT
(Citrus paradisi)

Grapefruit essential oil has a citrusy refreshing smell and is extracted from the peel of the fruit. Therapeutically, Grapefruit is an anti-depressant, antiseptic, disinfectant, and a lymphatic stimulant. Grapefruit is energizing and helps with memory retention and recall as well as overall mental clarity and alleviates stress and depression. It is an immune booster that can fight and defend against colds, viruses, and other illness.

Caution: Grapefruit applied topically subjects skin to sensitivity to the sun.

Here's why. Consider thyme. This type of essential oil can produce a number of different chemotypes, depending on the soil, the climate where it is grown, the altitude and area where it is produced. There are different species and types of thyme too. A high-quality version will feature a high-level essential oil of the thymol chemotype. These environmental influences directly impact the plant's chemical makeup, leading to oils with different properties, aromas and therapeutic benefits. So it matters which species you've got and where it was grown.



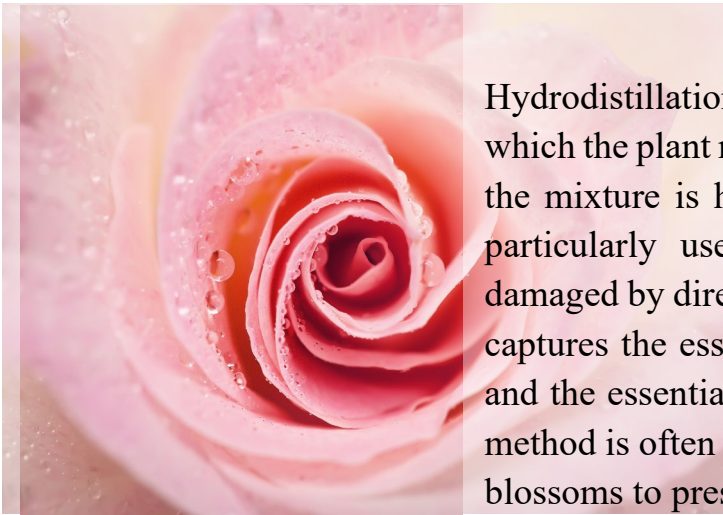
The Essential Oil Process

Essential oils are extracted from plants through several processes, each tailored to the specific type of plant material and the desired quality of the oil. The most common extraction methods include steam distillation using steam, water, or direct heat and cold pressing. CO₂ extraction, solvent extraction, and enfleurage are also used to make products labeled as essential oils. Each method has its advantages and is selected based on the plant's properties and the intended use of the essential oil.

What is Steam Distillation?

Steam Distillation

Steam distillation is the most widely used method for extracting essential oils from plants. In steam distillation, the plant material is placed in a still, which is a large, sealed container. Steam generated from boiling water is then introduced into the still. As the steam passes through the plant material, it heats the plants and causes the essential oil glands to burst open, releasing the volatile oils. These volatile oils, along with the steam, are carried into a cooling system, typically a condenser. Here, the steam cools and condenses back into liquid form, separating into water and essential oil. Because essential oils are generally hydrophobic (water-repellent) and less dense than water, they float on top and can be easily separated. The remaining water, often referred to as hydrosol or floral water, contains traces of the essential oil and can also be used for various therapeutic and cosmetic purposes. Steam distillation is effective for a wide range of plants, including lavender, eucalyptus, and peppermint.



Hydrodistillation

Hydrodistillation is a variation of steam distillation in which the plant material is immersed directly in water, and the mixture is heated to produce steam. This method is particularly useful for delicate plants that would be damaged by direct steam. As the water heats up, the steam captures the essential oils. The steam is then condensed, and the essential oil is separated from the hydrosol. This method is often used for plants like rose petals and orange blossoms to preserve their delicate aromatic compounds.

Dry Distillation

Dry distillation is less common and involves heating the plant material without water or steam. Instead, the plant material is placed in a still and subjected to direct heat, causing the essential oils to vaporize. This method is typically used for extracting oils from dense, woody materials such as cedarwood or frankincense resin. The vaporized oils are then collected and condensed in a similar manner to steam distillation.

Enfleurage

Enfleurage is an ancient and labor-intensive method used for extracting essential oils from delicate flowers like jasmine and tuberose. In this process, flower petals are placed on a layer of fat, which absorbs the essential oils over time. The saturated fat is then washed with alcohol to separate the essential oils, resulting in a highly fragrant extract. Enfleurage is rarely used today due to its labor-intensive nature and the availability of more efficient methods.

What Are Cold Pressed Oils?

Cold-pressing is another method used to extract natural aromatic oils from plants, primarily citrus fruits, through a mechanical process that does not involve heat or chemical solvents. This method of extraction involves mechanically pressing the plant material, typically the peel of citrus fruits such as lemons, oranges, and grapefruits, to extract the essential oil. The process begins by washing and preparing the fruit, followed by mechanically puncturing and pressing the peel to release the oil sacs. The mixture of essential oil and juice is then collected and centrifuged to separate the oil from the water and other plant materials. Because no heat is applied during the extraction process, it minimizes the risk of contamination and ensures that the oil remains free from harmful residues. The resulting essential oil retains its natural, vibrant aroma and the full spectrum of beneficial compounds that would be degraded or lost during heat-based extraction methods. These volatile compounds contribute to the oil's therapeutic properties, including its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant effects. This makes cold-pressed oils particularly suitable for use in aromatherapy, where purity is paramount to avoid skin irritation and allergic reactions, so you and your clients can enjoy the true essence and full potential of the plant's beneficial properties.

What You Need to Know about Absolutes

Like essential oils, absolute oils are concentrated, highly aromatic liquids that are extracted from plants, but that's basically where their similarities end.

For one thing, their extraction processes are very different, and therefore, they create a very different product with a very different effect.

How Are Absolute Oils Made

Absolutes are extracted in a complex manner that requires chemical solvents to extract the fragrance from the plant. The process of extracting an absolute oil was created because some flowers are far too delicate to withstand the heat generated from the steam distillation process that's necessary to extract their essential oils.

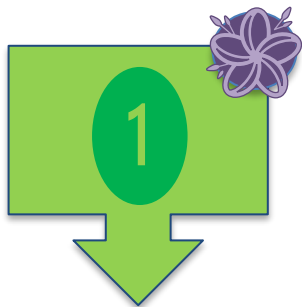
To address this problem, scientists developed a process that uses chemical solvents instead of water or heat to extract the aromatic compounds from more delicate flowers such as lilies, lotus, roses, jasmine, and carnations. This solvent-based process is the cheapest method and is generally used in large-scale industrial extraction. The chemical solvents are later removed in the latter production process, but remnants of the solvents remain.



Jasmine bloom

The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy (NAHA) defines solvent extraction as *“the use of solvents, such as petroleum ether, methanol, ethanol, or hexane, to extract the odoriferous lipophilic material (the smelly stuff) from the plant. The solvent will also pull out the chlorophyll and other plant tissue, resulting in a highly colored or thick/viscous extract. The first product made via solvent extraction is known as ‘a concrete.’ A concrete is the concentrated extract that contains the waxes and/or fats as well as the odoriferous material from the plant. The concrete is then mixed with alcohol, which serves to extract the aromatic principle of the material. The final product is known as an **absolute**.”*³⁵

This definition pretty much sums up the process of extracting an absolute, but the three-stage process is pretty complex.

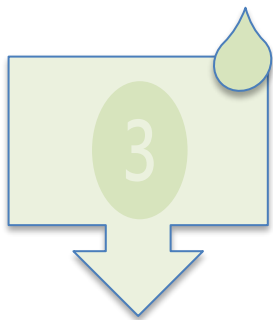


During the first stage, the plant is placed in a large cylindrical drum with an organic solvent (often toluene or hexane – exposure to either can cause a range of negative health effects). The process requires the rotation of the drum to aid in the absorption of the solvent and differentiate between the odiferous extraction and a secondary extraction that involves vacuum distillation to remove the solvent, which is available for recycling.



After the first stage of the process is completed, an aromatic material remains that can be obtained for the next stage. This material is known as **resinoids** or **concretes**, depending on the texture of the extract and whether it is resinous or waxy.

Then, the process continues into the second stage, which involves using alcohol (ethanol) to separate the fragrant compounds present in waxes and pigments (the extracted material derived from the herb or flower during the distillation process).



The third step is to chill the waxes to further separate them from the non-odiferous products. After removing that material, the remaining product is filtered to recover the alcohol following the vacuum distillation process.³⁶ What's left contains far more aromatic compounds in comparison to essential oils, which makes the fragrance very strong.

Absolutes are then diluted and often blended with carrier oils, essential oils, CO2 extracts (explained in the next section), and other types of extracted aromatics. The “naturalness” of the absolute oil extraction process is controversial among aromatherapists as most say the chemicals used to extract them cannot be fully removed and can leave as much as 10% remaining, making absolutes not pure, and therefore unsafe for aromatherapy.

What Other Differences Do Absolutes Have?

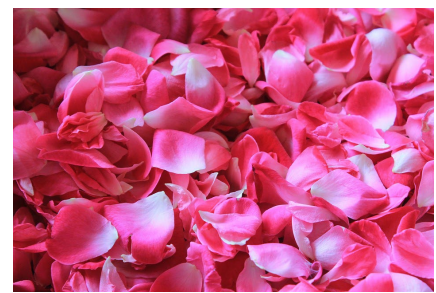
Absolute oils smell very strongly of the smell of the plant material and are most often **used in perfumery instead of aromatherapy** or other health-related applications. To ensure safety, the perfume industry dilutes absolutes with carrier oils or diffuses them in an oil burner before they come in contact with the skin.

As mentioned previously, some flowers and delicate plants cannot withstand the steam distillation process. Heating delicate plants can alter the aroma and/or produce very little essential oil. For example, when roses are steam distilled for essential oil (also known as Rose Otto), it takes 60 roses to create *a single drop* of pure rose essential oil.³⁷ Furthermore, there are over 5000 varieties of roses, but only two of them are used in aromatherapy. The process of making 1kg (2.2 lbs.) of Rose Otto essential oil will require 3000 pounds of petals.³⁸ And after all of that, the essential oil has a very different aroma than a bouquet of roses!

Rose *absolute* is far more desirable for perfumery because a kilogram (2.2 lbs.) of Rose absolute only requires 2,200 pounds of petals. While that is still a substantial amount of petals, the absolute is stronger in fragrance than the essential oil...making that one kilogram go a lot further when diluted.

Just another reminder, absolute oils – like essential oils – are extremely concentrated and not suitable for direct application or even smelling until they are diluted. The dilution process reduces the high level of concentration and can make the oil smell like a flower or herb once again.

Even as an aromatherapy beginner, you can quickly learn to identify the difference between the aroma of undiluted rose and a rose absolute. With practice, your olfactory system will easily recognize the overwhelming aroma of the absolute versus the pure smell of the undiluted rose oil.



ROSE OTTO
(*Rose damascena*)

Rose oil is very valuable because of the labor-intensive extraction process from rose petals--and for its many healing powers.

Rose Otto is best known for fighting depression, grief, anger, fear, and anxiety. It also helps with circulation, heart problems, asthma and other respiratory problems. Rose Otto is a natural aphrodisiac and is even beneficial for hair and skin too.

Caution: Pregnant women should avoid Rose Otto.

Absolutes are also visibly darker and thicker in consistency and can contain a high density of waxes, colorants, and chemicals from the processing.

Additionally, because certain delicate flowers and plants cannot be steam distilled, you should not find an *essential oil* claiming to be from such delicate flowers. For example, Honeysuckle, Carnation, Geranium, and Gardenia are flowers that do not distill well. Jasmine is another example of a flower that can be used to make absolutes but not essential oils because jasmine cannot produce oil through steam distillation.



Blue Lotus (Nymphaea aerulea)

Blue Lily, also known as Blue Lotus, is also a popular absolute. This plant was considered sacred by ancient Egyptians as a Blue Lily was believed to rise and fall with the sun. The flower has a sweet, floral scent that makes it a favorite for the perfume industry. Some in the aromatherapy industry profess that the aroma brings tranquility and heightened awareness. Regardless, the liquid from the flower should only be sold as an absolute, not an essential oil.

As mentioned earlier, the use of absolutes for aromatherapy is controversial. Some people, even professional aromatherapists, use absolute oils for aromatherapy and claim that absolutes just have a bad reputation, mainly due to misinformation being recycled on the internet and in some books. The debate about whether the best part of the plant is wasted and whether the alcohol and solvent residues left in the absolutes after processing are safe will continue. Still, others will say that the products are not pure and, therefore, should not be used for holistic healing. However, it is important that you learn about them and know there are aromatherapists who offer their services using these oils.

What about CO₂s?

As consumers become more chemical-conscious, extract artists are using methods that allow for carbon dioxide (CO₂) to be used in the extraction method instead of chemical solvents. Like absolutes, more of the plant scent is preserved, but through a pressure system free of solvent residue.

During the process, CO₂ is heated and pumped through the plant material at high pressure, turning it into a fog or vapor. The CO₂ acts as a solvent to extract oil from the plant material and then reverts back to a gaseous state when the pressure is released, leaving the essential oil behind.

A weaker version of the same argument about purity exists for CO₂s, just as with absolutes. It is factual to say that carbon dioxide is ever present in the air we breathe and is the gas we all exhale out of our lungs. It is also the gas that plants thrive on. When used in extracting oils, the solvent (CO₂) can be removed by releasing the pressure in the extraction chamber, letting the carbon dioxide into the air. The end result is that the fragrance is closer to the natural essence of the plant.

A number of products available on the market contain absolutes and are sold as essential oils or “absolute essential oils.” That's why it's very important to have a basic knowledge of the chemistry behind the making of these products and do your research.

Now that you've had a chance to review the benefits and challenges of absolute and CO₂ oils, you may be wondering if they are better than essential oils for aromatherapy.

The simple answer: **No!**

If you really want to provide your massage clients with the purest and, therefore, most effective results, stick with pure steam-distilled or cold-pressed essential oils.

Chapter 3

How Does Aromatherapy Work?

Now that you're better acquainted with what essential oils are and you know a few of aromatherapy's many benefits, you can explain to your massage clients the many reasons WHY aromatherapy is so incredible. But now you need to learn HOW to use essential oils and how the body becomes attuned to them both physically and psychologically.

Essential oils are used by inhaling them, applying them on the skin topically, or consuming them internally; (internal usage is outside the scope of this e-book class, but will be discussed briefly later). How an essential oil should be used depends on the goal of use, the properties of the oil, and safety concerns. Depending on the desired effect, oils may be combined and will often use a combination of delivery methods.

Inhalation

Let's first talk about the inhalation of essential oils. We think we perceive our surroundings mainly through our eyes and ears, but in fact, our noses tell us more than we give them credit for. Inhale...take a deep breath in..., and now exhale. Just that simple act has a huge impact on your body.

