

Wonders In

Aromatherapy



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INTRODUCTORY

Aromatherapy is one of the fastest rising industries in the country. With the fad of new age activities like yoga on the upswing, it seems that aromatherapy is here to stay for the next couple of years.

In fact, it is one of the most popular practices in terms of holistic and alternative medicine. It is being used everywhere, from clinics and hospitals for their pain relief treatment especially during labor and with chemotherapy to the rehabilitation of patients who have heart ailments, from the alleviation of stress and the relaxation of muscles in day spas to the beauty and cosmetic products being made. You name it and aromatherapy has influenced it one way or the other.

But besides candles and lotions and scents, which define aromatherapy to a T, what is it all about and what can it give us?

Aromatherapy is the practice of using oils from plant extracts for medicinal, relaxation and aromatic purposes. These oils are called essential oils, which are used and combined with other ingredients to produce perfumes, lotions, and other beauty, skin care and hair care products.

In fact, all the products with your favorite plant scent such as Rose, Lavender and Chamomile are results of the practice of aromatherapy. It is said that aromatherapy can also improve one's mood, lightening it up and easing the stress. This is perhaps why the technique is also used in massage parlors and spas to relax customers.

The use of essential oils is a practice that has been going on for centuries. It all started with the Greeks, who invented the crude way of distilling. The process of distillation was then used to extract the oils from the plants.

Next to adopt the practice are the Egyptians, which incorporated it into their traditions and customs. Plant oils are used in their various religious set-ups and even in the burying of their dead. In fact, archaeologists who dug up tombs in Egypt have found plant extracts and remains with embalmed bodies. It was also the Egyptians, who first used the plant extracts for cosmetic and aromatic purposes.

Next in line were the Romans, who discovered the use of the essential oils as medicine. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, has been known to use plant oils in his medical work back in his time.

It was only in the 1920s that the practice got the name "aromatherapy" which was invented by René Maurice Gattefossé, a French chemist, who used the process in his own work. Unknown to many, aromatherapy has a lot of branches.

One of those branches is Home Therapy, which deals with the use of the practice for self-treatment as well as in the use of it in making perfumes and cosmetics. It is also used in medical practice and this branch is called the clinical aromatherapy. Lastly, the branch that deals with the use of aromatherapy in the psychology of odors and its effects in people is called the Aromachology.

One of the best-known scents in aromatherapy is the lavender, which people can actually find in every product label in groceries and in beauty stores. Unknown to many, lavender can also be used in the treatment of wounds as well as in the enhancement of memory. It can also be used as a sleeping aid as it helps relieve anxiety and insomnia.

In addition to lavender, other really popular aromatherapy products are those with the scents of Rose, Eucalyptus, Bergamot, Cinnamon, Rosemary and of course Jasmine.

CHAPTER 1: BENEFITS OF AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy, like all new age practices, is riding on to successville. Everyone wants to try some yoga or have a massage with scents that will relax not only your body but also your soul.

But along with its increasing popularity is the increasing number of questions about the process. What is it about? What makes it work? Is it safe? Does it really calm the nerves and relax the muscles?

Aromatherapy is the practice or use of oil extracts from plants for their medicinal and aromatic benefits in order to improve psychological, spiritual and physical wellbeing. True aromatherapy does not include the use of oils that are only used for fragrance. These are considered unnatural products because they have been tampered with already in the laboratories.

Most think that aromatherapy is a new discovery but the truth is, the practice of using essential oils for medicinal and aromatic purposes has been going on for centuries. It started with the Greeks and the Egyptians, who used a crude distillation process to extract oils from the plants and flowers in the area.

One of the primary benefits of aromatherapy is in the improvement of a person's psychological and mental state. Aromatherapy, they claim, can help relax the mind and get rid of the everyday stress that people suffer from. It can lighten the mood and alleviate stress symptoms such as feelings of depression, heaviness and sadness. Of course, it cannot cure actual psychological problems. And if you are thinking along these terms, you are in for a disappointment. Aromatherapy only helps to alleviate the surface effects of stress but not the underlying causes and psychological problems.

