

## **How to use essential oils at work and home**

Because essential oils have so many therapeutic properties, they also have many uses – both in and around your home/workplace and for health and wellbeing/medicinal use. Don't be overwhelmed by aromatherapy – it really is a simple and effective therapy and it's easy to get started.

### **Direct inhalation**

Probably the simplest way to make use of essential oils is to inhale them directly from a bottle. Simply choose your oil and hold it up to your nose, and away you go. Alternatively, you can add a few drops to a handkerchief or a tissue and breathe deeply. Make sure that you take slow, deep breaths, feeling the effects of the oils as you inhale them, and let the deep breathing relax your mind and body even more. This method is excellent for a short burst of aromatherapy at work.

Other ways to breathe in the positive effects of essential oils include steam inhalation and vaporizing. Steam inhalation is great for treating colds and blocked sinuses and can be good for your skin too. Pour two or three cups of boiling water into a large bowl and add 2-5 drops of your chosen essential oil to the water. With your nose about 12 inches away from the bowl, cover both your head and the bowl with a towel, and inhale the steam.

You can get the healing effects of aromatherapy diffused all around your home if you choose to use an electronic diffuser, designed to disperse a fine mist of your chosen essential oils. Diffusers (or vaporizers) tend to work especially well with blends of oils, making the room smell delicious at the same time as relaxing, uplifting or energizing you.

### **Applying essential oils to your skin**

This method is suitable for some pure essential oils, but neat, undiluted topical use isn't recommended for all oils. Most essential oils can be used on the skin, if they are mixed with a carrier oil such as sweet almond oil or apricot kernel oil. Essential oils are fat soluble, so they are immediately absorbed by skin, making them very effective when used properly.

Some essential oils are available pre-blended in formulas that you can take to work, school or anywhere with you, and apply to your skin, usually with a roller or in a spray. Tea tree oil is exceptionally good for skin that suffers from excess oil, or acne, and is well known for its anti-bacterial properties, so you'll find it in many products designed for oily skin. Tea tree and lavender oils are two that can be used neat, directly on your skin, for burns, small grazes and blemishes, so keep some around in your purse for those little emergencies.

If you're applying pre-blended essential oils, the most effective places to apply them are your wrists and temples (eucalyptus and peppermint oils are good for relieving headaches/sinus congestion when applied to temples).

## **In the bath**

For a relaxing, or detoxifying treat, a bath is a great way to use essential oils. Just mix the oils with Epsom salts (just dropping the oils straight into the bath water isn't as effective because they won't dissolve as well), lie back and relax with your chosen blend of oils. Just two to four drops is usually all that's needed for a bath.

## **The best way to use essential oils?**

The method you choose will depend on where you are and what effects you are looking for.

- If you've got a wound, go for a topical application.
- To enhance your mood, steam inhalation works fastest but if that's not possible, applying to the wrist and inhaling can be beneficial.
- Choose a bath for a wider range of therapeutic effects, but relaxation especially, as this gives you the benefits of both topical absorption and inhalation.