Think about how you feel when you smell something pleasant...What goes on in your brain when you smell anything? There's far more going on in the background as your brain translates odors into more concrete concepts.

For instance, you may have grown up enjoying the smells of your mother baking an apple pie. Even as a grown adult, just the smell of a fresh apple pie wafting in the air brings back nostalgic moments. You may even feel a sense of peacefulness as you recall the warm memories of your childhood and how your mother used to bake yummy things just for you.



On the other hand, the smell of a rotten egg – an odor associated with natural gas leaks – takes your mind elsewhere, usually to warn you about something dangerous or unpleasant. When you open the fridge, how do you know if something has gone bad? You smell it, right? Think about the scents of freshly mowed grass, melting chocolate, salty ocean air, freshly peeled oranges... these are only a few of the *trillion* different scents that a human nose and brain are capable of distinguishing from each other.³⁹ Have you ever wondered how your nose distinguishes between the delicious aroma of cooking food and the danger signals of something burning?

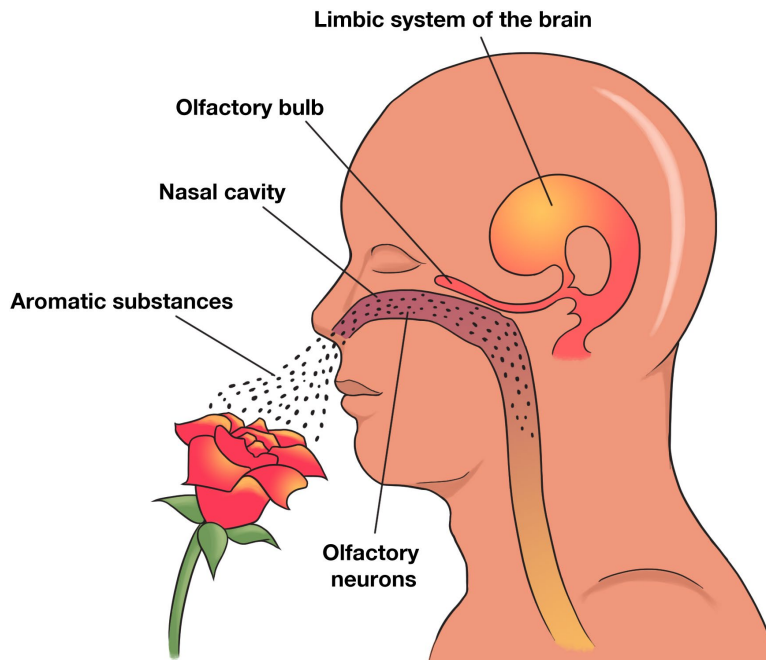
Smell plays a major role in how we perceive memories, people, places, and even particular situations. Our sense of smell heals, protects, nurtures us, and provides information about our external environment, whether real, memorized, or imagined.

What makes our sense of smell unique is that smell is the **ONLY** sense that goes straight to the brain for immediate recognition. Unlike other senses like touch or taste that must travel through the body via neurons and the spinal cord before reaching the brain, smells go straight from the nose to the brain centers, where they influence emotions and memories!



Olfaction in Action

But how and why do our brains behave a certain way for each particular smell?



It's all about the scientific process known as **olfaction**. Your body uses its olfactory system to sense smell and detect airborne substances. The ability to smell comes from specialized sensory cells called olfactory neurons found in a small patch of tissue high inside the nose.

Any substance that has a smell is emitting molecules into the air. When one of these molecules is inhaled, it moves into the nasal cavity through a nostril or the mouth. The molecules pass by receptors that act as “guards” and can trigger sneezing to eject offensive molecules.

Those molecules that make it past the receptors are taken up to the olfactory bulb.⁴⁰ The olfactory bulb is a relatively tiny structure at the front of the brain above the nasal cavity that is responsible for processing scents. Every fragrance or odor is interpreted as soon as we inhale it, thanks to the olfactory bulb.

The olfactory bulb is covered in epithelium, a special membrane containing some 10 million nerve cells that can categorize different smells and send messages directly to the limbic system to associate the smells with feelings.

The limbic system is a network of connected structures near the middle of the brain linked within the central nervous system. These structures work together to affect a wide range of behaviors, including emotions, memory, motivation, hormones, and heart rate.⁴¹ Consequently, **the sense of smell plays a key role in identifying people, places, objects, and activities.**

Our sense of smell is intimately connected to our memory, which explains why when you smell that apple pie, it instantly reminds you of your childhood. Our responses to odors are often learned, usually unconsciously, and sometimes can be paired with unpleasant experiences that may provoke physiological responses associated with the trauma. This is why you must always respect a client's individual, instinctive response to a scent, no matter how illogical it seems or how otherwise appropriate the oil might be.

If the client isn't experiencing a negative association with an essential oil, it can have uplifting psychological and physiological effects. For example, Frankincense, Sandalwood, Myrrh, Vetiver, Cedarwood, and Melissa are known for enhancing focus and mental clarity to help with concentration and staying productive. Furthermore, these have positive impacts on the respiratory system and can boost circulation—and thus, oxygenation--especially to our brains.



FRANKINCENSE
(Boswellia sacra)

Frankincense comes from a hardy tree that is grown mostly in Somalia (Wikipedia, n.d.). With a rich history and a spicy, sweet scent, Frankincense is another favorite essential oil because of its many health benefits. It has anti-anxiety and depression-reducing abilities and can elevate mood. With antibacterial therapeutic properties, it fights colds and coughs as well as helps with shortness of breath, asthma, bronchitis and circulation. It can also help skin wounds, inflammation and signs of aging. Frankincense is non-irritating to most people.

Physiologically, increased oxygen helps make cells more efficient at converting nutrients into energy, increases brain function, strengthens the immune system, builds and repairs tissue, and helps balance hormones, just to name a few of the benefits. What's more, merely inhaling essential oils can stimulate neurotransmitters in the brain and trigger the secretion of antibodies, enzymes, hormones, and endorphins, which impacts us psychologically by increasing alertness, reducing pain, memory recall, positive thoughts, and enjoyment.⁴²

Additionally, the inhalation of essential oils is also a good way to approach respiratory infections. Because the nasal cavity connects to the tissues of the respiratory tract, the oil molecules are brought into direct contact with the throat (pharynx & larynx) and proceed down into the esophagus, bronchi, and lungs, where gaseous exchange with the blood takes place. This efficiency increases with the rate of blood flow through the lungs, the rate and depth of breathing, and the solubility of the molecules.⁴³ Using essential oils provides fast relief of respiratory discomfort and benefits overall respiratory health to support healthy breathing.

With a better understanding of how olfaction is integrated with the limbic system, you should now be able to explain to your clients the many benefits of simply inhaling some essential oils. It can naturally reduce stress, promote relaxation, alleviate depression, help enhance memory, promote calm, improve sleep, reduce pain, and even boost libido!

Methods of Using Essential Oils by Inhalation

The first and easiest way to inhale the oils is just to open the bottle and take a gentle sniff. With some oils, it is effective to apply 1-2 drops in the palm of your hand, rub your palms together, then cup them over your mouth and nose and inhale deeply.

Other easy ways are to sprinkle a few drops of an essential oil onto a handkerchief or tissue and inhale. Alternatively, add three drops of essential oil to a bowl of steaming water. Cover your head with a large towel, close your eyes, put your face above the water, and inhale deeply.

“Inhalation is an important route of exposure because of the role of odor in aromatherapy, but from a safety standpoint it presents a very low level of risk to most people.”

-Robert Tisserand, Essential Oil Educator and Founder of Tisserand Institute of Aromatherapy

To put oils in the air, we diffuse them. A diffuser is a device that sprays a fine mist of essential oils into the air so that the aroma fills a room or an area with a natural fragrance. Just a few drops of oil and a small amount of water are all you need, along with an inexpensive diffuser to feel the vibrancy and enjoy the benefits of essential oils in your home or office.

From the simple to the elaborate, there are many different methods for diffusing essential oils into a room but remember that essential oils are very powerful and should only be used for a purpose such as to ease anxiety or help with congestion.



Furthermore, essential oils should only be inhaled for short periods of time. There is a statistical curve that shows that the effectiveness of inhaling essential oils goes up as you approach 30-45 minutes. After that, the curve peaks and then starts to go down. So, after 30-45 minutes, the therapeutic value of the oils decreases.⁴⁴

Topical Application

To further expound on the way aromatherapy works, remember that essential oils are not just fragrances; they are more complex than just the scent. The health-promoting benefits of essential oils aren't the only ones you can smell. As Gattefossé and Valnet learned, essential oils can also have immensely powerful healing properties when applied on the skin. This is also the case during massage therapy sessions. In fact, the versatile use of essential oils can provide your massage practice much more than you can imagine.



Again, it must be emphasized that essential oils are very powerful. Some varieties can irritate skin and cause rashes or a “burn” due to their strength, concentration, and/or a person’s individual tolerance. As such, they are almost always blended with a carrier oil (such as Vitamin E, Coconut, Almont Oil, lotions, etc.) to dilute their potency rather than being applied directly to the skin. Carrier oils are discussed in more detail later in this chapter and dilution information is covered in [Appendix C](#).

Essential Oil Absorption

When a substance is applied topically, it is absorbed into the skin by the pores and hair follicles. After permeating the skin, the oils enter into the bloodstream, where they disperse to the organs and systems that are specific to their purpose.

The body's cells each have permeable (passable) membranes that allow energy sources in and let wastes out. In general, very few substances are allowed into cells, but essential oils have very small molecules that have the ability to not only enter but influence cells. There are approximately 40 million trillion molecules in ONE drop of essential oil; that's approximately 40,000 molecules for each cell in the average human body!⁴⁵

When applied to the skin, some oils can cleanse, soothe, numb, warm, and/or cool the body. Many essential oils have powerful antibacterial properties that kill and/or ward off infectious pathogens.

Laboratory studies show that Lavender and Tea Tree oil kill common strains of fungi and bacteria. Menthol in Peppermint oil stimulates cold-sensitive nerve receptors to produce a "cooling" sensation without an actual temperature change, and it desensitizes nerve receptors in the airways, suppressing the cough reflex. Clove oil, which has long been used to treat toothaches, contains a numbing agent that inhibits neural response in much the same way that local anesthetics do.⁴⁶

Pulse points are the areas of the body where blood vessels are closest to the skin's surface. Applying essential oils to these areas allows for quicker absorption for faster relief. The slow permeation of properly diluted essential oils can positively affect pain and inflammation.



YLANG YLANG
(*Cananga odorata*)

The sweet scented Ylang Ylang essential oil is extracted from flowers that bloom on a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. (Wikipedia, n.d.) While it has many antiseptic uses to help fight germs and acne, it's used far more often as a calming oil to help with lowering high blood pressure, soothing headaches, easing nausea, driving away anxiety and stress. It helps with sleep and is an aphrodisiac.

Caution: Overuse can cause headaches.

Permeability factors should be assessed when deciding to use essential oils topically on areas where the skin is thin and absorbs quicker, such as the face.

Using certain essential oils topically with sun exposure (or in tanning beds) can damage the skin. Photosensitization can happen, causing the development of



abnormally heightened reactivity to sunlight.⁴⁷

Visible reactions may take up to three days after initial exposure.⁴⁸ In general, the oils that can react this way are citrusy in nature: Bergamot, Grapefruit, Lemon, and Orange. Blocking the sun's damaging rays by covering up the body will help reduce the risk of reaction.

Certain essential oils can have strong effects on the body and may not be safe for topical application for pregnant or breastfeeding women. Being organic substances, essential oils, by their very nature, will cross the placental barrier and have the potential to affect the fetus. The amount of essential oil reaching the placenta is minuscule if proper dilutions are used, but unless you are very familiar with pregnancy aromatherapy, wait until post-delivery. Extra caution is needed as some oils, when used topically on pregnant women, may cause uterine contractions.⁴⁹ Also, pregnancy can increase sensitivity to smell and may make some scents overwhelming, possibly to the point of triggering nausea. Before proceeding with a topical application of an oil on a pregnant woman, try placing the oil on a tissue or cotton ball for inhalation, which can easily be removed if the aroma is too much.

Methods of Using Essential Oils by Topical Application



Roller bottles make topical application of oils to a small area of skin super simple. They are small and compact and hold just enough for a special blend of essential oils and a carrier oil. They can roll on quick relief for soothing skin from itching, minor insect bites, scratches, burns, and more.

Compresses also work well for topical application. A compress is a clean, damp, folded cloth that has been infused with essential oils and is then applied to the problem area. A compress can be either cold or warm. Fill a small bowl with water, add 2-5 drops of essential oil, stir briskly, soak the cloth in the water mix, wring it out, and apply.⁵⁰ Repeat this procedure as needed.

Likewise, a relaxing aromatherapy bath has powerful healing and, of course, provides pampering as well. While not the most practical method for your massage practice, an aromatherapy bath is a valuable delivery method for self-care. Keep in mind, however, that **oil and water do not mix**, so adding the oils directly to the bathwater isn't the best method. Unlike the stirred small bowl of water mentioned above, in a bath, the oils will float on top of the water until they come in contact with skin, at which point they'll be drawn into the body undiluted.⁵¹ It's better to first dilute the oils in a carrier oil, a teaspoon of honey, or half a cup of milk before adding to the bathwater.⁵²

An excellent way to add essential oils to a bath is to first mix five drops of essential oil with two tablespoons (20 grams) of bath salts and then add the mixture to the bathwater. Also, be careful not to use an oil in bathwater that is sensitizing or irritating to the skin or oils that may be photosensitizing, causing issues when you're back in the sunlight. Lavender and Chamomile are good oils to use in the bath for relaxation.

However, **the most effective way** to apply essential oils topically is to mix them with a carrier oil, drip a few drops into the palms of your hands, and **massage them** into the area of the skin being treated. *Please never drizzle essential oils directly from the bottle undiluted onto an unsuspecting subject!*

Massage is one of the most enjoyable and beneficial ways to use essential oils topically. Since you are already a massage therapist and offering a list of massage benefits, you know the benefits associated with the healing touch and the profound effect of allowing a person to relax. You will also agree that the desire for relaxation and soothed muscles are some of the most common reasons that your clients come to you.

When pure essential oils are combined with massage – aromatherapy – the session gets intensified, and therefore, one can expect better results from a session.

Massaging the oils into joints, muscles, and tissues can be very advantageous for



your clients' aches and pains. Any massage experience can be improved with the appropriate essential oil as the aroma will smell great, and the health benefits will stack up. Just as there are numerous styles of massage for numerous ailments, there are numerous essential oils that can enhance and increase massage sessions. Lavender, Geranium, Sandalwood, Chamomile, and Ylang Ylang are just a few common essential oils that are calming and offer many benefits to massage clients.