There are also claims that aromatherapy has medicinal purposes and it has but it does not directly cure an illness. It only serves to strengthen the bodies of the person and also calm their fears so that they can better cope with the disease. Aromatherapy can also in easing the feelings of nausea when having an illness. This is especially true with people who are undergoing chemotherapy.

Also, aromatherapy can improve one's immune system, which is a big plus in fighting off diseases and illness. Like with the claims with psychological wellbeing, aromatherapy cannot cure a disease. People who claim otherwise should not be trusted. Aromatherapy indirectly helps but it does not directly cure the problem.

Another benefit that aromatherapy provides in the improvement in common ailments such as indigestion, acne and other skin problems and also PMS and menstruation. The therapy has been known to help stop dysmenorrhea, a condition wherein a person feels pain in the abdominal area due to menstruation.

Essential oils are also used and combined with some hair care formulas because they have been known to keep the hair healthy and shiny. The same goes with skin care.

Aromatherapy can also help in coping and dealing with various emotions. In fact, there are special plant extracts that can be used for this very purpose. Anger for instance can be alleviated by Jasmine, Orange, Roman Chamomile, Rose and Ylang Ylang while anxiety can be dealt with extracts from plants such as Bergamot, Geranium, Cedarwood, Mandarin and Lavender.

Confidence can be improved with a touch of Cypress, Bay Laurel and Rosemary while depression can be alleviated by Clary Sage, Helichrysum, Neroli, Sandalwood, Frankincense and Mandarin.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF AROMATHERAPY

In its exact definition, aromatherapy is the process of using volatile plant oils in order to treat not only the physical wellbeing of a person but also his or her psychological and mental health.

From decades past, apothecary drawers have been filled with essential oils that have been used in the treatment of diseases and other health problems. In fact, the practice of using oils has been in place for nearly a thousand years. It was however only in the 20th century when the term aromatherapy was used.

It started with the Chinese, who are among the first cultures to incorporate the practice into their traditions. They use plant oils and burn incense to help create balance within the body and harmony with nature.

Later on, the Egyptians adopted the practice and created an old distiller prototype which extracts cedarwood oil crudely. The oils that they extract from the plant are then sold in markets in their country. There are some that claim that Persia and India were the ones that invented the distillation process but of course nothing has been proven yet.

As time passed, the Egyptians started to extract oils from different plants. In addition to cedarwoods, they use clove, nutmeg, cinnamon and myrrh. These oils were also used in the embalming of their dead. In fact, when an Egyptian tomb was opened back in the early 20th century, remains and traces of these plants were seen in some parts of the body. Archaeologists were even able to smell the scent. The Egyptians also used the scents and the oils in some of their rituals, especially those that are spiritual in nature. Some also used the oils as medicines while the women used them as perfumes and cosmetic.

In fact, the word perfume is thought to have come from the Latin word fumum, which means smoke. There are claims that men also use fragrance like women but they have an interesting method of doing it. They will place a solid cone of perfume on their heads, which they will gradually melt until the perfume and scent cover their whole bodies.

The Greeks also used perfumes but of course everything was credited to the Gods of their mythology. Still the use of plant oils as perfume took a life of its own and soon Megallus made a perfume from myrrh, which is a fatty-oil. His perfume called the Megaleion not only had aromatic benefits, it can also heal wounds and has an anti-inflammatory property towards the skin.

It was also the Greeks that established the medicinal purposes of plants. In fact, the father of medicine, Hippocrates, practiced the use of plants for its aromatic and medicinal benefits.

Armed with the knowledge that they have gotten from the civilizations of the Egyptians and the Greeks, Roman Discorides wrote a book called De Materia Medica, which essays the different properties of as much as 500 plants.

In the 11th century, a process called coiled cooling pipe was invented. This had a large impact on the distillation of essential oils. Avicenna, a Persian, was the one who created the prototype, which allowed steam and vapor from the plant to cool down so that it can be extracted better and faster than other distilling machines. Because of this invention, the focus once again went to the benefits of essential plant oils.

