

Aromatherapy, essential oils and stress

An aromatic way to reduce stress levels

By Dr Gillian Hale

Aromatherapy – the therapeutic use of essential oils – is a widely acknowledged, effective way to relieve stress, and the inhalation of certain vaporised essential oils has been shown by research to have immediate stress-relieving effects, raising mood, reducing anxiety and aiding focus and concentration.

There are a number of easily obtainable essential oils that can be used to reduce the symptoms of stress especially [work related stress](#). A few are listed here, together with their main stress-relieving properties.

Basil

Basil essential oil, derived from the leaves of the herb, is usually very pale yellow in colour and has a fresh sweet but spicy, aniseed aroma. It is useful in cases of mental and intellectual fatigue, negativity or burn-out and helps improve concentration, clarity and enthusiasm.

Cedarwood

Cedarwood essential oil is amber in colour and is extracted from the wood of the cedar tree. It aids focus, concentration, strength of purpose and stability, and is particularly useful against mental strain, worry and anxiety.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon essential oil is obtained from the bark of the cinnamon tree, and has a warm, sweet and spicy aroma. Pale amber in colour, this oil invigorates and aids positivity, helping fight stress and fatigue.

Eucalyptus

Eucalyptus oil is colourless and its aroma is head-clearing and cooling. The oil is extracted from the leaves and young twigs of the tree. Eucalyptus is used to combat confusion, sluggishness and restlessness, and aids confidence, balance, enthusiasm, vitality, creativity, regeneration and understanding.

Grapefruit

Grapefruit is pale yellow in colour and has a fresh citrus aroma. The oil is extracted from the fresh peel of the fruit. Grapefruit oil is a mental stimulator and can be used to counteract mental pressure/exhaustion and frustration, and improve clarity, balance, positivity and inspiration.

Lavender

Lavender is a very versatile oil and has been used for healing purposes since ancient times. Extracted from the flowering tops of the plant, this usually colourless/pale yellow oil with a sweet floral aroma is particularly useful in stressful situations as it has been shown to reduce levels of anxiety, depression and fatigue. It also aids clarity, balance, relaxation and rejuvenation.

Lemongrass

Lemongrass is yellow in colour with a lemony aroma. Obtained from fresh and partially dried grass, the oil helps reduce stress and panic, and improves concentration and focus.

Orange

Orange essential oil, like grapefruit essential oil, is extracted from the peel of the fruit. Pale yellow in colour, the oil has a sweet and refreshing aroma, and provides mental stimulation, helping to fight apathy, anxiety and burn-out.

Pine

Extracted from pine needles, this essential oil is colourless to pale yellow with a strong refreshing aroma. Pine essential oil is good for combating stress and a lack of confidence, providing assurance and balance.

Rosemary

Rosemary is a colourless to pale yellow oil extracted from the flowering tops of the herb. A refreshing aroma with woody undertones, it aids energy, creativity, clarity and concentration. It is useful in cases of strain, overwork, fatigue, sluggishness and lethargy.

For the best effects, it is advisable to buy pure essential oils; products containing synthetic ingredients will not provide the same degree of benefit.

For more information on essential oils, visit: www.aromatherapy-stress-relief.com

Dr Gillian Hale is co-founder of Aromatherapy-stress-relief.com, a home based UK business providing Aromatherapy Stress Relief Gifts.

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