Essential oils may also be applied to the chest for clearer breathing, the crown of the head for improved memory, behind the ears for staying calm, to the neck for tension, on the temples for stress, on the forehead for headaches, to the face as part

of a skincare routine, on the abdomen for digestive discomfort, and other areas of concern as applicable to the condition being treated.

Applying essential oils to the feet is especially beneficial because they quickly absorb into the bloodstream but are tough enough to make the likelihood of irritation much less, especially for those with sensitive skin, including children and older adults. Furthermore, the feet have reflex points that correspond to different areas of the body by way of the nervous system.



SANDALWOOD
(Santalum paniculatum)

Sandalwood oil is an essential oil distilled from wood of the evergreen sandalwood tree. Because of its popular woody scent, sandalwood is the second most expensive wood in the world (Wikipedia, n.d.). The therapeutic benefits are great too: antibacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and can both stimulate the mind and promote restful sleep. Sandalwood is calming and reduces stress. It can be an aphrodisiac but is also helpful to hydrate and heal skin conditions. Sandalwood is non-irritating to most people.

Some other conditions that may be appropriate for topical application are:⁵³

- Acne spot treatment (Tea Tree)
- Cold sore (Sandalwood or Geranium)
- Minor burn (Lavender or Chamomile in aloe vera gel)
- Minor skin trauma or infection (Lavender, Tea Tree or Helichrysum)
- Insect bites (Lavender and/or Tea Tree)
- Migraines (acute – Rosemary, Bergamot, or Peppermint)
- Bruises (acute – at first chance, apply Helichrysum and/or Chamomile)
- Musculoskeletal trauma (e.g., whiplash: Helichrysum and/or Chamomile)
- Reflex or acupressure work (Lavender or Bergamot)
- Ear infections (Peppermint or Tea Tree)

Always remember that oils are dispensed by the drop for a reason. A single drop has great power! Start slow, err on the side of caution, and watch for signs of a reaction. You can always add another drop.



Internal Use

While aromatherapy is not based on the internal uses or consumption of essential oils, this method of using essential oils can have benefits. *Since encouraging internal use of essential oils is outside the practice of being a massage therapist, we are not including anything on internal use.* Please consult a Certified Aromatherapist if you are interested in consuming essential oils personally.

Carrier Oils

Purchasing pure essential oils allows for confidence in the oil's therapeutic properties and gives you greater control over the concentration and application of the oils. However, pure oils are highly concentrated plant extracts that can be very potent, often too strong to be applied directly to the skin without causing irritation, like a rash or "burn." So, carrier oils are added to adjust the overall potency. Carrier oils are sometimes referred to as "base" oils. They serve to dilute the essential oils before applying them to the skin. A carrier oil acts as the base for "carrying" the essential oil to the skin.

Carrier oils are essential in aromatherapy for safely diluting and applying essential oils to the skin, enhancing their therapeutic effects, and providing additional skin-nourishing benefits.

Which Carrier Oils to Use

Carrier oils are derived from the fatty parts of plants, such as seeds, nuts, and kernels, and are used to dilute essential oils, ensuring they are safe for topical application. Rich in vitamins, fatty acids, and antioxidants, carrier oils offer their own therapeutic benefits, which can complement and enhance the effects of essential oils. By choosing the right carrier oil, you can create personalized and effective aromatherapy treatments that provide additional nourishing and moisturizing benefits. For example, vitamin E oil has antioxidant properties to help fight inflammation and nourish the skin; jojoba oil closely resembles the skin's natural sebum, making it an excellent choice for balancing oily skin. Coconut oil, with its antimicrobial properties, is ideal for moisturizing, soothing, and protecting the skin. Argan oil, known for its high vitamin E content and essential fatty acids, can help rejuvenate and restore the skin's natural elasticity. Almond oil is rich in vitamins

and minerals, providing additional nourishment and protection for dry skin. Olive, sesame, apricot kernel, and avocado are also common carrier oils used for blending.

Carrier oils help to distribute the essential oil's active compounds evenly, enhancing absorption and minimizing the risk of adverse reactions. A far greater amount of the carrier oil relative to the essential oil is used to make sure the essential oil is properly diluted.

How Much Carrier Oil is Needed?

Mixing essential oils with carrier oils is a straightforward process that ensures the safe and effective use of essential oils for topical application. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you create the perfect blend:

Optimal dilution ratios depend on many considerations, including purpose, age, health conditions, skin health and sensitivity, olfactory sensitivity, and so on. This customized dilution also allows for precise adjustments to meet specific therapeutic needs or preferences. However, a typical essential oil blend contains three drops of base oil per 5 milliliters (ml). This means if 5 ml is 100 percent, then the essential oil in it is only about 3 percent. A teaspoon is 5 milliliters.



Here are some common guidelines:

1% Dilution: For sensitive skin, children, elderly, or for facial applications (1 drop of essential oil per teaspoon of carrier oil).

2% Dilution: General use for adults (2 drops of essential oil per teaspoon of carrier oil).

3-5% Dilution: For specific therapeutic purposes or localized areas like muscle pain (3-5 drops of essential oil per teaspoon of carrier oil).

You can measure the carrier oil using a clean measuring spoon or a dropper if desired. Measure the appropriate amount of carrier oil based on the dilution ratio you've chosen. For instance, for a 2% dilution in 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of carrier oil,

you'll need two drops of essential oil. Stir the mixture gently to ensure the essential oils are evenly dispersed in the carrier oil. You can use a clean glass rod, a dropper, or simply swirl the container—much easier if it has a lid.

So, let's say you've got a client with a headache; peppermint might be nice to use, so use 1-2 drops, mixed with a teaspoon of carrier oil, and add the mixture to your hands and really focus on working on the neck and shoulders.

While it may seem unusual to emphasize selecting only pure essential oils so that you can dilute them, this is so you know the oil retains all of its therapeutic properties with no additives or chemicals. You are in control over what products are being used—not a manufacturer trying to save money by filling their bottles with cheap chemicals. Just as having pure essential oils is, well, essential to aromatherapy, so is choosing a pure carrier oil.

Get the Most from Essential Oils

Additionally, diluting essential oils into carrier oils makes them more cost-effective. Pure essential oils are often more expensive due to the extensive extraction process and the large quantity of plant material required to produce a small amount of oil. By diluting these oils, consumers can extend the lifespan of their essential oil supply, making it a more economical choice in the long run. This practice also supports sustainable use, as it reduces the demand for large-scale harvesting of plants, contributing to environmental conservation.

You don't have to mix the essential oils into a separate bottle of carrier oil because then you would HAVE to use the same essential oil and carrier combo with each client. Just can mix what you need and personalize it for each client. Maybe someone needs to relax, you could use Lavender for them. Someone else is in pain, and Peppermint or Helichrysum might be indicated for them. You don't need much, just a spoonful of carrier oil and 1-2 drops of essential oil.

Purchasing the purest essential oils and diluting them into quality carrier oils ensures safety, effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and sustainability. It allows for tailored therapeutic applications, leveraging the full potential of both essential and carrier oils to promote overall health and wellness.

Synergy

Before we go much further, it's important to understand the critical concept of synergy, which is when various essential oils are combined



to create a more powerful effect and more benefits than individual oils could do on their own. Synergy could be understood as $2 + 2 = 8$, meaning that synergism happens when the effect of the combined substances is greater than the sum of the individual

parts.

Blending oils is both a science and an art because the range of possibilities for combining essential oils for synergistic purposes is endless, but not all synergy is beneficial. In fact, if combined improperly, certain essential oils can trigger allergies and can even become toxic.⁵⁴

Before creating your own aromatherapy recipes, a good starting point is to categorize your essential oils into groups that share traits. What they do (the effects you're after), how they smell (scent type), or their chemical makeup of how fast each of them evaporates (called "notes") are some of the more common characteristics.⁵⁵ In general, oils that have the same effect work well together, and mixing scent types adds dimension to the blend

The craft of blending oils is one of the most important things you'll learn as you master using essential oils during massage. Aromatherapists choose a combination of essential oils for a variety of reasons.

For instance, when making a blend for insomnia, we would first explore the potential reasons for insomnia and understand how insomnia manifests in the individual.

We may find that the individual is currently feeling ungrounded, scattered, and overwhelmed. We can choose essential oils that are sedative (Lavender, Chamomile) and also choose essential oils that can provide a sense of rootedness and strength. Such oils representing this quality are found in Vetiver, Cedarwood, and Jatamansi. So, our final blend could look something like Lavender, Roman Chamomile, and Vetiver. This is synergy in action!

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Essential Oils by Effect

Energizing	Rosemary, Clary Sage, Lemongrass, Eucalyptus, Peppermint, Tea Tree, Cypress, Pine, Lemon, Basil, Grapefruit, Ginger, Black Pepper
Calming	Lavender, Geranium, Chamomile, Bergamot, Ylang Ylang, Neroli, Melissa, Palmarosa, Patchouli, Sandalwood

Essential Oils by Scent Types

Flowery	Geranium, Lavender, Palmarosa, Rose, Vanilla, Ylang Ylang
Citrus	Bergamot, Citronella, Grapefruit, Lemon, Lemongrass, Lime, Melissa, Neroli, Orange, Petitgrain, Tangerine
Spicy	Cinnamon, Clove, Ginger, Nutmeg, Black Pepper
Woody	Angelica, Cedarwood, Coriander, Cypress, Fir, Frankincense, Helichrysum, Juniper, Myrrh, Patchouli, Sandalwood, Vetiver
Herbal	Basil, Chamomile, Clary Sage, Eucalyptus, Marjoram, Oregano, Peppermint, Pine, Rosemary, Sage, Tea Tree, Thyme

Creating aromatherapy blends for therapeutic synergy takes skill and practice. Remember that blending oils is both a science and an art. Scientifically, essential oils positively affect the body, and artistically, it's exciting to experiment with blending oils that smell amazing. However, when blending for clients or others, we must remember that everyone is unique, so every person will connect with fragrances differently as their memories are closely associated with aromas.

To get a good blend, you're first going to need to ask yourself a few questions:



Who is this essential oil blend for?

What effect do I want it to have?

When will it be used?

Where will it be used?

Why is this blend needed?

How will it be applied?

Layering the Oils

Assuming you've made significant progress on the use of pure essential oils with your clients, you may be ready to learn how to *layer* them. As the term suggests, this technique is literally about creating additional benefits for your massage clients by layering different oils on top of each other.

For example, let's assume your client is complaining about discomfort from strenuous workouts and experiencing pain, meaning her/his muscles are both sore and inflamed.

To give your client an aromatherapy boost, you can start by rubbing Marjoram down into the muscles to lessen inflammation. Then, you can layer it with a few drops of Peppermint to take advantage of this oil's amazing cooling effect. For the third layer of essential oil, Basil serves as a natural pain reliever to handle any leftover aches that Marjoram didn't address.

Remember that no matter how pure or therapeutic essential oils are, they're usually diluted and blended in a carrier (base) oil. In their most natural form, these oils are highly concentrated and cannot be applied directly to the skin. By combining essential oils with suitable carrier oils, you can create synergistic blends that offer a wider range of benefits, addressing multiple aspects of health in one application.



MARJORAM (*Origanum majorana*)

Marjoram is cultivated for its aromatic flowering leaves from which the essential oil is distilled. Marjoram is a multi-purpose oil that has a warming effect that calms emotion and anxiety. It is also useful for rheumatic pains as well as sprains, strains, spasms, joints, and sore muscles. Marjoram can also increase circulation, reduce headaches, and alleviate respiratory congestion, menstrual cramps, and physical exhaustion.

Caution: Marjoram is considered non-irritating to most people but should be avoided during pregnancy.

Oil Notes

A few hours after creation, some essential oil blends can begin to smell differently. This is because certain essential oils evaporate more quickly than others, so while one blend might still hold its fragrance after a time, other scents may have dissipated.

Similar to a musical scale, essential oils that are the quickest to evaporate (usually within 1-2 hours) are called “top notes.” Next are the oils that evaporate within 2-4 hours and are known as “middle notes.” The “base notes” are the oils that evaporate the slowest. Some base note oils can take several days to evaporate. Blending oils with the same “oil notes” will ensure that the blend keeps smelling and acting consistently over time.

Here are a few examples of popular oils, divided into their oil notes:

Essential Oils by Oil Notes	
Top Notes	Bergamot, Citronella, Eucalyptus, Grapefruit, Lavender, Lemon, Lemongrass, Lime, Orange, Peppermint, Spearmint, Tangerine
Middle Notes	Carrot Seed, Chamomile, Cinnamon, Clary Sage, Cypress, Dill, Fennel, Geranium, Marjoram, Neroli, Palmarosa, Rose, Rosemary, Rosewood, Spruce, Tea Tree, Thyme, Ylang Ylang
Base Notes	Angelica Root, Balsam, Cedarwood, Frankincense, Ginger, Helichrysum, Myrrh, Patchouli, Sandalwood, Vanilla, Vetiver

Once again, to accomplish the proper dilution of your oils for topical use, here is an example of complementing your carrier oils with your oil notes:

Take three drops of a top note, five drops of a middle note, and two drops of a base note, then mix and determine if you like it. If you do, take one drop of your blend and mix it with nine drops of carrier oil to give a 10% dilution.

As with all of these methods and uses, it’s always best to KNOW your client when giving them an aromatherapy massage in order to ensure they have the appropriate and most effective experience.

Chapter 4

Oils that Work and Those that Don't

No matter whether you want to learn about essential oils and aromatherapy for personal use, as an add-on service to massage therapy, or to become a professional aromatherapist, it is important to know that you're using the right products.

Not All Natural is Natural

Think about all the catch phrases food manufacturers use to hype their products – terms like *all-natural*, *sugar-free*, and *low-calorie*. The implication here is that foods with these labels are healthier for you.



TEA TREE (*Melaleuca alternifolia*)

Also known as melaleuca oil, tea tree oil is extracted from the leaves of the tree that is native to Australia. (Wikipedia, n.d.). Tea Tree is an energizing immune booster with antimicrobial, antiseptic, antiviral, and antifungal therapeutic properties. It helps treat itching, acne, burns, athlete's foot, cold sores, and other skin conditions. It also works as an insecticide.

Caution: While generally considered safe for aromatherapy, Tea Tree oil should not be used around the mouth and it is poisonous when taken internally. Tea Tree should be kept away from children and pets.

However, once you know what *natural* actually means, you'll want to think twice before buying those products. The government allows the word *natural* to be used on any product if the compounds that produce the product's final shape "could" be produced in nature.