CHAPTER 3: MASSAGE YOUR WAY TO BETTER WELL BEING

Aromatherapy is a wonderfully natural way to treat common ailments. It works by stimulating the connection between the brain and body by using the olfactory sense as a point of stimuli.

The use of aromatherapy can be incorporated into daily life through the use of aromatherapy candles, soaps and such. However, to be able to get the full benefit of aromatherapy, you must get serious and learn all about the topical application of aromatherapy essential oils to affected areas for a full experience of healing.

What better way to incorporate topical application of essential oils than using it for an aromatherapy massage. You can enjoy aromatherapy massage with a partner or on your own. All you need to do first is learn and understand what essential oils are best for what to be able to begin aromatherapy massage. When you have decided which essential oil to use, you need to mix your essential oil with a carrier oil of your choice and the usual ratio is 10 drops of essential oil per ounce of carrier oil.

You can use different massage techniques with your aromatherapy massage. It may be beneficial however to do some research on how best to combine your aromatherapy massage with the proper acupuncture point stimulation for the best effect.

An aromatherapy massage is wonderful because you are enveloped in the aromatic scents of your essential oil of choice and at the same time, you are gaining the direct benefits of topical application of these same oils. Whether you are giving the massage or receiving it, both parties will benefit from this aromatherapy technique.

If you are doing the aromatherapy massage to yourself, be sure to choose a quiet and relaxing area in your home to do this. Perhaps you can do your own aromatherapy massage after a wonderful aromatherapy bath. You can massage your chosen essential oils inside the warm comfort of your bathroom while you are still basking in the glow of the aromatherapy bath. Work the essential oils into the affected areas.

This way, you benefit from smelling the scents from the essential oils but also your massage will induce the introduction of fresh oxygenated blood to the area that you are massaging. Also, the application of the essential oil to the affected area will give it instant relief by penetrating the layers of skin.

For an aromatherapy massage you can enjoy in solitude but in total relaxation, you can employ the services of a professional masseuse. You can bring your own home blends of aromatherapy massage oil or benefit from a professional aromatherapy package at your favorite spa.

Whether you decide to employ aromatherapy massage alone, with a partner or with a professional, be sure to make the most out of it. Situate yourself in a relaxing position in an equally relaxing area. From here you can breathe and feel your way to better health and disposition.

One last tip for getting into aromatherapy massage: use the right types of essential oils for the corresponding ailments or problems. For instance, if your goal is to alleviate a headache, simply massage to the back of your neck a blend of rosemary and lavender oil. If it's aching muscles and tired joints however, you can try a mixture of one part each eucalyptus, basil and sage combined with 4 parts of your favorite oil like sweet almond or jojoba.

CHAPTER 4: THE POWER OF TOUCH AND THE BENEFIT OF SCENTS

The etymology of the word massage can be traced back to the Greek word "massein" which loosely translated means "to knead".

In our hectic, fast paced lifestyle, the massage has become a thing of luxury and indulgence. However, in as far back as the ancient times and ancient civilizations of the Greeks, Persians and Chinese, the massage has been used as a medicinal treatment for common ailments. It was mostly used though as preventive medicine and was given a sublime or spiritual association.

The wisdom of these ancient people should be incorporated into modern day perspective. The massage can very well be used in this age as a sort of preventive therapy. If one takes the time to trace relations between illnesses and its causes, one will notice that a lot of the modern-day ailments that befall the modern individual are mostly due to stress and a hyper active lifestyle.

Regular massage will help one maintain a balance between a hectic life and a relaxed, stress free life. This way, instead of creating a tension between these two worlds, you can create harmony and balance. To enhance the experience of a massage further, aromatherapy can be incorporated into the massage. This can be done by using an aromatherapy massage oil during the massage session. This way, you are able to harness the power of touch combined with the benefits of aromatherapy.

Whatever massage technique is employed, whether it is Shiatsu, Swedish or a combination, the benefit of using an aromatherapy massage oil will double the beneficial results of your massage session. However, you must remember to acquire the assistance of qualified massage therapists because untrained individuals may cause more harm than good when it comes to practicing massage techniques.

