



Crow River
Animal Hospital
& Dental Clinic

Introduction to Essential Oils – Number 1:2009
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Basic Philosophy and Use of Essential Oils

Disclaimer: All of the information provided here is intended for educational purposes. The information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any illness. Please seek the advice of a qualified health care professional in your area of concern if you have a health challenge.

What are essential oils? Essential oils are the volatile compounds that are the “blood” of a plant. Not really an oil at all, they are the aromatic compounds that plants produce – thus the term Aromatherapy. Aromatherapy is not just about scent, which is what I thought when I first became involved with essential oils. The French have been using essential oils in medicinal aromatherapy for centuries. Plants are amazing at adapting, healing, and overcoming disease. By utilizing these substances in health care – we can utilize the amazing healing properties of plants.

How are essential oils different from herbs? Herbs are dried plants, so the essential oils have been evaporated out of them. Herbs still have powerful medicinal properties, but generally have to be used in a larger amount than essential oils to have the same effect. For example, one drop of Peppermint oil contains the same power as 20 cups of peppermint tea.

What kind of essential oils should I use? This is extremely important. Oils must be harvested from properly grown plants, proper medicinal species of the plant, and then distilled in very exact and careful ways to make sure that the entire plant oil is extracted and preserved as nature intended, not just the fragrant portion of the oil. Chemical composition of an essential oil can vary by many factors: the chosen day the plant is harvested, the time of day the plant is harvested, how long the plant was dried prior to distillation, the temperature and length of time the plant was distilled for, the soil the plant was grown in, and even the weather of the growing season. The best companies do a test harvest and distillation before harvesting an entire crop of plants. Rigorous chemical analysis of each batch of oil, by multiple independent laboratories, are a good sign of a company dedicated to medicinal properties of oils.

Many essential oils on the market today are grown where chemical residues may be present on the plants. Even when organically grown, they may be right next to a traditionally treated field, affected by overspray of chemicals or roadside

pollutants. As of July 2009, the government allowed the use of Round-Up on organically certified fields. "Organic" no longer means much in my eyes. Distillation will concentrate these chemicals if they are present, giving a "super" concentrated chemical – or an adulterated oil. If an essential oil supplier does not directly supervise and inspect the farms where the plants are grown – medicinal grade oils are unlikely to occur.

Oils can be adulterated in other ways as well. Lab created "natural" compounds can be added to pure essential oils to make them more "affordable" or to increase profit margins. It is perfectly legal to call a laboratory made, and adulterated oil "natural" or "100% pure" or "organic" – because by law, even if chemicals are made in a lab, if they are found in nature – they can be called natural. Just like "natural banana flavoring" in your organic yogurt is actually a lab created synthetic chemical (sorry to ruin your breakfast!).

It is extremely important to use a proven therapeutic and medical grade essential oil. Many companies claim therapeutic grade – but few have the actual effect of a true medical grade oil. I am most comfortable recommending people to Young Living Essential Oils – due to the fact that every oil they produce is safe for use as directed, and is medical grade. I have found a few companies that do have some medical quality oils – however, they often supply perfume grade and non-medical grade species as well. This is confusing to the basic consumer – and can make purchasing difficult if not dangerous. A good example of this is Pennyroyal essential oil. This oil is well known in the medical community to cause abortions – however, it is often recommended for insect control for animals. Many popular natural pet care books flippantly recommend its use. I like the fact that Young Living does not even carry this oil – thus, I do not even have to worry about telling you not to use it. As long as you are using Young Living Essential Oils, I can be sure that you don't have a dangerous oil lurking in your cabinet.

So because they are from nature, they are 100% safe? Nothing is 100% safe. Just as pennyroyal essential oil can cause abortions, there are cautions to be used in every aspect of natural health care. Everyone needs to be smart, and use essential oils in a respectful manner. They are powerful medicine, and although they have basically no side effects – you still would do poorly to take ½ of a bottle of Wintergreen essential oil – which would be like taking 4 bottles of aspirin! The amazing part of essential oils and plant medicine is that they rarely take the body past homeostasis. That is, if your blood sugar is high, and you take an oil to normalize it – it will not bring your blood sugar abnormally low. I have yet to meet a pharmaceutical that intelligent! Be smart, and use oils according to their directions. Young Living provides an amazing amount of educational handouts, books, classes, and resources to make sure you use their essential oils properly and understand the situations in which you would want to use caution.