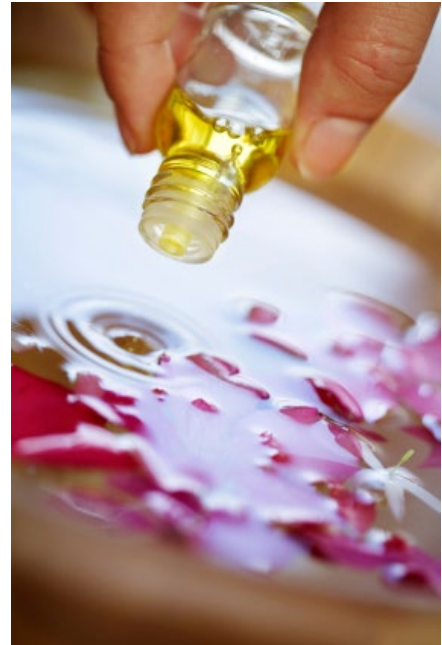
In other words, even if a product is based on natural ingredients but is manufactured and finalized in a lab using synthetic materials, it can still be labeled as *natural*. Does that really make the product *natural*? Not really!

Just like you need to read food labels to really understand what you're eating, it's critical for you to do your own due diligence into the companies whose oils you use and their methods of production.

Since aromatherapy revolves around the benefits of pure essential oils, it's crucial for you, as a massage therapist, to ensure the oils you are using

professionally are of the best quality. It is important to choose only **PURE** oils. They are the best compounds that offer real results by providing balance and restoration to all systems of the human body.

Keeping this in mind, an inferior quality oil with synthetic ingredients is the last thing you want to use on your client's body. In fact, low-grade oil can not only cause damage to your client's body (and organs) but to your own body as well. **Don't forget that when you are applying essential oils, YOU are absorbing them, too,** so if it can harm your clients in any way, it can harm you as well.



Additionally, although your client may be exposed to inferior oils infrequently, as a massage therapist, you would be exposed to these synthetic-grade oils multiple times a day, potentially exposing you to health problems over time.

The Fallacy of the Different Grades of Essential Oils

The topical application of aromatherapy requires massaging essential oil into the skin, which is the largest organ of the human body. When accessing that organ to maximize the health benefits of aromatherapy, it is important to offer your clients the best. However, keep in mind that **any** company can market their product as “certified” to be the best with terms that sound good, like “pharmaceutical grade” or “medical grade,” with nothing to back up these terms.

“Food-grade”, “therapeutic grade”, “certified” or “100% authentic” are also just marketing terms. Even artificial intelligence (AI) will glean info from across the internet to say that essential oils are “graded” or are categorized into fragrance grade, food grade, or aromatherapy grade. This is for categorization only. Again, the terminology is not regulated or standardized to mean any specifications of an essential oil are met.

The fragrance industry is only interested in how good a nail polish, cologne, or lipstick smells. So, when these products are manufactured with essential oils, only the fragrant part of the oil is used—the rest is discarded—and the fragrance is mixed with synthetic chemicals to achieve a specific scent “profile.”

Aromatherapy is not involved with the internal uses or consumption of essential oils, but you will occasionally see them listed on food products. The food industry focuses mainly on taste. In the laboratory, this industry extracts the ingredients that enhance the taste of the product, for example, cinnamon, peppermint, or mint. Those tiny amounts are used to make processed foods, like mint cookies or cinnamon cereals. Again, unfortunately, the remainder of the essential oil is discarded.

The essential oils labeled “pharmaceutical grade” or “pure” SHOULD BE high-quality products. But BEWARE! While most companies do not mean to intentionally deceive consumers, as we’ve learned, the terms on labels can have different interpretations and, therefore, can be misleading. Quality companies will provide details (usually called GC/MS Analysis) particular to their oils and their processes on their website, so it is incumbent upon you to do your own research (Trusted companies listed in [Appendix F](#)) when choosing the right and most authentic essential oils to use in your massage practice. As mentioned previously, there are no established regulatory bodies in the United States to ensure that manufacturers only use unadulterated plants for the production of essential oils; which means no authority “grades” or “certifies” essential oils. “Therapeutic grade” is marketing!

Europe has the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Association French Normalization Organization Regulation (AFNOR), which have established production standards and outlined the constituents and chemical profile that a pure and high-grade essential oil should have. Ethical companies will use these guidelines and other standards to make sure that the oils they are creating will preserve the properties and integrity of the plant through testing and other factors. ISO and AFNOR are non-governmental organizations that *can*



help assess an essential oil's quality, but they should not be the only factors considered.

Now, I'd like to share with you some tips that can quickly help you identify if you're using a pure essential oil, as well as some ways to help you separate the pretenders from the pure stuff right away.

1. The bottles: The type of bottle in which essential oils are stored should be your first clue. First of all, pure essential oils should be stored in glass bottles because plastic can leech chemicals like bisphenol A (BPA) that are harmful to the human body. Not only is BPA bad for endocrine function, but it can also cause various other serious and life-threatening diseases such as obesity, thyroid issues, hormone fluctuations, and even neurological cancers. In addition, the glass should be a dark color (usually a shade of amber) to protect the essential oil against sunlight and degradation.



Therefore, it is highly important that you inspect the bottles carefully before buying the essential oils.

Finally, bottles without a rubber stopper on top can diminish the quality of the oil, even if it was once a pure grade. If there's no rubber stopper, environmental factors can contaminate the oil, making it harmful instead of beneficial.

2. The labels: As mentioned earlier, anything that says “grade” on it may not be pure. Even if you find “100% pure therapeutic-grade essential oil” on the label, this may or may not be true. Also, watch out for words such as “aromatherapy,” “blend,” “fragrance,” “perfume,” or “nature identical,” as these words indicate that the product isn't pure. Any reference on the label to “oils” in the plural form should be a red flag as well (unless it is a blend). The label should clearly list all ingredients—and there should only be one! It is a very common practice for suppliers to dilute pure essential oils with other oils, substances, and even alcohol to generate bigger “batches” for bigger profits. Therefore, check the list of ingredients and ensure nothing other than the specific plant oil is mentioned.

3. Look for Latin. Know the exact botanical name of the plant for the essential oil you're seeking. This important factor could help you separate the high-quality products from the inferior ones. For example, one of the most commonly used essential oils is Lavender.

However, most readily available brands aren't even derived from the original lavender plant. In fact, many use a different plant known as *Lavandin* (aka, French Lavender, because it was historically developed as a hybrid for the French perfume industry). *Lavandin* has a high



level of camphor (5-11%), which is a known skin irritant.⁵⁷ For a pure, true Lavender essential oil, the botanical species name mentioned on the label should be *Lavandula angustifolia*. This indicates greater purity and that the essential oil has been distilled from the real plant. True *Lavandula angustifolia* should not have more than trace amounts of camphor present in the oil (0-0.5%). So, although the two lavender plant types have similar aromas, they have vastly different chemical compositions—which, as you would expect, vastly affects their therapeutic benefits.

Other types of oils are also based on different species and thus are not equal for aromatherapy. For instance, the chamomile essential oil may be based on Roman (*Chamaemelum nobile*), Moroccan (*Cladanthus mixtus*), or German Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*). Roman Chamomile is recognized for its calming and anti-inflammatory properties. It's also better known for its analgesic and sedative properties, and helps with insomnia, anxiety, and menstrual pain, and even helps stabilize asthma attacks until emergency treatment is available.⁵⁸ On the other hand, German and Moroccan Chamomile are good for helping heal sprains, inflamed muscles, and skin with allergies, dermatitis, eczema, and rashes. So, it is important to learn about these different species and the medicinal properties associated with them to ensure you choose the right pure essential oil for the right purpose.



ROMAN CHAMOMILE
(*Chamaemelum nobile*)

Mainly grown in England, the flowers have an apple-like scent (Wikipedia, n.d.) and the essential oil is used as a sedative to improve sleep, insomnia, and sleep patterns. It is also used for asthma, arthritis, muscular aches and pains, stress and tension.

Caution: Pregnant women should avoid Roman Chamomile as it can cause contractions.



GERMAN CHAMOMILE
(*Matricaria recutita*)

Also known as *wild chamomile*, it is found growing in Europe, Asia, North America, South America and Australia (Wikipedia, n.d.). German Chamomile is great for relieving anxiety, stress, and tension. Its anti-inflammatory properties help treat muscular pain, digestion, and many skin conditions such as dermatitis, eczema, rashes, and allergies.

Caution: Pregnant women should avoid German Chamomile.



MORROCAN CHAMOMILE
(*Cladanthus mixtus*)

Mostly grown in North Africa, the flowers only bloom during the rainy season. (Wikipedia, n.d.). The essential oil is distilled and used for its calming properties as well as for soothing skin with rashes, eczema, dermatitis, and allergies. It's also good for inflamed joints, muscles, and nerve pain.

Caution: Moroccan Chamomile is not safe during pregnancy

4. The price tag: Real, pure essential oils are much more expensive than synthetic brands. The process of distilling essential oils from various plants (some of which grow in different countries) is very costly. It takes both time and money to extract pure essential oils that have medicinal and therapeutic benefits.


So, what is the “average” price for a pure essential oil? At this juncture, it's important that you first remember that each type of essential oil will have a unique price depending on where in the world the plant grows, what species is used, how much of the plant material is needed and its unique distillation process. Just know that prices can vary significantly, and they will be expensive because of their purity and other factors.

As an example, pure Jasmine or Rose can be extremely expensive. A bottle of pure Rose containing as little as 5 ml can be rated at \$180 because it requires thousands of pounds of rose petals to extract pure rose essential oil.

So for example, if you see a rose essential oil available for \$10 or even \$50 for 5 ml, you aren't getting the real, pure essential oil. As you become more familiar with each oil and understand the intricate processes by which they're produced, it will be easy to distinguish between synthetic and pure oils simply based on the price.

For many people, higher prices can be a big turnoff, which is why they turn to synthetic, cheaper oils. But as the old adage says, 'You get what you pay for,' and that decision not only impacts you but your clients as well.

One caveat: from time to time, you may find a synthetic brand at a HIGHER price, so examine the items we've discussed (bottling, labels, species, etc.) to ensure you have the real, pure thing.

 **5. Take the smell test.** Most retail health food stores that sell essential oils will let you give them a smell test before you purchase them (this is especially true for pure oils). Ideally, your nose can be a guide to help identify pure essential oils, as the smell is distinctive, and the effects are quite immediate.

Once you've smelled the real thing, it's easier to identify an inferior oil. Pure oils have a fresher, more crisp smell that instantly soothes your mind as soon as you inhale. You smell only the goodness in it without a hint of anything 'overly sweet' or chemical-laden that indicates the product is synthetic.

Another warning sign: If you experience sneezing or a headache after sniffing an essential oil or you feel repulsed by an essential oil in any way, you can assume it is fake.



6. Research the Manufacturer. Be concerned about where the plants are being grown and who's in charge of quality control. It is absolutely valid to question the quality and origin of the plants – organic or not – that are used for making essential oils. Who owns the land and whether or not the land has been pesticide and chemical-free for at least 50 years or more are critical questions to ascertain the quality of oils extracted from that land.

Again, those companies that take strides to grow and harvest plants that produce superior oils typically provide detailed descriptions of their processes on their websites to help consumers evaluate the suitability and purity of their oils.

The company or manufacturer should (hopefully!) own the land and be proud of the products they grow. While non-ownership of the land does not directly affect the quality of the essential oils produced, it can cause challenges. For instance, if the manufacturer of the oil does not own the farm where the plants are grown, this can create a lot of confusion about the quality and authenticity of the plants, the distillation process, and general knowledge about the health of the land used to grow the plants.

If a manufacturer is purchasing plants from external suppliers, it calls into question whether they have control over the conditions where the plants are grown or the distillation process. This scenario may require more research on your part.

You need to find out if the company checks on their external suppliers and visits the farms regularly to ensure the perfect plant-growing environment is in place, as well as the harvesting conditions of the plants.

Is the manufacturer you are purchasing the essential oils from aware of the optimal time for testing the plants for harvest? A few days can make a lot of difference. It is very common for plants to alter their chemistry over a few days or weeks. Therefore, the optimal time for harvest is set for each plant to capture its most beneficial qualities (including the medicinal quality) that are later transferred to the essential oil distilled from that plant.⁵⁹

Soil conditions, seed quality, climate, altitude, growing conditions, harvesting, the care during distillation, bottling, and storage can all play a part in the resulting quality of an essential oil. These are all factors that conscientious suppliers pay close attention to.⁶⁰

Has the manufacturer you are researching established (in-house and 3rd party) testing procedures to confirm the purity of their essential oils? Do the labs these companies use to meet the standards outlined by AFNOR or the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)? Finding answers to these questions will help you determine whether the essential oils you are purchasing are authentic or not.



7. The distillation process that produces the essential oil is critical. Several factors influence the quality of the essential oil produced during distillation.

More often than not, manufacturers use steam pressure to create an essential oil. Since longer procedures can cost more money, manufacturers often use maximum amounts of both heat and pressure to save money on the process.

Are essential oils distilled over low heat or high? What's the steam pressure? The duration and temperature of the distillation process must be carefully controlled to ensure that the volatile compounds are extracted. Maximum heat and pressure are harmful to the chemical constituents and molecules present in the oil, which are the

main components that make these oils beneficial for health. By speeding up the process, manufacturers can ruin the quality of the essential oil, making it an inferior product.

Pure Essential Oils vs. Synthetic Oils

Hopefully, you now have a better understanding of why we advocate avoiding synthetic fragrances or oils. As the name suggests, these fragrance oils are made from synthetic compounds – primarily petrochemicals – to duplicate the smell of a specific plant or part of the plant. The company may have duplicated the smell, but *not* the therapeutic responses. According to a 1986 report published by the National



Academy of Sciences, more than 90 percent of chemicals used in the production of synthetic fragrances or essential oils are derived from petroleum.⁶¹ These include aldehydes, benzene derivatives and a number of other known sensitizers and toxins that are capable of causing various allergic

reactions, respiratory disorders (asthma), disorders of the central nervous system, birth defects, and even cancer.⁶²

Unfortunately, these impure, petrochemical-based substitutes for essential oils, including candles and air fresheners, are far more common than most people assume because they are far cheaper and more easily available. Not only do they provide **no therapeutic benefits**, but they actually threaten your health.

As professionals who want to expand your massage business to include aromatherapy, we cannot stress enough how very important it is to avoid these synthetic products. **ONLY** when using pure essential oils can you expect to achieve the greatest results with your clients.

Chapter 5

Safety and Caring for Your Oils

In addition to choosing the best oils and using them smartly, storing them properly is the key to getting the most use out of them. You've spent valuable time and money on purchasing them, so it's just as important to protect their value and give them the attention they deserve. Fortunately, the rules for storing your favorite oils aren't complicated. What follows are some tips and tricks for storing your essential oils and keeping their potency high.

Storing Essential Oils

1. Protect your essential oils from light and heat. As mentioned earlier, exposure to heat and sunlight can damage the evaporation rate and chemical composition of essential oils. Therefore, it is important that you keep pure essential oils in their purest and most beneficial form.

Essential oils should be stored in dark (usually amber) glass bottles with airtight rubber tops not only to protect oils from ultraviolet damage and evaporation but also to keep them potent and strong. Moreover, the glass should be used to protect blends and oils like citrus oils that may dissolve plastic and may even turn the contents toxic.