Once you have found a qualified professional, before starting the massage session, you must tell your therapist about what you want to achieve and give a personal history so that both of you can decide what best type of massage therapy will be best given your special personal situation.

Decide on which aromatherapy massage oil to use for your situation. For instance, if you need an invigorating and relaxing massage, you might decide to use a rose blend for your aromatherapy massage oil. This blend consists of some sandalwood, rose and jasmine. Done properly, the use of this aromatherapy massage oil in your massage will do wonders for your mood and physical being.

You must remember though to plan the schedule of your massage appropriately, although you can start your day with a massage using an aromatherapy massage oil, remember that you should not bathe at least 8 hours after your session to allow the aromatherapy massage oil to be fully absorbed by the body.

Going back to the use of aromatherapy massage oils, you should not be afraid to try and make your own blends. You will find recipes in books and online for aromatherapy massage oils, however, this should not limit you into using just these recipes.

After you have gained a certain proficiency and knowledge about essential oils and their benefits, you can try experimenting to make your own perfect blend for an aromatherapy massage oil. This way, each experience can be unique and wonderful at the same time and personally suited to your needs.

CHAPTER 5: RELAXING THROUGH AN AROMATHERAPY BATH

A tiring day at the office with the head feeling heavy and the muscles in the body a bit sore will all disappear after a warm bath or a massage. Unfortunately, the prices for such services are quite expensive so this can't be done regularly.

If the same oils applied to the body can do wonders, why not use the same thing by simply inhaling it? This idea brought about aromatherapy and studies have shown that more people are getting into it.

Aromatherapy comes from oils extracted from plants or trees. A few examples of these are chamomile, jasmine, lavender, sandalwood and ylang-ylang. These are packed in small bottles and pouring a few drops into warm water or using scented candles has an amazing effect on the person.

But what makes an aromatherapy bath so effective? The key to this is the various scents, which enter through the nostrils and then sends a signal to the brain. It gives the person a certain high making one feel happy and refreshed.

This truly makes an aromatherapy bath different because the scent of the soap or shampoo used can never be compared to what the oils have to offer. After lying in the tub for maybe fifteen of 15 minutes, the individual can get up and then take a shower to rinse everything off.

The nice thing about this new trend to take away stress is that an aromatherapy bath can be done at home. This will truly save a few dollars instead of going to the spa especially when the different oils can be purchased online or from a store.

Sometimes, instead of just using one scent, it is possible to mix a few drops to create something that will have a stronger effect. A good example that will help relieve body aches and pain is mixing 20 drops of lavender oil, 10 drops of rosemary and blackberry, 5 drops each of peppermint and cypress oil mixed with some massaging oil to make the pain go away.

Another great idea to mix into the warm water is 20 drops of geranium, 10 drops of bergamot and ylang ylang with 5 each of frankincense and cedar wood. This should also be mixed again with massaging oil before putting it in.

Aside from oil and candles, some have even tried using bath salts that will dissolve in the water. The person can even play some soft music in the background transforming the bathroom into a miniature spa.

Before trying anything, it will be a good idea to check if the individual is allergic to any of the oils used. Sometimes doing a few experiments when mixing one scent with the other should be done beforehand to be able to enjoy the experience. The person could discover something new that has never been tried before until now.

The person should be aware that aromatherapy is not the solution to someone who is suffering from a serious ailment. However, studies have shown that it can help improve or even strengthen the immune system.

So the next time the person feels stressed, instead of taking some medicine, perhaps lying in the tub won't be a bad idea after all to be able to recharge those all batteries and getting geared up for another day at the office.

CHAPTER 6: KNOWING ABOUT AROMATHERAPY OILS

From the days of early civilization in Egypt, people have been using aromatherapy to in everyday their everyday lives. Without the intricacies of modern healing, people back then only resort to traditional and alternative medicine in relieving physical pain.

But, due to the emergence of modern science in the field of medicine, this tradition of healing using natural resources have slowly disappeared.