But, I am allergic to essential oils, how can I use them? It is actually physically impossible to be allergic to a pure essential oil. Properly distilled, medical grade essential oils do not contain any proteins or contaminating molecules responsible for a true allergic response initiated by the body. However, poor quality or adulterated oils do contain compounds that can initiate allergic reactions. This was made painfully clear to me in the case of *Melaleuca alternifolia* (Tea Tree Oil). As *Melaleuca* became a popular oil, it was added to everything under the sun; shampoo, lotion, soaps, laundry detergent, lip balm etc... In my case, it would cause a horrible reaction, usually to my head. I was convinced that I was allergic to this oil, and that I should avoid all essential oils. After much research and a leap of faith – I tried Young Living’s *Melaleuca* oil. Guess what? No reactions.

If you do have a “reaction” to a *truly* medical grade oil, it is a detoxifying action, which is actually a good sign. This can be hard to understand, and can truly seem like an allergic reaction. Some people can experience a sinus headache, nasal and sinus congestion, skin rash, pimples, inflamed lymph nodes, respiratory signs or other symptoms when exposed to certain essential oils. These symptoms just indicate that you have previous toxins in your body that the essential oil is binding to and eliminating. Essential oils are extremely efficient at purging foreign chemicals from our bodies, much like they would for a living plant. If you damage a plant leaf, you will often see essential oils leaking out to repair and protect the injury. If you do experience a detoxifying reaction – it is recommended that you use less oils, less frequently, or a less aggressive or diluted oil for a while, until your body can catch up in the cleansing process. Eventually, you will be able to use the oil that caused your reaction with no problem.

I experienced this first hand in converting over to natural deodorant. I had always been sensitive to traditional anti-perspirants and had to continually search for less scented brands or brands created for sensitive skin. These chemical laden products were just not good for my body, and I often got rashes from these traditional products after using them for a few months. As I started to apply essential oils instead, my armpits became sore and rashy with certain essential oils. I even had a lymph node swell at one point. The oils were aggressively cleansing my skin of the chemicals that I had been applying for over 20 years. Thankfully, I knew that this reaction was a good sign, and it was cleansing my system. I chose to continue to detoxify the situation, but in a milder and slower way. I diffused more oils, drank more oils in my water, increased the anti-oxidants in my diet, applied oils to other areas of my body, and backed off on any “aggressive” oils used as deodorant or diluted them with Extra Virgin Olive Oil. A few months later, the very oils that initially caused a problem, were just fine to use, even on a daily basis.

People who may have extreme toxin build up from being on many chronic prescription medications or who have major health concerns, may initially tolerate only mild exposures to essential oils. Drinking lemon oil in water or tea, changing normal lotions and shampoos over to natural, non-toxic and essential oil containing products, and regular diffusion of very mild oils, such as citrus oils, for a couple months can start the process slowly and comfortably.

Is this new age? Actually, essential oils have been used for thousands of years in many cultures. There are hieroglyphics in Egypt explaining the use of many essential oils. Mummies were embalmed using essential oils, and the elongated hats that the pharaohs wore contained essential oils mixed in hippopotamus fat. Romans used essential oils in their baths and prior to battles. There is documentation of Kings requiring specific essential oil remedies to be made for them. Generally, only the richest and most powerful people of ancient times had access to essential oils.

Essential oils are referenced an amazing amount of times in the Bible. Whether or not religion is involved with essential oil use for you – one cannot doubt the immense importance essential oils carried for people of biblical times. Frankincense and Myrrh were given to the Christ Child, and were valued more than gold. Every religion around the world has some form of essential oils used in prayer, meditation, or to connect with their higher power. Coincidentally, the very people who used essential oils in their spiritual work – were also the healers of their culture. Shamans, Monks, Medicine Women, Priests, Rabbis, Nuns, etc... often have the double duty of spiritual leader and healer.