Never consider storing your undiluted essential oils in anything but dark-colored glass bottles. Pure essential oils are very strong and have a tendency to eat up and even melt plastic.

However, there are a few specific circumstances when it might be acceptable to use plastic containers. Limit the time that essential oils are stored in plastic containers to reduce the risk of degradation and contamination. *Heavily diluted* essential oil mixtures that are intended for single use, such as a diffuser blend or a spray, can be stored in plastic temporarily. Storing massage lotions and diluted oil blends for aromatherapy in plastic bottles is generally safe for short periods of time. If you are mixing a blend that you plan to use immediately or within a very short period (such as within a day), it might be acceptable to use a high-quality plastic bottle.

Only use high-quality, oil-resistant plastics like PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate)



or HDPE (High-Density Polyethylene) if you must use plastic. Avoid low-quality plastics, which are more likely to break down when in contact with essential oils. Be aware that even with high-quality plastic, prolonged storage can lead to the leaching of chemicals from the plastic into the oils, which can compromise both the safety and effectiveness of the oils.

In addition to keeping your essential oils in dark, airtight glass containers with rubber tops, store them where consistently cool and dry room temperatures are maintained and out of direct sunlight. As often as you can, avoid transporting your oils in a car, especially near the windows where sunlight and heat can affect them. Simply put, keep them away from any heat source for extended periods of time.



2. **Be extra safe with essential oils.** Besides damaging their delicate therapeutic properties, there is another very good reason to store essential oils away from heat. **SOME ARE FLAMMABLE!**

Yes, essential oils are flammable to varying degrees. Essential oils such as Tea Tree and Lavender and citrus oils such as Lemon and Orange have a flash point (the temperature at which something ignites) of about 50-60 degrees Celsius (122-140 degrees Fahrenheit), so they are classified as Class 3 Flammable Liquids (a ranking of combustible materials). So make sure you keep them away from open flames, like a candle that you may have in your massage area.

3. **Bottle essential oils yourself.** If you intend to make your own aromatherapy blends to address the various health concerns your clients may present, it is essential to understand the proper techniques for bottling pure oils.

First, buy a quantity of small, dark-colored (amber) glass bottles with airtight rubber tops not only to protect oils from ultraviolet damage but also to keep them potent and strong. Moreover, the glass should be dark to the oils.

4. **You'll need extra gear to protect your essential oils safely.** You may need to carry some essential oils with you, particularly for clients who are unable to travel to your office.

Unlike other things you can easily carry in your pocket or purse, don't rely on plastic sandwich bags to store your essential oils when you're traveling. After all, you must protect them from the sun and heat. Ideally, you'll want to carry your essential oils in proper storage cases that will easily keep your bottles accessible and neatly organized while protecting them from impact that could break the glass or affect the oils packed inside.

5. **Don't forget to cool it.** Because some oils are more sensitive to extreme variations in temperatures than others – they may be more prone to oxidation, solidification,

and potency problems – so keeping them cool is critical. It's best to store in a cool, dark place. In super hot climates, some people even keep oils in the fridge to protect them!



If you choose to keep in the fridge, and you don't have time to let an essential oil come to room temperature on its own, try holding the bottle in your hand and rub it gently to produce some heat. This process will naturally melt the solidified wax below room temperature for oils like Rose Otto. For others, however, you can let them stand for an hour or so to allow them to return to their normal temperatures and textures.

6. Be good to your carrier oils, too. Just like essential oils, warm temperatures can also affect the carrier oils you use. The best storage spot for them – at all times – is a cool and dark place. You can also store in the fridge, but make sure to allow them to return to normal temperatures by removing them from the fridge hours before you need them.

When stored in cool temperatures, Jojoba oil settles into a butter-like, solid consistency. Bring the oil to room temperature and shake the bottle once to adjust the fatty/waxy particles back to their normal oil consistency. If this happens and the oil goes back to its liquid form at room temperature, it'll assure you that the Jojoba oil is of high quality and is not extended further with cheaper oil mixtures. Using an unrefined, pure form of avocado oil as a carrier oil will also react this way or look cloudy from the fats solidifying when kept in colder temperatures. Maintain a



JOJOBA (*Simmondsia chinensis*)

Also known as *goat nut*, *deer nut*, and *pig nut*, Jojoba is extracted from the seed of a shrub found in the Western United States. Its consistency is more similar to whale oil than vegetable oil. (Wikipedia, n.d.). Jojoba is therapeutic for multiple skin and hair benefits including moisturizing, fading stretch marks, treating acne, and reducing signs of aging.

Caution: Jojoba oil is generally considered safe for most people, including children and others with sensitive skin.

consistent schedule for removing carrier oils from your refrigerator and don't heat them except with your hands.

7. Need an aromatherapy storage box? While you can purchase a separate small refrigerator to store essential oils – as you will need lots of them and in a wide variety – there are other options for storing them.

If space is at a premium, consider storing your essential oils in an inexpensive, specially designed-storage box. Keeping all of your essential oils together in one place where they can be safe from exposure to extreme variations in temperatures and heat is a great idea.

8. Keep bottles tightly sealed. Ensure that the caps on essential oil bottles are tightly sealed when not in use. Essential oils are volatile substances, meaning they can evaporate quickly when exposed to air. Keeping the bottles tightly sealed prevents evaporation and preserves their aromatic and therapeutic properties.

For oils that you use frequently, consider transferring small amounts into smaller bottles. This minimizes the exposure of the main supply to air and light each time you open the bottle, helping to extend the shelf life of the oils.



The shelf life of different essential oils, as well as the storage methods for each one of them, is important to know as a professional using these miracle oils so you can bring the greatest benefits to your clients.

Using Essential Oils Safely

Essential oils provide an amazing number of benefits, but that doesn't make them harmless. In many ways, aromatherapy is no different from other holistic therapies or even medications. All beneficial therapies – both natural and man-made – have rules governing their safety that must be followed.



1. Discuss any health issues – Always ask your clients about allergies, epilepsy, diabetes, high blood pressure, and so forth BEFORE you introduce oils into their massage. Obviously, you will be doing a thorough intake of your client before using essential oils and aromatherapy. Some oils will also react differently in certain conditions. Learning these potential changes will help you choose the safer alternative.

2. Know your oils – Know which oils will help your client's specific issues; know whether you should diffuse the oils into the air or massage them into their skin; and know whether you are using pure oils. This may seem repetitive, but it cannot be stressed enough that using adulterated essential oils increases the likelihood of an adverse response.

3. Deliberate over the dosage and dilution – Most aromatherapy oils will be between 1 and 5 percent dilutions.⁶³ If your clients are children or elderly, don't forget to further dilute the essential oils you use. For example, it will only take a single drop of Roman Chamomile or Lavender diluted in a gentle carrier base oil when using this oil on younger (or older) clients.

As I've mentioned previously, very few essential oils in their purest form can be applied directly to the skin, so diluting them is necessary. Oils such as Cinnamon,

Ginger, Black Pepper, and Peppermint have many uses and can be soothingly warm but need to be used with caution as they can also cause a burning sensation on skin.

4. Ensure pregnancy care – This suggestion bears repeating again: In my opinion, it is **not safe** to use essential oils women that are pregnant, without doing further research and study. While some experts believe essential oils in low dilutions with gentle essential oils can be used on pregnant women after the first trimester, if you're not very experienced with prenatal aromatherapy, we believe **it's better to be safe than sorry** and to wait until post-delivery. For further study and education, please consider books listed in [Appendix D](#).

In fact, after delivery, a gentle blend of Mandarin and Neroli can be used on a client to help with stretch marks. But, if a woman asks for this blend during her pregnancy, be sure to have her speak to her doctor first before starting the therapy.

5. Oils aren't for eyes or noses – In the rare case any essential oil accidentally splashes into one of your or your client's eyes, water is the worst thing you should use to remove it as it will further push the oil inside. Instead, apply a carrier or base oil (almond, coconut, or olive oil) on a soft tissue or cloth and dab the eye quickly.



This base or carrier oil will immediately absorb the essential oil, making its removal far easier.

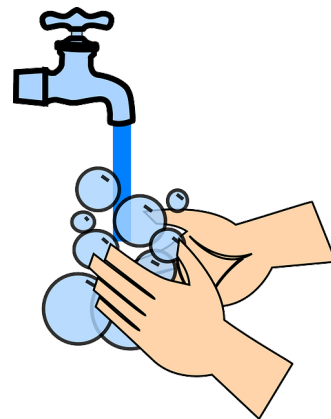
For obvious potency reasons, essential oils should only be inhaled with the nose, not applied inside it. It is not generally recommended to directly apply essential oils inside any part of the body, especially not the delicate membranes of the nose.

It is also important to ensure that no oil (diluted or undiluted) should get into the mouths or eyes of children. Keep your essential oils out of the reach of pets, too!

6. Take in the skin – Inspect the integrity of the skin before starting any therapy on it. Damaged, diseased, or inflamed skin is often more permeable to essential oils and may be more sensitive to dermal reactions.

7. Understand skin irritation – Skin will immediately react with blotches or redness if a product is irritating. If you suspect a client has sensitive skin, it's best to perform a skin test prior to doing a massage. If a client complains about minor itching or redness on his/her skin after essential oils are applied, you can either use more carrier oil to dilute the mixture further, change oils, or discontinue the massage.

When clients show severe sensitivities and/or reactions to pure essential oils, including redness, burning and/or pain, or hives (tiny blisters), stop the massage immediately and recommend that your client see their doctor or a healthcare provider as soon as possible. If the reaction is causing breathing issues, swelling, or any other sign of severe distress, seek emergency help immediately. These types of reactions could be an indication of toxicity in the body and, you should recommend your client see someone who can help them detoxify their system using natural therapies like herbal and nutritional products.



8. Photosensitization – Citrus-based oils (Grapefruit, Lemon, Orange, Neroli, Bergamot, etc.) should be used with caution, as they can enhance the sensitivity of the skin to sunlight. **When citrus is applied to the skin, skin can be sensitive to sunlight for 12-72 hours.**

9. Wash your hands – Be sure to wash your hands after every massage therapy session, especially when you're using essential oils. Remember that you're absorbing everything that you're applying to someone else.

10. Is it ever safe to use essential oils without diluting them? Seldom. Applying essential oils directly to the skin without diluting them with a carrier or base oil is known as an undiluted or "neat" application. A very limited number of oils are considered safe enough to use undiluted, as they are gentler than the rest. Only specific situations permit the application of undiluted oils, and they are only for a specific localized area and only to address acute conditions with targeted treatments. Examples are Tea Tree and Lavender, which are gentler in nature and considered safe if you only use **one drop** for a specific purpose.

For instance, if you are personally using Tea Tree for acne, apply one drop to the acne spot directly and rub it in well to let the skin absorb it. Similarly, if you want to eliminate the itching from a mosquito bite, a single drop of Lavender will do the trick.

Also, it's important to remember that what works for one client may not work for others. Children, the elderly, and others may have especially sensitive skin and could have a reaction to undiluted oils.

If you are using undiluted essential oil on a client for the first time, do a patch test first on a small skin area (on the leg or hand but not the face). Only when you are satisfied with the results should you move ahead with a direct application.

Chapter 6

The Do's and Don'ts of Aromatherapy

By now, you're beginning to realize how versatile and beneficial essential oils and aromatherapy can be in promoting good health, and you have a better understanding of how to use aromatherapy in your massage practice. So, let's review some of the guidelines again.

DO: Think Safety First When Using Essential Oils

Obviously, you'll need to get to know and understand your clients before you incorporate the use of essential oils into the massage. Know their health issues and if they have special considerations (sensitive skin, allergies, pregnancy, etc.). Know the risks and side effects of each of the oils you use.

Dilute oils appropriately and do skin tests to ensure safety. Follow precautions when using citrus or warming/cooling oils. Wash your hands after giving an aromatherapy massage.

Remember that all oils are flammable and should not be allowed near heat.

DON'T: Drizzle Oils

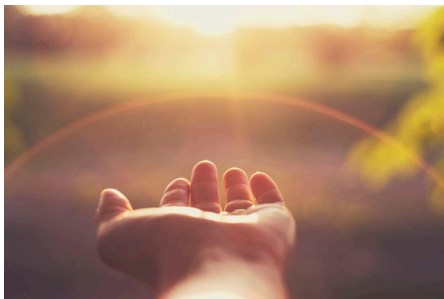
Never splash essential oils on your skin or anyone else's! Oils are dispensed one drop at a time. They are very potent and powerful, and a little goes a long way!



Using oils by the drop is not only a safety precaution, but pure essential oils can be quite a financial investment, and you don't want to be wasteful.

DO: Learn All You Can

We'll say it again. Aromatherapy is both an art and a science. The best way to get the creative parts right is to know the scientific parts. Fortunately, many practicing aromatherapists who have experimented and practiced with essential oil blends have published their research and synergies. You can benefit from this information as it is readily available. While this CE course is a good start, it certainly shouldn't be your only source of information about essential oils and aromatherapy. Learning the uses, benefits, contraindications, dilution ratios, and volatility of each essential oil, as well as the legalities and statutes that govern the use of treating massage clients with aromatherapy, is an important commitment to your practice and your clients. Furthermore, there is no replacement for the knowledge gained hands-on. See [Appendix D](#) for reference guides and [Appendix F](#) for safe and reputable essential oil companies.



DON'T: Blindly Trust "Experts"

Do not trust just anyone who says they are an expert in essential oils or are certified as an aromatherapist. Do the research for yourself and ask questions. You should know that there currently is no national certification or licensing requirement established for aromatherapy. No national regulatory body will mandate or enforce aromatherapists' practices or anyone claiming to be an expert. Some states do have regulations in place, such as not treating children under two years of age or requiring practitioners to work with a licensed physician. There are also legal statutes to investigate and *enforce disciplinary actions against alternative health care practitioners for violations of prohibited conduct.*⁶⁴

Conversely, there are schools and groups that do offer instruction and certifications that can set you apart from other massage therapists. If you decide to pursue aromatherapy professionally, you should consider joining the [National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy \(NAHA\)](#). NAHA is a nonprofit organization that has established education guidelines for aromatherapy training programs.⁶⁵ [The](#)

[Alliance of International Aromatherapists \(AIA\)](#) is another respected aromatherapy education provider.



DO: Research Where Your Oils Come From

Be very conscientious about where you source your oils from, ensuring you only get pure, high-quality essential oils. Investigate each seller, their extraction process, their farms, etc. Refer to the purchasing guidelines mentioned in [Appendix F](#) for a list of trusted companies to purchase oils from. It is important to remember that the success of you using essential oils on your massage clients will be greatly impacted by your investment in quality essential oils.