But today, with the trend of going back to the natural and to the basic, aromatherapy is becoming quite popular in the world of healing because of its therapeutic properties. Usually, aromatherapy involves the use of aromatherapy oils derived from various parts of plants. These aromatherapy oils are believed to contain therapeutic properties that greatly help patients to recover and heal eventually.

Aromatherapy Oils 101

Basically, aromatherapy refers to the healing technique that uses aromatic oils extracted and distilled from different plants to bring about a feeling of wellbeing physically and psychologically.

The most common form of using aromatherapy oil is through inhalation done by placing a tiny drop of your chosen aromatherapy oil on a piece facial tissue or soft cloth. Aside from inhaling it using a cloth or a tissue, you can also reap the benefits of aromatherapy oil through steam inhalation that involves the use the aromatherapy oil dropped in bowl of hot water.

Aromatherapy oils—when used in conjunction with a carrier oil—is also a great way to a relaxing massage or a soothing bath. Aside from using aromatherapy oil as a soothing medium, this can also be used to solve common household problems such as smelly kitchen, drawer, or room. Various aromatherapy oils like lavender, citronella, and peppermint can also be effective bug repellants and natural insect repellents. You can do this by placing a few drops of the aromatherapy oil on cotton balls and place them in locations where insects usually thrive like doorways and windows.

Since there are seemingly countless ways where one can use aromatherapy oils, it is a must to familiarize yourself what are the things you should consider before buying or purchasing aromatherapy oils.

- Conduct a little research before using specific aromatherapy oil. Since each kind of aromatherapy oil has varying therapeutic qualities, you cannot ensure that the product you're planning to buy will not cause you any harm. Make sure that you know what are the properties to be used for a specific purpose of illness.
- Be meticulous about the container. The first thing you should consider in buying aromatherapy oil is the container. If you see an essential oil that is placed in clear bottle or a plastic bottle, then disregard it because light has probably lack or excessive light might have damaged the intrinsic properties of the aromatherapy oil. Make sure that you buy aromatherapy oils that are placed in colored bottles to ensure quality.
- Make sure that you check and double check label. By checking the label, you can ensure that the aromatherapy oil you are planning to buy is pure. Avoid buying those bottles that say "perfume" or "fragrance oil" because these do not contain pure aromatherapy oils extracted from plants.
- Examine the bottle carefully for dust and expiration date. If the bottle has dust on its cap or around its container, don't buy it because this indicates that the product you're planning to buy is old and have probably lost its aromatic scent and healing properties.

- Consider the price. Since pure aromatherapy oils are extracted and distilled from various plants, they price range drastically. Bear in mind that pure therapeutic aromatherapy oils that are derived from exotic plants are more expensive than those derived from common plants.

CHAPTER 7: DISCOVERING THE WONDERS OF ESSENTIAL OILS

Even before the dawn of modern civilization, essential oils have been derived and used to heal, relax, and restore people. History says that Egyptians first administered the use of these essential oils in their everyday lives.

But, because of the emergence of modern healing, this practice of healing using scents slowly disappeared. But now, the impact of using essential oils in healing has regained its rightful place. Blended with the term "aromatherapy," essential oils now play an important role in "holistic" therapy—healing not only the body but the mind and emotions as well. Today, essential oils are believed to be present in almost all aromatic products like essence oils, absolutes, resinoids, and concretes.

One of the trends when it comes to healing is the emergence of aromatherapy or the use of selected fragrant substances—called essential oils—in lotions and inhalants in an effort to affect mood and promote health.

Often administered through a massage, the use of aromatherapy essential oils has become quite popular because of its therapeutic properties that go directly into a person's skin and the blood stream. Aside from using it through a massage, aromatherapy essential oils are also used in the form of hot and cold compresses, in baths or simply being inhaled.

The use of aromatherapy essential oils is also being adapted even by various hospitals because it is believed that these oils greatly help stress relief, depression, and even helps the patient to control or tolerate pain.

Aside from taking advantage of its soothing and therapeutic properties, aromatherapy essential oils are also being used to treat various skin problems while reducing the effects of the said disease. Aside from these, aromatherapy essential oils are also known to alleviate pain and relieve stress and depression.