Why are essential oils so special? This question is hard to answer. Scientifically, these oils contain many compounds that science has yet to identify. The main components that have been identified and named are extremely powerful and have proven physiologic actions. To this date, there has never been ANY single essential oil that has been completely analyzed in a laboratory. To some, this is the very reason for the healing benefits that science cannot explain. There is a life force within every living being that escapes scientific explanation. This force is something that makes life unable to be controlled by science.

“Until man duplicates a blade of grass, nature can laugh at his so-called scientific knowledge. Remedies from chemicals will never stand in favor compared with the products of nature, the living cell of the plant, the final result of the rays of the sun, the mother of all life.” Thomas Edison.

Why should I use essential oils? Essential oils are just another powerful tool available to us for natural health care. They are often easy to administer, as they can be absorbed directly through the skin or absorbed through the nasal mucosa as they are inhaled in the air. Getting children or pets to drink an herbal tea can be difficult, however breathing diffused air or rubbing an oil onto their feet can be much easier. Although some oils do smell nice and can be used as air freshener – when you use medical grade essential oils, you are enjoying amazing health benefits while enjoying the fragrance.

How often should I use essential oils? It is my belief that by having small amounts of “good stuff” everyday – we will prevent illnesses. Much like a good diet and good vitamins can account for much of our health – we are greatly lacking in the every day raw and whole foods that we would historically be eating. By not consuming live, fresh, and naturally ripened fruits and vegetables, we are greatly lacking in the life force that food can bring to us. By being able to

concentrate the life force of a plant, we can easily gain access to these missing components of our foods through essential oils.

How do I use essential oils? There are many ways to utilize essential oils. You can diffuse them into the air, inhale them directly, apply them topically, and ingest them orally. There are many ways to accomplish all of these routes. Diffusing into the air can be done with a diffuser, by mixing the oils with some water and spritzing into the air, putting a few drops on a tissue and placing by an air vent, or even by direct inhalation of just smelling an oil from the bottle or from the palm of your hand.

Topically, the safest place to apply oils is to the bottom of the feet. This skin is tough and less sensitive, however has large pores to allow for the absorption of the oils easily and quickly. Oils can be applied to the skin of other locations – and can vary by the oil you plan to apply. I use essential oils as deodorant, perfume, and for medicinal use regularly and rarely have any discomfort from an oil. “Hot” oils like Cinnamon, Clove, Oregano, Thyme and some others – can obviously be irritating to sensitive skin areas and should usually be used with oil dilution. Even hot oils can usually be applied to the bottom of feet, just wash your hands after application.

All of Young Living essential oils are safe for ingestion (the exception are absolutes which are not essential oils – but are extracted in alcohols). You can place a few drops in Agave syrup, honey, or maple syrup and swallow. I will also add certain essential oils to my water, or to the Ningxia Red juice that is also from Young Living. Oils can also be placed into an empty gel capsule, and then swallowed for internal use.

The *Essential Oils Desk Reference* is a great book that explains the different ways to use oils as well as how to use each oil. It lists oils individually with their medical properties, chemical components, any cautionary notes, and research supporting each finding. It also has listings by ailment which will tell you which oils to use, how much to use, how often to use, and the different routes to use.

What cautions do I need to know about with using oils? Never put oils into your eyes or directly into your ear canal – unless directed by a qualified health care professional. You also want to be careful with male and female genitalia, as these areas can be more sensitive to contacting oils. Adding pure oil to a bath can be soothing, however the oils should be dispersed in salts or bath gel, so that an oil layer is not coating the surface of the water as you climb into your tub. Citrus oils can cause us to discolor in the sun (the same process that helps an orange to ripen). This is called photo-sensitivity. In winter we are mainly okay, however, in the summer time it is well advised to place these oils “where the sun don’t shine”.