DON'T: Get Taken Advantage Of:

It is never a good idea to purchase essential oils from street-fair vendors, limited-time events, or craft shows. These people are “familiar” with the limited knowledge of beginners just starting to learn about oils, and unfortunately, they can be very convincing to encourage you to purchase from them – especially because they know there’s no way you can seek recourse against them afterward if you are not satisfied with the products.

DO: Know the Difference between Synthetic vs. Pure

Learn to compare when purchasing essential oils. Know the exact botanical name of the plant for the oil you’re looking for. Give it a sniff test and see how you feel. Know what’s on the label, what price the oil you’re seeking sells for, and in what quantities. Having knowledge BEFORE you purchase will make you a BETTER purchaser!

DON'T: Get Tricked or Settle for Perfume Oils

Remember to watch out for words on their website, labels, and all advertising material such as “blend,” “fragrance,” “perfume,” or “nature identical.” These words indicate that the product isn’t pure. Remember that it is a very common practice for suppliers to dilute the pure essential oils with other oils, substances, and even alcohol to make a bigger profit.

Do not confuse perfume oils with essential oils. Purchasing perfume oils to save a little money or thinking you can attain the same health benefits will not serve you or your clients. Perfume oils do not contain any natural qualities or therapeutic benefits like pure essential oils do. Even if you only want to buy essential oils for sheer enjoyment, it is best to stick to the real, pure oils. Even if only inhaled, true essential oils can offer great health benefits, unlike any other aromatic oil.

DO: Choose Your Essential Oils Wisely

Each pure essential oil has valuable healing properties. Learn the purposes for each oil that you use and choose the correct oils for the type of healing desired. If you are just starting to learn about essential oils, we suggest you begin by learning the basics about two or three of the safest go-to oils (such as Lavender, Peppermint and Chamomile). Experiment with these--along with blending techniques--on yourself in your home before working with massage clients or even adding them to your list of oils. Then, add a few more oils to your repertoire as you gain experience.

[Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) has a list of many of the essential oils mentioned in this e-book. We encourage you to use it as a quick reference to the scent type and some common uses of the oils. As you learn to work with a few versatile oils, you'll build up the knowledge of what works best for different health ailments.

DON'T Buy Essential Oils You Won't Use

Besides the financial outlay, if you don't know the purpose of an essential oil or feel uncomfortable using a specific oil, don't purchase it. This also holds true for any oils you personally dislike the smell of or the memories associated with that smell.

DO: Store Essential Oils Properly

Because essential oils are delicate and have been sourced ever so carefully, protect them properly in dark glass bottles away from heat and sunlight to ensure their long-term potency. Following the right storage method will ensure no therapeutic properties of the essential oils are lost.

Chapter 7

Cautions & Contraindications

Aromatherapy and the use of essential oils can enhance massage therapy sessions, but it is crucial to understand the potential risks, dangers, and contraindications associated with their use. Just because they are natural (and hopefully pure oils!), doesn't mean you can just use them recklessly...they are truly plant "medicines" and should be respected.

Psychological effects of essential oils should not be overlooked, as aromas can evoke strong emotional responses that may not always be positive. For example, a particular scent might remind a client of past trauma.

Discussing the choice of essential oils with the client and obtaining consent is important to ensure a positive experience.



Certain populations of people require special consideration when using essential oils. Pregnant women, children under the age of six, and older clients with thinner, more sensitive skin may also be more susceptible to adverse reactions. Clients with medical conditions such as high blood pressure or epilepsy should avoid certain oils. So, while essential oils are beneficial for many therapeutic applications, users need to be aware of the risks to ensure safety and avoid adverse reactions.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Certain essential oils can have strong effects on the body and may not be safe for pregnant or breastfeeding women. Oils such as Sage, Rosemary, and Basil may stimulate uterine contractions, while Chamomile should be avoided during pregnancy. Chamomile can act like estrogen in the body, so women with a history of hormone-sensitive cancers should consult their doctor before using, and pregnant women should generally avoid Chamomile essential oil due to the risk of miscarriage.⁶⁶ Essential oils like Peppermint and Eucalyptus can reduce milk supply and should be used with caution during breastfeeding.



Young Children and Babies

Essential oils are highly concentrated and can be too potent for young children and babies. Oils like Eucalyptus and Peppermint contain compounds that can cause a distinct cooling effect that may be unpleasant to

little ones. Moreover, Eucalyptus contains a component called Eucalyptol (also called 1,8 -cineole) that can cause breathing difficulties in children under six years old.

It's recommended to use only mild essential oils, such as Chamomile and Lavender, and in very diluted forms for young children.

Allergies and Sensitivities

Individuals with allergies or sensitive skin may react adversely to certain essential oils. Oils like Tea Tree, Cinnamon, and Clove are known to be more likely to cause skin irritation or allergic reactions. A patch test should be performed before using any essential oil topically to check for sensitivity.

Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders

Certain essential oils can trigger seizures in individuals with epilepsy or other seizure disorders. Oils such as Rosemary, Fennel, Sage, and Eucalyptus are known to potentially induce seizures and should be avoided by individuals with these conditions.

High Blood Pressure

Some essential oils can increase blood pressure and should be avoided by individuals with hypertension. Oils like Rosemary, Sage, and Thyme have stimulating properties that can elevate blood pressure levels.

Photosensitivity



Certain citrus essential oils, such as Bergamot, Grapefruit, Lemon, and Lime, can cause photosensitivity, leading to skin irritation or burns when exposed to sunlight. It is advised to avoid sun exposure for at least 12 hours after applying these oils to the skin.

Kidney and Liver Conditions

Individuals with kidney or liver conditions should use essential oils with caution, as these organs are involved in metabolizing and excreting substances from the body. Oils like Juniper and Cinnamon can be taxing on the kidneys and liver and should be used sparingly.

Medication Interactions

Essential oils can interact with certain medications, either enhancing or inhibiting their effects. For example, oils like Grapefruit can interfere with the metabolism of various medications by inhibiting liver enzymes. It is important to consult with a healthcare provider before using essential oils if you or your clients are taking prescription medications.

By understanding and respecting these precautions, you can safely incorporate essential oils into your life and the lives of your clients as part of a health and wellness routine.

Rules and Ethics

There are some absolute rules to follow when using essential oils in massage therapy. Undiluted oils should never be applied directly to the skin, and oils should not be used near sensitive areas such as the eyes, inside the ears or nose, or on mucous membranes. Essential oils should never be ingested unless under the guidance of a qualified Certified Aromatherapist. It is also important to avoid applying oils to broken or irritated skin and to be vigilant about health conditions or situations where certain oils are contraindicated, such as pregnancy, epilepsy, or specific allergies.

Ethical and professional considerations are also paramount when incorporating aromatherapy into massage therapy. Discussing the intended use of essential oils with clients and obtaining explicit consent is critical. It is also a good practice to document the type of oils used, dilution ratios, and the client's response in their treatment notes.

Finally, being prepared for emergencies is essential. Knowing how to respond to adverse reactions, such as washing off oils with a carrier oil (not water) in case of skin irritation, can help manage minor issues. For severe reactions, such as difficulty breathing or a widespread rash, immediate medical assistance should be sought. By adhering to these guidelines and being mindful of contraindications, massage therapists can safely and effectively incorporate aromatherapy into their practice while minimizing risks to clients.

As a Licensed Massage Therapist, it's essential to recognize that this e-book class on aromatherapy and the use of essential oils in massage therapy is merely a foundational introduction to the subject. While it provides a solid starting point for understanding the basics of aromatherapy and essential oil applications, it is by no means an exhaustive or comprehensive guide.

As a professional in the field, it is your responsibility to conduct thorough research and due diligence to ensure that you are using essential oils safely and effectively in your practice. This includes staying up-to-date on the latest research, guidelines, and best practices in the field of aromatherapy.

To support your ongoing education and professional development, I have compiled a list of reference guides in [Appendix D](#), which includes the highly regarded book "Essential Oil Safety". This authoritative resource provides in-depth, technical information on the safe use and application of essential oils, including detailed guidance on potential contraindications, interactions, and other critical safety considerations.

It is crucial that you consult these reference materials and continue to expand your knowledge and understanding of aromatherapy and essential oil therapy. By doing so, you will be able to provide the highest level of care and service to your clients, while also minimizing the risk of adverse reactions or other potential issues. Remember, your professional reputation and the well-being of your clients depend on your commitment to ongoing education and responsible practice.

Chapter 8

Essential Oils for Health and Healing in Your Massage Practice

Throughout the earlier chapters of this course, you've learned a lot of practical information about essential oils – their history, the great differences in manufacturing pure oils versus synthetics, storing and using them safely, and studying them through the prism of wellness. Now, it's time to incorporate them into your massage practice.

Making a Healthy Connection

If you enjoy building relationships and developing bonds with your clients, integrating pure essential oils via aromatherapy into your massage practice will enhance that experience. Why? Because massage therapy is a very popular healing and stress relief modality and learning how to use aromatherapy effectively will set you apart from your competition.

Normally, a new client is ushered into a massage therapy room with a therapist who may spend a couple of minutes at most assessing their needs.



Where don't you feel comfortable getting touched? And *Do you have any special needs or areas that require extra attention?* are the two most common and, sometimes, only questions asked.

Although time is of the essence – hopefully, you've got another massage scheduled right after this client – rushing through a quick chat, especially when you're using essential oils, is a big mistake. If you don't take the extra time to really get to know your client, you're missing out on a valuable opportunity to make a connection and build a long-term relationship.

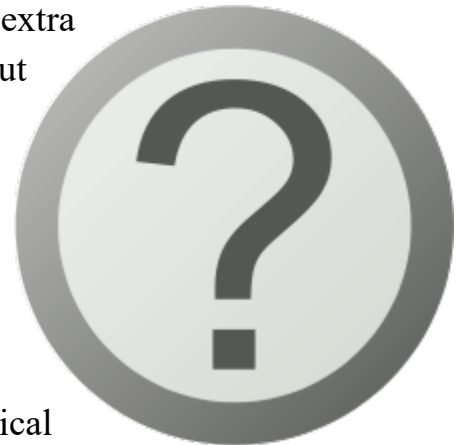
We're not talking about a lot of extra time, but give yourself a few extra minutes to probe more deeply and ask your clients general questions like these.

- Do you have any ongoing physical or psychological issues that might be creating extra stress?
- Are you being treated for any specific conditions?
- Are you experiencing pain (where and for how long)?
- Do you suffer from headaches or insomnia?
- Are you allergic to any specific substances or scents?

Asking general questions like these not only gives you insight into the best treatments for your client but can make them feel like you care about them as a person and that you want to provide the best possible care.

For example, if a client says they're having *some challenges*, a great response from you is, *Tell me more*. This allows her/him to elaborate (if they choose) and not give you just one-word answers.

During this quick Q&A, if a client discusses a physical illness, ask her/him if they have tried some other natural healing methods like acupuncture or homeopathy. This will give you a clue about their level of open-mindedness and would be a great time to introduce them to essential oils.



The Right Strokes

Before the session begins, we suggest letting your clients inhale a sample of the essential oil (or blend) you've chosen based on the conditions they've discussed to ensure they're 100 percent comfortable with it. We suggest that clients take at least three deep breaths to fully inhale the essential oil and experience its benefits.

Using gliding Effleurage strokes is one of the best ways to apply and distribute the carrier oil and essential oil combination while giving a massage. These strokes are noninvasive and gently warm up the muscles prior to any deep tissue work. Hint: Your best choice among essential oils is Lavender, as it is the gentlest oil to work with gentle Effleurage strokes.

Aromatherapy can also be given via shorter, more circular Petrissage strokes, which are ideal for clients who want to treat certain areas that are causing them discomfort. Massaging trigger points and applying pressure therapy with fingers, elbows, and thumbs will help your clients by reaching deep into their nerves, tendons, ligaments, and muscles.

As you already know, some clients experience more tension in their shoulder and neck areas, while others may experience more pain in the lower back. Using essential oils with Petrissage strokes is best for soothing the affected muscles in these problem areas while simultaneously promoting serenity and relaxation.



The Three Dimensions of Wellness

Another great approach for using essential oils effectively within your massage practice is to consider the three connected but different dimensions of wellness. We touched on this topic at the beginning of this e-book, but now that you have a deeper understanding of essential oils, let's expand on the value they can add beyond your client's massage to include your and their everyday life.

Restore Wellness

Nourish Wellness

Protect Wellness

Restore Wellness

Restoring wellness and energy, especially if your client has been suffering from an illness or injury, is critical. Try these methods at home with your own family and friends, and then share your experience with your clients so they realize you practice what you preach.



1. **Burns, bug bites and bee stings:** Applying diluted Lavender on the affected area can speed up healing and can even help get rid of pain/itching. This same oil can be used in an aromatic diffuser for aromatherapy to speed up healing.
2. **Itch relief:** Blend a few drops of Lavender with a 30 ml unscented lotion, a carrier oil, or aloe vera gel. Apply this mixture to the affected area and enjoy immediate relief from itchy skin.
3. **Headaches:** Inhaling a mix of Lavender and Peppermint– separately or as a combination – can be very helpful in getting rid of headaches and facilitating relaxation. If you prefer the more direct approach, combine three drops of Peppermint, five drops of Lavender, and 30 ml of fractionated coconut oil, then apply this mixture to the temples (keep away from eye area) and the back of the neck and massage it. (Peppermint may not be suitable for every skin type, as using too much can create a burning sensation on the skin. Just to be safe, start with only 1-2 drops on a small area and experiment first.)
4. **Nausea:** If your clients complain about nausea, aromatherapy can help them navigate away from that nasty feeling. To immediately help your client (or yourself) from feeling nauseated try and inhale Peppermint essential oil.
5. **Swelling and bruising:** When an injury first happens, combine Lavender and Peppermint essential oil (3-5 drops each) and mix them with a carrier oil or an unscented lotion. Apply that mixture several times on the affected area of swelling or bruising. It will help the area to heal more quickly.
6. **Coughing and sinus problems:** Eucalyptus can greatly help you fight off sinus problems and coughs, as this oil has the powerful ability to open airways and relieve congestion. Add a few drops of Eucalyptus oil in a diffuser or steaming water. Inhale and allow the nasal passage to clear.
7. **Wounds and Bruises:** Essential oils can be successfully used as hot compresses to treat wounds and bruises. Mix five drops of Frankincense with four drops of Lavender, then combine the oils with 4 ounces of hot water. Soak a soft cloth in the mixture and gently apply it to the affected area for natural pain relief.



NOURISH

Wellness



Nourishing wellness and vital energy requires the daily use of beneficial essential oils for everyday chronic health challenges.