The Essence Of Aromatherapy Essential Oils

Aromatherapy basically involves the use of pure essential and absolute oils. Essential oils—which are derived from different plants gathered across the globe—are highly-fragrant, complex, and volatile substances that has varying degrees of fragrance, complexity, and volatility.

Known as the most potent and concentrated extracts of various parts of flowers, fruits, leaves, spices, roots, and woods—each type of essential oil is believed to emulsify and contain a certain aromatic energy.

Compared to fatty or vegetable oils, essential oils are more volatile by nature. Experts say that the primary functional groups of the essential oils that are being used in aromatherapy today include Monoterpenes, Esters, Aldehydes, Ketones, Oxides, Alcohols, and Phenols.

Monoterpenes are those aromatherapy essential oils that contain bactericidal, anti-viral, and antiseptic properties that can cause skin irritation when not used properly. Examples of such include lemons, pines, and frankincense. Esters, on the other hand, are those that are fungicidal, sedating, and quite aromatically pleasing like bergamot, Clary sage, and lavender.

While Aldehydes are known to contain sedating and antiseptic properties like melissa, lemongrass, and citronella, Ketones are those that help ease congestion, aid in the flow of mucus but can be very toxic with excessive use. Examples of such are fennel, hyssop, and sage. Oxides are those that have expectorant and bactericidal qualities like rosemary and tea tree.

While Alcohols are known to contain antiseptic, anti-viral, and uplifting qualities present in plants like rosewood, geranium, and rose, Phenols are said to have bactericidal and strong stimulating properties that can be quite to the skin like clove, thyme, oregano.

CHAPTER 8: AROMATHERAPY INCENSE

One way to stay calm should the person feel stressed is by taking deep breaths. If this is not enough, sometimes walking out of the room to get some fresh air will do some good.

Aromatherapy is also a great stress reliever. Aside from applying the oil or inhaling it, the same thing can be done by using incense. The person can buy a set of sticks for less than \$10 from the store. These should be lit and then placed in a container so that the scent can fill the room. The use of incense is also used in other functions. Most churches use either frankincense or sandalwood when holding special ceremony.

The Chinese use this to ward off evil spirits when opening a business to have a prosperous future ahead. Certain establishments use lavender sticks, which are very effective in keeping insects away. Not all kinds of incense sticks are good to use. This is because there are substandard ones in the market, which could endanger the respiratory system especially for those who are asthmatic. This can be avoided by only going to reputable dealers that are recommended by family members and friends.

Here are a few examples of incense sticks generally sold to the public.

1. The first is amber. These are designed to calm disturbing conditions, which can help stabilize imbalances in one's system.
2. The second is Indian Cedar, which is often used as anti-depressant.
3. The third is Jasmine. It helps balance the hormones in both men and women. This is sometimes taken as an aphrodisiac just like chocolate, which is great to give the sex life alive.

4. Next is lavender, which is always known to make a person relax.
5. Lily is sometimes called a mild sedative since it helps slow down the heart rate and calms the nerves.
6. Patchouli helps strengthen the nerves. It does the same thing just like Indian Cedar so should the first run out, there is always an alternative, which can be used as a substitute.
7. Rose promotes spiritual healing and attunement. This is ideal either lying down or when meditating in the room which will help the person focus on the task at hand.
8. Lastly, is sandal aids, which is very similar to Rose and helps stimulate the pituitary and pineal glands.

These sticks are usually sold in sets. One pack can hold up to a dozen while those who want to get good value should try getting the kind that carries four or five different scents. This will give the individual of some of those available in the market so the customer will know which one to get when it is time to resupply.

After some time of using aromatherapy incense, the person can try other things that are available to help feel relaxed at all times. There are bath salts, which can be used in the bathroom, candles which also does the same thing like the incense.

Aromatherapy is truly a great way to feel good again. It has a natural high that does not have any side effects and can be used as often as the person wants. The only thing to figure out is which one to be used given that each kind has a particular usage.