What to do if an oil makes you uncomfortable? If you do get an oil in your eye or on a sensitive area – **do not** wash with water. Water and oil do not mix; therefore you can drive the oil into the sensitive skin faster and make it even more uncomfortable. Oils mix together, so you want to flush the area or dilute

the area with a good quality Olive oil or vegetable oil blend. In a pinch, fatty whole milk, yogurt, or butter can also be used to dilute an irritated area. Whole milk is my first choice to flush an eye with – as it won't leave a greasy residue. The next time you use an oil that you found to be irritating to your skin, dilute it first with the vegetable oil and/or apply it to a different, less sensitive location.

But I have a health concern, what can oils do for me? The amazing truth is that many of our pharmaceutical drugs were derived from plants. Essential oils do have remarkable healing and therapeutic effects. There are an amazing amount of products on the market that contain the exact active ingredient of an essential oil, but just in a synthetic form. I have seen and been a part of, almost miraculous healing events using essential oils. It is certainly an avenue that I gravitate toward before relying on the chronic use of traditional medicine to cover up symptoms. Essential oils can aid in actual healing, not just the masking the symptoms of a disease.

Aren't Essential oils expensive? Not really. But, being unhealthy is very costly. How much does it cost you to miss a day of work, or to have to visit the doctor? I once balked at ordering a very expensive bottle of essential oil that is highly anti-viral. However, I quickly realized that one drop for my husband averted a missed day of work. For us being self employed, that missed day would have cost much more than that entire bottle ever cost me, and I still have 84 drops left!

I replace everyday items that I would normally have used, with essential oils – often I find the quality to be better, with no toxic ingredients, and it is far more economical than a purchased item. Take BioFreeze for instance – it is a popular pain relief gel used to relieve back and muscle pain, arthritis pain, shoulder and neck pain, and joint and leg pain. My chiropractor carries and recommends this, and they have a bottle at our Tae Kwon Do studio for all to use. As an avid label reader this is what I found...

The active ingredient reveals that it is "Natural Menthol USP 3.5%" (and we already know that natural means nothing!). A glimpse at the warnings says "For external use only". And the inactive ingredients are "carbomer, FD&C blue #1, FD&C yellow #5, glycerine, herbal extract (ILEX paraguariensis), isopropyl alcohol USP, methylparaben, natural camphor USP (for scent), propylene glycol, silicon dioxide, triethanolamine, water".

The inactive ingredients are scary enough for me, there are 5 ingredients that I instantly don't want to use - propylene glycol is just one step away from anti-freeze. But, I also live by the rule "if you can't eat it, you probably shouldn't be putting it on your skin". Knowing what I know about chemistry and oils, I know that Menthol comes from the peppermint plant (and you can look this up easily in the above referenced book). So, I personally want my family to use Menthol derived from a REAL peppermint plant, completely ingestible, medical grade, non-synthetic, AND that contains 34-44% menthol instead of just 3.5%. Even if I dilute one drop in Olive oil, I have a much more natural and powerful pain reliever, costing only pennies. And, if I lick my hand after applying it – instant Binaca! Frugal!

What are my favorite ways to use oils everyday? I literally use essential oils everyday. In our vet clinic, we diffuse an oil in the waiting room and in the examination room. This controls odors, but also can offer stress relieving properties for worried pet owners. We love hearing – “I can’t believe you have 14 cats in your house – I can’t smell a single one!!!”

Here are the daily ways I use oils:

1. I put a citrus oil in my water or hot water everyday. This gives me gentle detoxifying effects, as well as encourages me to drink more water because it just tastes better. There are antibacterial effects, antioxidant effects, fat metabolism benefits, and many other great benefits – but honestly, it just tastes good.
2. We diffuse Peace and Calming every night in our daughter’s bedroom. If we forget to turn it on, we are often disturbed in the middle of the night by a little girl who woke up and couldn’t go back to sleep. When the diffuser is on, magically, she sleeps through the night.
3. Diffusing in the clinic, as mentioned above.
4. We rub Thieves oil blend on the bottom of our feet almost daily during cold and flu season. This increases our ability to fight off the “nasties”.
5. Odor control – we have 6 dogs that sleep in our bedroom. So odor control is important. By diffusing Purification oil blend you can’t even tell we have one dog!
6. Our very old dog “Q” – uses Copaiba oil and Frankincense oil every day. We apply a couple of drops to her stomach twice a day. We notice that she is much brighter and more alert (the Frankincense is oxygenating to the tissues and the brain) and she did not need her arthritis or incontinence medication (Copaiba helps with those regards). She particularly seems to enjoy Orange oil being diffused – quite an uplifting oil for her.
7. Winston takes several essential oils every day. Depending on his needs, he will add some to water, Ningxia Red, or in a capsule for an extra boost in fighting off a cold or to help stay healthy.
8. Before Tae Kwon Do class, I apply Cedarwood essential oil to my chest. Breathing this increases oxygenation to all tissues within seconds. This allows me to get through those sit ups and push ups a little easier! When I forget to apply it, I can definitely tell a difference.
9. After 60 sit ups and 60 push ups – I developed a horrible tendonitis in my elbow. Pan-Away oil blend literally took the pain away in seconds. I am still astonished by this event, as I was ready to cancel an entire day of appointments with the amount of pain I was in. I only had to re-apply the oil every 2 hours the first day. The next day; there was no pain at all.

10. For everything else – I look it up and try something natural first:

Upset stomach/diarrhea – DiGize oil blend on the belly button
Headaches – Peppermint on temples, back of head, or orally
Copaiba is also very mild and works great (kids)
Aches and pains – Copaiba orally (better than any Advil)
Cat Scratch – Melrose or Thieves oil blend topically
Goose Egg to the head – Valor oil blend or Helichrysum topically
Cold Sore – Melissa Oil Topically (diluted)
Frost Bite – Lavender Oil Topically
Hives – Melissa or Basil oil orally
Bad Breath – Peppermint oil orally (diluted is more pleasant)
Deodorant – Geranium or Purification oil under the arms
Gum in hair – Lemon oil takes it right out (diluted is nice)
Peeling labels off of a jar/window – Lemon Oil
Washing produce – Lemon oil mixed in the water
Keeping cut apples from browning – Lemon oil in water
Getting medical tape off animal fur/skin – Lemon Oil diluted
Growing Pains – Pan-Away blend, Wintergreen, Copaiba
Natural laundry deodorizer – Purification Oil
Somebody smoked by me and I hate the smell in my jacket –
Purification oil misted in distilled water
Tooth Ache – Thieves oil topically (doesn't taste great, but boy it works)
Warts – Clove oil applied topically to the warts, 1-2 times a day
Studying – diffuse Lemon, Peppermint, or Brain Power blend
Sore Throat – 2 drops of Melrose and 1 drop Lemon in a teaspoon of Agave Syrup. Hold in back of throat, swallow. Instant relief.
Who used the bathroom?? – Purification in water mister

These are just some of the many ways I use essential oils every day. There is rarely a situation that an essential oil will not benefit our family. For every complaint, there is an oil. You just have to be willing to give up the Children's Tylenol, Nyquil, Theraflu, Chloraseptic Spray, Advil, Aspirin, BioFreeze, Bengay, Carmex, Binaca, Extra Sugar Free Gum, Bounce Fabric Sheets, Febreze, Glade Plug Ins, Benadryl, Neosporin, Pepto-bismol, Secret Deodorant, Goo Be Gone, Ambesol, Wart Remover, Sucrets,

For some great information on how other people are using essential oils – please check out this site: www.oil-testimonials.com/1039262
It has a searchable data base, and can be just plain fun to look up many ways to use essential oils.

For more information about purchasing essential oils and equipment – feel free to contact me. Our clinic carries a small amount of Essential Oils Desk References, Aromatherapy A-Z books, and Glass Spray Bottles, trial size oils, and

supplies for sale. Before spending a ton of money on products that may not be ideal for your particular situation – please ask – and I can give you the best recommendations based on your individual needs. I am glad to help!

I hope you find this information helpful and educational. I am sure you will find essential oils as exciting and helpful as I have in our quest for a more natural, safe and healthful life.

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