1. **Relaxation:** Apart from aromatherapy massage, you and your clients may be looking for new and more effective relaxation techniques using essential oils. For one, you can apply one drop of Lavender on a tissue or cotton ball and place it next to your pillow before going to sleep. Or, mix Lavender (5 drops) with 1 ounce of Himalayan pink salt or Epsom salt for a relaxing bath after a strenuous workout routine or before bedtime.
2. **Uplifting:** Because you or a client may be interested in getting emotional relief, consider essential oils like Sweet Orange that has the ability to uplift one's emotions. Even outside of their massage session, your clients can use these oils to lift their spirits. Here's an example. Combine three drops of Sweet Orange with three drops of Lavender and add it to an unscented, skin-friendly lotion (30 ml) to create an uplifting face and hand lotion.
3. **Stress:** A single drop of Lavender can go a long way toward helping relieve stress. Just drip a drop of Lavender oil with a small amount of carrier oil in your palm and rub your hands together. Place your hands over your nose and cup them to prevent the aroma from escaping. Take deep breaths and let the amazing smell relieve your stressed-out emotions or senses.
4. **Circulation:** You can boost circulation merely by adding ten drops of Grapefruit oil mixed with Epsom salts and add to a warm bath to enjoy a nice soak.



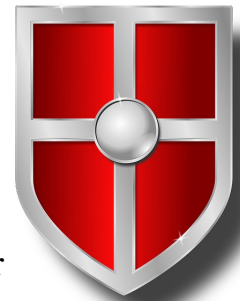
Protect Wellness

Protecting wellness means protecting your body and your clients from direct health threats. Fortunately, essential oils are excellent, non-toxic products that are naturally blessed with various antimicrobial properties that protect wellness in many ways.

1. **Hand sanitizer:** Whether you want to make it for yourself or recommend it to your clients, essential oils can be used to create a healthy hand sanitizer that fights germs (bacteria, viruses, etc.). Combine five drops each of Sweet Orange, Tea Tree, and Peppermint with aloe vera gel (30 ml) in a dispensable bottle. You can change the number of drops for each oil per your preference but don't exceed 20 drops each. Since you're diluting the essential oils a lot, using a plastic bottle for this purpose will be OK. Just remember to aim for a BPA-free plastic bottle (or glass if you prefer).
2. **Body care:** Your skin is the outer barrier of your body that protects you from sun rays, germs, and toxic substances. If you take care of your skin, it'll take care of you.

You're probably aware that essential oils have become the primary ingredient in many cosmetics and natural beauty products. Do you still need to make sure the oils haven't been "tainted" in these cosmetics? Yes! Always read the labels and know what to look for! There are a number of body care recipes that include essential oils to help with aging, skin tone, firmness, elasticity, sun damage, chapping, rashes, eczema, acne, and more. CAUTION: The specific oils used will depend on the state of the skin.

3. **Cleaning spray:** What's better than having your own natural, essential oil cleaning spray? Use a small spray bottle and combine a couple of ounces of water with about 1/3 as much vinegar. Add ten drops of Sweet Orange and five drops each of Peppermint and Tea Tree. Shake to combine, and your cleaning spray will be ready.
4. **Immunity Boost:** Inhaling or diffusing Lavender and Sweet Orange can have strong effects on the immune system, as well as keeping stress at bay while at work, home, or traveling. Strong immune systems are the body's defense against damaging bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi, etc.
5. **Insect control:** There are several essential oils you or your clients can use to keep pests away from your massage office or home without using pesticides. Combine two cups of water with one tablespoon of dish soap in a spray bottle, then add ten drops of Peppermint, Sweet Orange, or Tea Tree (or a combination of them) to this mixture. Shake the bottle, then spray this mixture near the windows and doors or any other area where the insects invade your space.



Peppermint is also wonderful for driving away insects from your garden and plants. For every ounce of water, use one drop of Peppermint, then spray the mixture on your plants once every week to keep them clean from insects and pests.



Adding Services to Your Massage Therapy Practice

Once you've become more comfortable with using essential oils and aromatherapy in your massage therapy practice, you'll want to expand the number and scope of services you offer to your clients.

The types of services listed below will give you a good idea of how you can expand your massage therapy practice. The more customizable your services are, the better your growth will be. Just make sure you are very clear about the different costs based on the time involved in providing these services to your clients.

Warm Pack: Because some clients may want deeper work done on their joints and muscles, it may be advantageous to recommend a warm pack to achieve increased muscle relaxation.

Heating the affected area is one of the most effective ways to relieve tired and sore muscles because heat dilates the blood vessels of the muscles surrounding the heated area. The process increases the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the muscles, helping heal the sore tissue and flush out the injured debris.⁶⁷ Adding pure essential oils to the mix enhances the overall impact by penetrating deeper into the joints and muscles and offering greater healing to your clients.

Before you start providing heat packs, be sure you have all of the equipment and tools you need, including access to warm (but not extremely hot) water and extra cloths.

Soak cloths in warm water, wring them, and then apply the diluted essential oil on the affected area with gentle hands. Place warm towels over all affected areas and cover them up for at least 20-30 minutes.

Be sure to maintain normal temperatures in the massage room so that the towel does not become too cold too soon. Also, communicate with the client and remove the hot towel immediately if he/she complains about any discomfort.



Cold Pack: This service provides greater, more suitable relief to clients with a sprain or injury. If your list of services already includes exercise or sports massage, you'll probably have lots of cold packs available. But if you are planning to offer cold pack services with essential oils, we advise keeping a few extra available. Ice helps relieve pain and prevent swelling by decreasing blood flow to the area.

In addition to cold packs, you can even use frozen bags of corn or peas if you're in a pinch. Follow the same directions as warm packs to use cold packs. Apply essential oil on the affected area and cover it up with a cold pack. Keep the cold pack on the affected area for a few minutes making sure to check with the client that it's not TOO cold; be sure to add an extra towel or cloth so tissue damage does not occur.

Body Wraps: If you have worked in a spa environment, you're likely aware of the body wrap phenomenon used by more massage therapists for various health challenges, including weight loss and body cleansing.

As the name suggests, this service revolves around enveloping the body in plastic wrap and then covering the skin with cloths, towels, or ace bandages. Later, heat is applied, allowing the body to expel toxins and excess water, resulting in detoxification and significant weight loss, according to reports. This treatment is particularly beneficial when pure essential oils are added to the process.

As this concept has evolved with time, clay, seaweed, algae, and mud wraps have been added to the mix of body wrap applications in spas and salons. This is an effective way to eliminate toxins in the body, expel excessive water retention, and achieve substantial weight loss. After the seaweed or mud is washed away, creams and lotions are applied to the body.

If you utilize specialty wraps in your practice, don't be afraid to incorporate essential oils into that therapy. Essential oils added to mud wraps instantly boost the therapeutic value of the whole session. Skipping lotions and creams in favor of applying essential oils after removing mud gives your client an even greater boost.

Cypress, Lemongrass, Lemon, and Grapefruit are the most common essential oils used for body wraps.

An important tip: Remind clients to drink lots of water before (and after!) having a wrap, as their body will need it to remove toxins.

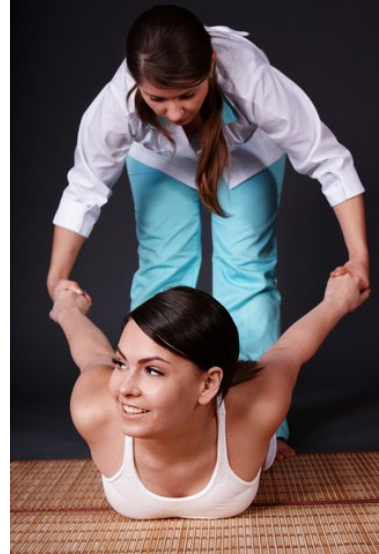
Scrubs and Salt Glows: Salt glows, and scrubs contain a form of sugar, salt, or even coffee bean chunks – usually combined with essential oils – that exfoliate the skin, leaving your client with smoother, more hydrated skin.

In some cases, the scrub is combined with a Swedish massage or a mud wrap. It is very easy to add pure essential oils to these scrubs as they not only smell great but also have amazing benefits that enhance the overall experience of body scrubs.



Although Citrus or Lavender essential oils are often used in scrubs, be sure to keep the needs of your client in mind. For example, if your client complains about her/his cellulite, adding Grapefruit to your scrub may be more appropriate, and pay closer attention to the problem areas. Or, if your client is concerned about flaky, dry skin, Sandalwood or Geranium may be better choices.

Thai Massage: Sometimes called a “yoga massage” because clients lay on a yoga mat or on the floor, the Thai massage is great for removing energy blockages that inhibit the body's natural harmonizing balance. This technique uses stretches and some gentle rocking movements to open up and stretch the muscles, then gently compresses problem areas on the body using the palms, thumbs, knees, elbows, and even feet.



Unlike most massage therapies, clients typically wear clothing during a Thai massage, but that doesn't prevent you from using pure essential oils. Pick the most relaxing essential oil – Geranium is an excellent choice for its energy alignment properties – and apply it on the bottom of the feet before starting the stretching routine and afterward.

Deep Tissue Massage: Not every type of massage addresses the deep tissues, and not all clients are up for a deep tissue massage (or deep trigger point therapy techniques) that help to deeply work on muscles and break up adhesions at the connective tissue and muscle attachments of the body.

However, a growing number of potential clients may be suffering from spasms, muscle tension, fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, and chronic long-standing pain. For those who are experiencing these types of excruciating deep muscle pain, there's nothing better than a deep tissue aromatherapy massage to relieve those aches and restore flexibility.

Some excellent essential oils you can use to compliment any deep tissue massage are Marjoram, Lemongrass, Copaiba, and Black Pepper.

Lymphatic Drainage Massage: As the name suggests, lymphatic drainage massage is beneficial for stimulating and cleansing the lymphatic system, a complex network of ducts and vessels whose primary job is removing toxins from our body and boosting our immune system.

This form of massage involves using extremely light, sequenced strokes made in the direction of lymph flow, not only to remove toxins from the body but to relieve chronic inflammation, fluid retention, and pain. This "pumping" directs the toxins via the lymphatic system to move out of the body.



You can add essential oils to this specific massage as well. There are a number of amazing pure essential oils that can be used for the lymphatic system. Some of the best are Helichrysum, Lemon, Grapefruit and Geranium.

Sports Massage: This massage – focused on working out stiff, tense muscles and stretching – is specifically helpful for sports athletes as well as exercise enthusiasts who require deep tissue healing. However, sports massage should not be confused with a more generalized relaxing or Swedish massage. Sports massage typically is much deeper work on the muscles. Using essential oils like Marjoram, Lavender, Peppermint and Lemongrass for a sports massage will help to penetrate deeply into muscles and ease inflammation.

Shiatsu Massage: Developed in Japan, the Shiatsu massage is similar to the Thai massage in that both support the natural flow of energy – known as *chi* or *qi* – by eliminating blockages.

The main purpose behind introducing this massage is to help the natural energy of the body to flow freely without any blockage. The traditional word for natural Shiatsu involves the rhythmic movement of using the palm, finger, and thumb to identify and treat pressure points, which generally correspond with the meridian points of the body.

Also, like the Thai massage, this massage is performed on the floor or a low table, and clients usually don't remove their clothes.

For aromatherapy, always consider the client's scent preferences and any possible sensitivities or allergies. Align the essential oil choice with the specific needs and goals of the Shiatsu session, whether it's for relaxation, pain relief, or energy balancing. You can also blend essential oils to create a customized experience. For example, mixing lavender and peppermint can provide both relaxation and invigoration, ideal for a balanced Shiatsu session.

Hot Stone Massage: This very common massage treatment, known for its restorative properties, naturally promotes a deep state of relaxation and relieves stress with the help of black volcanic stones (smooth basalt stones) of different sizes that are heated and then rubbed on the body and placed in strategic positions.

Stones are positioned along the leg or spine to adjust for relaxation and the amount of heating. The heat stored in these stones is extremely powerful and greatly helps with soothing pains and deep aches.

Start this massage with your client's feet, particularly if you're new to using essential oils.

Apply a gentle essential oil – like Lavender – then place the stone on the foot and wrap it up to keep the heat in. This sequence is critical, as it will push the oils deep



down into the muscles and offer great relaxation, making your hot stone massage therapy session more effective.

If your client is complaining about discomfort in her/his back or spine, strategically place the stones along the spine and allow the heat to penetrate deeply inside the body for amazing benefits.

Healing Energy/Reiki: If you're not familiar with this Japanese specialty, Reiki is a great alternative therapy in which a practitioner can redirect energy from his/her body to a client to foster the release of blocked energy, restore their natural balance, and promote improved healing.

Typically, Reiki is applied when a client is dressed, and it can be an amazing way to help your clients relieve stress.

Essential oils like Lavender, Frankincense, Ylang Ylang, and Sandalwood are perfect for Reiki, as they have a vibrant frequency and are highly energetic, thus complementing this massage technique.

Following Up with Your Client

Now that your client's massage session is over, it doesn't mean your work is done. Hopefully, you're in the company of one very relaxed, pain-free client, but you can't assume that. Pay attention. Look at their body language... Do they look relaxed?

Ask your client if any areas of tension or special issues he/she reported before the massage has eased and if he/she is feeling better. During the intake phase, you hopefully asked them to rate their pain on a scale of 1-10. Now, after the massage, is a great time to find out where their pain level is now. If it was an 8 before, but now a 6, that's a big change, but they could be disappointed that it's not zero! This is the time to be very communicative with them and help them to understand and acknowledge the difference in their pain level and also set up another session, so progress can continue to be made.

If you used essential oils during the massage, now is the time to ask them for feedback. Did they enjoy the smell? Did it make them feel better?

These questions may sound a bit too obvious, but their answers help them get in touch with how they feel right now. Unfortunately, most people feel so much discomfort that they may not be able to discern if their bodies feel and look better. It's up to you as their massage therapist to point out those differences, for example, in the way they're standing or walking. Often, when you point this out, they realize it's true, and this is a wonderful moment for them.

Be sure to tell them you'd like another opportunity to work with them to fine-tune their massage therapy. Mentioning you would love to have another session with them will lay the groundwork for a continued relationship. And, if you sense they have had a positive experience, it's a great time to schedule their next appointment or mention that you appreciate referrals.

You may find it helpful to take a moment before you see the next client and make a record of exactly which oils you used on this client. Record what the client may have said was bothering them and the purpose of your oil choices (relaxation, pain, etc.). This is especially helpful when they return and request a repeat treatment!

Finally, following up with them with a phone call or text is a wonderful way (again) to let them know you care. It keeps you on their mind and gives you the opportunity to tell them of any specials you have coming up or anything new about your therapy practice you want to share with them.

Again, be sure to ask if they have friends or family that could benefit from your services. This is relationship-building and bonding at its finest.

Have you heard the popular phrase; *The fortune is in the follow-up?* I believe this to be true, so developing a relationship and caring attitude with your clients will ensure your place in their lives. They will come to you when they are stressed and turn to you for advice if they have a healing challenge and need help.



Final Word

In summary, I hope you have a better appreciation for incorporating pure essential oils for aromatherapy in your massage therapy practice and the benefits they can offer you and your clients. Ancient Egyptian healers, down to today's most accomplished aromatherapists, have used essential oils to bring balance to emotions, healing to the body, and enhanced function and clarity to the mind.



All of us are involved in the natural healing field to help others and to promote health in a natural environment. Educating people about the benefits of massage therapy utilizing aromatherapy can enhance their well-being and enlighten them about integrative and natural healing methodologies.

Good luck and be well!

Please be sure to return to your Student Dashboard to take your assessment and get your Certificate of Completion!



Appendix A—Oils Alphabetically & Uses

Essential Oil	Type of Scent	Therapeutic Uses
Bergamot	Citrusy, light	Calm. Great for tension.
Black Pepper	Spicy and strong	Energize. Relieve anxiety.
Cedarwood	Warm, woody	Calm. Alleviate stress. Improve mental clarity.
Chamomile	Woody, fruity	Calm. Relieve anxiety, stress, and tension. Heal skin. Reduce pain. Better digestion.
Cinnamon	Spicy, sweet	Energize. Antimicrobial. Ant repellent
Citronella	Citrusy, lemon	Energize. Repel Insects. Help digestion, fevers.
Cypress	Woody, light	Energize. Uplift emotions. Reduce cellulite.
Clary Sage	Spicy, sweet	Calm. Treat muscle fatigue, tame tension, uplift emotions and mood. Improve sleep. Antiseptic. As an aphrodisiac.
Eucalyptus	Herbal, Camphorous	Energize. Reduce congestion. Improve mental clarity. Relieve pain.
Frankincense	Spicy, sweet	Energize. Cognitive function. Heal wounds. Help aging skin.
Geranium	Spicy, floral	Calm. Maintain emotional balance. Reduce tension and stress. Help skin, cold sores and cellulite. Insect repellent.
Ginger	Spicy, strong	Energize. Relieve nausea and pain. Improve mental clarity. Analgesic. Skin sores.
Grapefruit	Citrusy	Energize. Improve mood, memory and mental clarity. Boost immunity and circulation. Help skin. Reduce cellulite.
Helichrysum	Woody	Calm. Heal and regenerate skin. As an anti-allergenic, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic.

Juniper	Woody, fruit, fresh	Energize. Help water retention and obesity.
Lemon	Citrusy, sweet	Energize. Antibacterial. Boost Immune. Reduce stress and depression. Alleviate migraines. As a cleanser. Aids digestion
Lemongrass	Citrusy, light	Energize. Improve mental clarity. Uplift emotions and mood. Acne, cellulite, and tone skin. Insect repellent. Aids digestion.
Lavender	Floral	Calm. Reduce stress, pain, headaches, and inflammation. Improves sleep. Strengthen immunity, soothe skin and reduce cellulite.
Marjoram	Herbal, spicy	Calm. Warm and comforting, Relaxes muscles.
Neroli	Floral, heavy	Calm. Uplift mood. Antiseptic. Improve sleep. Smooth skin and stretchmarks.
Patchouli	Earthy, musky	Calm. Grounding. Helps skin. controls appetite.
Peppermint	Herbal, menthol	Energize. Improve concentration. Alleviate headaches, migraines, and stress. Analgesic, cooling, and anti-inflammatory. Decongestant.
Rose Otto	Floral	Calming. Harmonize mind. Treat anxiety
Rosemary	Herbal, menthol	Energize. Antimicrobial. Reduce cellulite, relax tight muscles, treat mental fatigue, improve memory.
Sandalwood	Woody, floral, spicy, and earthy	Calm. Reduce stress. As an aphrodisiac and improve sleep. Fight cold sores and flaky skin.
Sweet Orange	Citrusy, sweet	Energize. Uplift mood. Antimicrobial and strengthen immunity. Anti-anxiety. Detoxify.
Tea Tree	Camphorous	Energize. Antiviral, anti-fungal and antibacterial. Treat skin and acne.
Vetiver	Woody	Calm. Treat mental and physical fatigue.
Ylang Ylang	Floral	Calm. Reduce tension and improve sleep.

Appendix B—Oils by Purpose

Stress Relieving, Relaxation, & Sleep

- Lavender
- Chamomile
- Bergamot
- Ylang Ylang
- Frankincense
- Clary Sage
- Rose
- Vetiver
- Cedarwood
- Sandalwood
- Neroli
- Marjoram

Mental Clarity + Focus

- Peppermint
- Rosemary
- Basil
- Helichrysum
- Cedarwood
- Vetiver
- Grapefruit
- Lemon
- Lemongrass
- Clary Sage
- Frankincense
- Juniper

Energy Boosting

- Lemon
- Orange
- Grapefruit
- Eucalyptus
- Basil
- Peppermint
- Ginger
- Rosemary
- Spearmint

Muscle Relaxers

- Peppermint
- Eucalyptus
- Chamomile
- Lavender
- Marjoram
- Rosemary
- Ginger
- Black pepper

Appendix C—How to Use a Carrier Oil

When diluting essential oils for safe topical use, carrier oils like jojoba, coconut, almond, Vitamin E, apricot, avocado or olive oil are commonly used.

General Guidelines for Dilution:

- **1% dilution:** For sensitive skin, children over 2 years old, and elderly individuals. A 1% dilution rate is often recommended for facial applications, long term use, daily use, or when applying citrus essential oils to the skin (since they cause sensitivity to the sun).
 - Mix 1 drop of essential oil per 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of carrier oil.
 - 3 drops essential oil per 2 tsp carrier oil
 - 4 drops essential oil per 1 tbsp carrier oil
 - 9 drops essential oil per 2 tbsp carrier oil
 - **2% dilution:** For most adults and daily skin care; can be good for massage oils and baths.
 - Mix 2 drops of essential oil per 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of carrier oil.
 - 6 drops essential oil per 2 tsp carrier oil
 - 9 drops essential oil per 1 tbsp carrier oil
 - 18 drops essential oil per 2 tbsp carrier oil
 - **3% dilution:** For temporary or localized use on specific areas (muscle pain).
 - Mix 3 drops of essential oil per 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of carrier oil.
 - 9 drops of essential oil per 2 tsp carrier oil
 - 13 drops essential oil per 1 tbsp carrier oil
 - 27 drops essential oil per 2 tbsp carrier oil
- **Sensitive Skin:** Stick to a 1% dilution, especially when trying a new essential oil.
 - **Facial Use:** Generally, a 1% dilution is recommended
 - **Children and Elderly:** Use more conservative dilutions (0.5% to 1%).
 - **Patch Testing:** Always do a patch test before applying a new essential oil blend to a larger area.

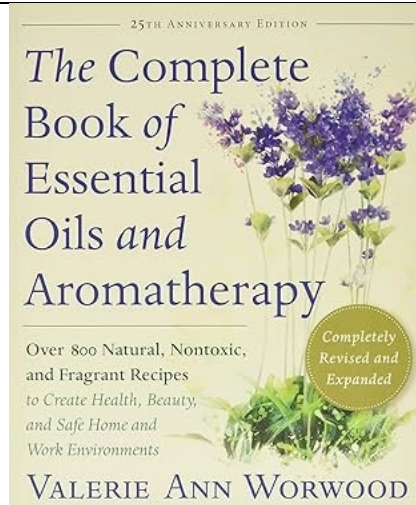
Dilution by Volume:

- **10 ml (2 teaspoons) of carrier oil:**
 - 1% dilution: 2 drops essential oil
 - 2% dilution: 4 drops essential oil
 - 3% dilution: 6 drops essential oil
- **30 ml (2 tablespoons) of carrier oil:**
 - 1% dilution: 6 drops essential oil
 - 2% dilution: 12 drops essential oil

Appendix D – Aromatherapy Reference Guides

[The Complete Book of Essential Oils & Aromatherapy](#)

[Author: Valerie Ann Worwood](#)



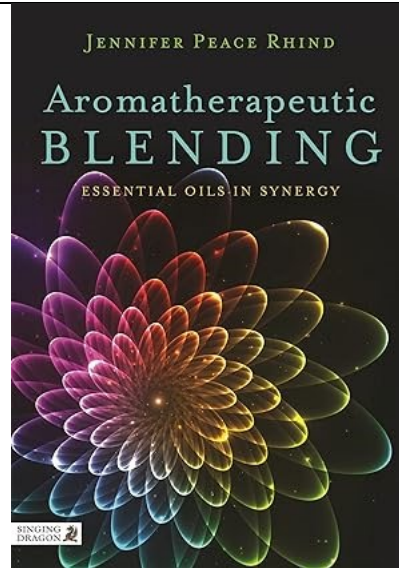
[The Complete Aromatherapy and Essential Oils Handbook for Everyday Wellness](#)

[Author: Nerys Purchon & Lora Cantele](#)



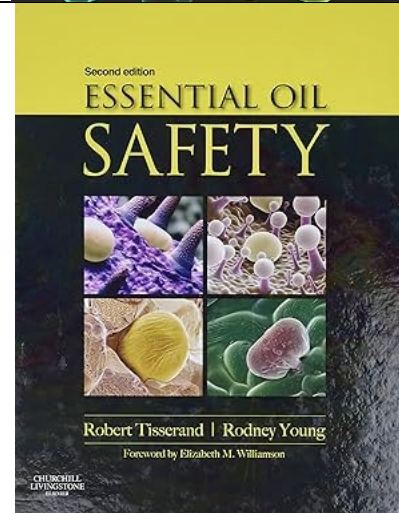
[Aromatherapeutic Blending; Essential Oils in Synergy](#)

[Author: Jennifer Peace Rhind](#)



[Essential Oil Safety](#)

[Author: Robert Tisserand & Rodney Young](#)



Appendix E: Buying Pure Oils

When considering what brand of essential oils to use, there are numerous questions to consider to ensure you're getting high-quality, safe, **PURE** and effective products. Here's an expanded list of factors to consider:

1. **Sourcing and Origin:** Where do they source their oils from? Are they sourced from local farms, do they grow their own or are they imported from other countries? Are the sources sustainable, environmentally friendly and fair trade?
2. **Cultivation Methods:** Are the plants grown organically, wildcrafted, or conventionally? Are pesticides, herbicides, or other chemicals used in the cultivation process? Organic and wildcrafted methods are generally considered superior, as they reduce the risk of contamination and promote environmental sustainability.
3. **Altitude and Temperature:** At what altitude and temperature has the essential oil been produced? Climate, soil, and altitude can significantly impact the quality and composition of the essential oil. For example, some plants may thrive in high-altitude, cool climates, while others may require warmer temperatures and lower elevations.
4. **Extraction Method:** How was the essential oil created? There are several methods, including:
 - **Distillation:** Steam distillation, water distillation, or hydro-distillation are common methods used to extract essential oils from plants.
 - **Absolute:** A method that involves using a solvent to extract the essential oil from the plant material, often used for delicate flowers and herbs.
 - **Chemical:** A method that involves using chemical solvents to extract the essential oil, which can result in a lower-quality product.
 - **Cold Pressing:** A method used to extract essential oils from citrus fruits, where the oil is extracted from the peel through a mechanical process.
5. **Additives and Adulterants:** Were any additives added during the distillation process? Some companies may add synthetic fragrances,

extenders, or other adulterants to enhance the aroma or extend the shelf life of the essential oil.

6. **Certifications and Compliance:** Does the company have any certifications, such as:
 - **Organic:** Certified by organizations like the USDA or EU organic standards.
 - **Non-GMO:** Certified by organizations like the Non-GMO Project.
 - **Fair Trade:** Certified by organizations like Fairtrade International.
 - **Sustainable:** Certified by organizations like the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
 - **AFNOR**
7. **Plant Part:** Do you know which part of the plant is used by the manufacturer to produce the essential oil? Different parts of the plant can produce different essential oils, such as:
 - **Flowers:** Rose, lavender, and jasmine essential oils are often extracted from the flowers of the plant.
 - **Leaves:** Peppermint, eucalyptus, and lemongrass essential oils are often extracted from the leaves of the plant.
 - **Roots:** Ginger, turmeric, and valerian essential oils are often extracted from the roots of the plant.
 - **Bark:** Cinnamon and sandalwood essential oils are often extracted from the bark of the plant.
8. **Purity and Authenticity:** How do they ensure the purity and authenticity of the essential oil? Look for companies that use:
 - **GC/MS testing:** Gas Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry testing to verify the chemical composition of the essential oil. Make sure the company is willing to share those test results by having them available on their website.
 - **Third-party testing:** Independent testing by reputable organizations to ensure the quality and purity of the essential oil.
9. **GC/MS Reports:** Are GC/MS reports available for review? These reports should provide detailed information on the chemical composition of the essential oil, including the presence of any impurities or adulterants.
10. **Education and Usage Instructions:** Does the company provide education and usage instructions about their oils? Look for companies that offer:

- **Usage guidelines:** Recommendations for safe and effective use of the essential oil.
- **Safety guidelines:** Warnings and precautions for potential allergic reactions, interactions with medications, or other safety concerns.
- **Aromatherapy resources:** Educational materials, workshops, or online courses that teach about the benefits and uses of essential oils.

11. Safety Guidelines and Warnings: Do they have safety guidelines and warnings for each oil? Look for companies that provide clear and concise information on:

- **Contraindications:** Potential interactions with medications, health conditions, or other essential oils.
- **Allergic reactions:** Potential allergic reactions or sensitivities to the essential oil.
- **Pregnancy and breastfeeding:** Safety guidelines for use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

12. Trained Aromatherapists or Experts: Does the company have trained aromatherapists or experts on staff who can provide guidance on the oil usage? Look for companies that have:

- **In-house experts:** Trained aromatherapists or essential oil experts who can provide guidance and support.
- **Customer support:** Responsive customer support team that can answer questions and provide assistance.

By considering these factors, you can make an informed decision when choosing a brand of essential oils and ensure that you're getting high-quality, safe, and effective products.

Appendix F: Trusted Aromatherapy Companies

As previously discussed in this e-book class, I neither endorse nor recommend any Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) or Direct Sales company such as DoTerra, Young Living, Nature's Sunshine or Melaleuca.

The following is a list of reputable aromatherapy and essential oil companies that prioritize transparency by sharing third-party GC/MS (Gas chromatography and Mass spectrometry) testing results and provide clear, safe education on essential oil usage. Many of these companies also offer sample sizes for purchase. Please note, the companies are listed alphabetically and not in order of preference.

[Aromatics International - https://www.aromatics.com/](https://www.aromatics.com/)

[Eden Botanicals - https://www.edenbotanicals.com](https://www.edenbotanicals.com)

[Eden's Garden - https://www.edensgarden.com](https://www.edensgarden.com)

[Nature's Gift - https://naturesgift.com](https://naturesgift.com)

[Plant Therapy - https://www.planttherapy.com/](https://www.planttherapy.com/)

[Rocky Mountain Oils - https://www.rockymountainoils.com/](https://www.rockymountainoils.com/)

[Simply Earth - https://simplyearth.com](https://simplyearth.com)

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