

Aromatherapy and Essential Oils

Aromatherapy is the systematic use of volatile plant oils known as [essential oils](#) for the treatment or prevention of disease. It is a form of complementary therapy designed to treat the whole person and not just the symptom or disease by assisting the body's natural ability to balance, regulate, heal and maintain itself.

Essential oils consist of tiny aromatic molecules that are readily absorbed via the skin, and whilst breathing they enter the lungs. These therapeutic constituents enter the bloodstream and are carried around the body where they can deliver their beneficial healing powers. Because they are highly concentrated, only a small quantity of essential oil is required to bring about results. Some “essential oils” may by necessity be “cut down” or “diluted” many times over, so powerful are some concentrations, that in 100% form can burn the skin. These “Cut Down” oils are usually cheaper and are not recommended for Aromatherapy treatments. Hence the Therapist will usually use a combination of essential oils, so that minimum and controlled dilution takes place, for example when mixed with the Carrier Oil for massage purposes.

When using good [quality essential oils](#) correctly – and your therapist will have studied the mixing of oil combinations for different treatments. Result, the soothing combination of beautiful aromas, massage, aromatic baths and other treatments all work to regulate, balance, heal and maintain your entire being by working with nature, and not against it. A far cry from allopathic medicine, which tends to take a 'sledgehammer to crack a nut' approach.

The Massage Practitioner at Amber Health, Beauty and Sports Injury Clinic tends to use Aromatherapy Essential Oils as part of a variety of standard Massage Treatments.

Typical BODY Massage Treatments prices – variations are being added all the time.

All Massages will include the appropriate Aromatherapy oils. This we believe gives “Added Value” to the quality of the Massage.

Full Body Massage and G5 (1 3/4 hrs)	£45.00
Full Body Massage (1 hr)	£35.00
Full Body & Face Massage (1 1/4 hrs)	£45.00
Japanese Body Brushing (2 hrs) (Brushing the body systematically, salt scrub and massage with Aromatherapy Oils)	£45.00
Pre Tanning / Cleaning Salt Scrub (30 min)	£25.00
G5 Gyrator Massage (1hr)	£30.00
Back, Neck and Shoulder (1/2 hr)	£25.00

Face, Head and Neck (1/2 hr)	£20.00
Face and Neck (20 min)	£15.00
Indian or Thai Head, Face, Back and Neck and Shoulder Massage (1hr)	£30.00

Prices and Timings may vary slightly, should additional work be required on a specific area.

Aromatherapy - a holistic approach

Today, aromatherapy is one of the most popular of all complementary therapies, offering a wide range of highly effective treatments to both the acute and chronic stages of illness and disease. At the same time, regular use of aromatherapy treatments and home-use products can help to strengthen the immune system, thereby establishing a preventative approach to overall health.

One of the reasons that aromatherapy has been so hugely successful is because it uses a holistic approach, whereby the aroma therapist takes into account a person's medical history, emotional condition, general health and lifestyle, before planning a course of treatment. The whole person is treated - not just the symptom of an illness - and this is in direct opposition to the modern trend of just treating the presented condition.

Backache, irritable bowel syndrome or headaches, for example, are often the result of stress and not actually a physical problem. Therefore no amount of pill-popping is really going to provide a long term solution since it only masks the symptoms without addressing the problems. By looking at the causes of the stress and providing treatments to ease and manage it, the aroma therapist will alleviate the condition in a much more efficient manner.

Stress makes you sick

It has long been known that stress accounts for a staggering amount of illness in modern society, and aromatherapy and massage offers one way of combating the ravages of stress without having to resort to modern chemical based drugs; which may be habit forming and may even damage to your health, if taken over a prolong period. Your Doctor should always be asked about long-term potential complications with any drug taken over prolong periods. You Doctor should also be prepared to offer advice on counter indications with any long-term drug usage.

Research has shown how prolonged stress can cause the body to over-produce cortisol and adrenalin which are hormones produced by the adrenal glands. These two hormones are normally secreted to produce a burst of energy as part of the 'fight or flight' response, and of course this response is an essential tool for survival. Prolonged periods of emotional and psychological pressures or stress however, means that the over-production of these hormones can begin to weaken the integrity of the immune system because they reduce the

level of T-helper cells, and inhibit the production of natural killer cells. Here a massage, with the appropriate aromatherapy essential oils may start to show real stress reduction results.

Cruelty-free therapy

This natural form of complementary therapy dating back to ancient times is being warmly embraced by today's environmentally conscious and caring society, in which people are increasingly unwilling to accept the [cruelty inflicted on animals](#) in the unnecessary testing of drugs and beauty products.

The essential oils used within aromatherapy have been tried and tested on humans for thousands of years, and with great success. Therefore, when used correctly we can be sure of their safety and efficacy without the need to test them further on animals.

How Aromatherapy works

When applied to the body, [essential oils](#) penetrate the skin via the hair follicles and sweat glands and are absorbed into the body fluids, where they not only help to kill bacteria and viruses but also stimulate the body's immune system, thereby strengthening resistance to further attack.

Some essential oils increase the circulation and help with the efficient elimination of toxins; others promote new cell growth and encourage the body's natural ability to heal itself. Each essential oil has its own character and aroma, exhibiting a varying number of properties and benefits which are unique to it, since no two essential oils are quite the same.

The minute molecules of essential oils are readily absorbed into the bloodstream when they are inhaled and the lungs work to oxygenate the blood. This form of absorption is most efficient when inhaling essential oils from a tissue, diffusing them in a vaporizer, or adding them to your bathwater. The aroma sends a signal directly to the Limbic System in the brain which is the centre of emotions, memory and sexual arousal. This is why essential oils have such a powerful effect on our moods and general state of mind, as we will see later.

Magical combination

Massage is one of the best ways to enjoy aromatherapy because you not only receive the therapeutic properties of the essential oils, but you also get the wonderful benefits of the massage itself. The therapeutic action of the essential oils when brought together with the revitalizing effects of massage, stimulate all of the organs in the body, plus the skin, muscles, nerves and glands. The increased circulation of the blood and lymph flow also assists with the clearing away of body toxins.

Because essential oils can influence our emotions, aromatherapy can help to lift depression, soothe irritable nerves and generally encourage a better state of mind. It has been discovered that relaxing oils such as Lavender, Sweet Marjoram, Clary Sage, Sandalwood, Frankincense and Ylang Ylang work by stimulating a neuron-chemical called serotonin that is naturally produced by the body to help relaxation and induce sleep. It is this action that

makes these oils so invaluable in helping long-term conditions such as insomnia, stress and tension.

Meanwhile, those of us who enjoy aromatherapy will quietly carry on putting into practice what Plato had discovered over 2,000 years ago. Since it has now been proven by scientists that essential oils can influence both the mind and the body - as we have always claimed - perhaps the skeptics will accept this and at last understand why aromatherapy has been so effective and popular for all these years.

Finally

Aromatherapy excels as a form of complementary and alternative medicine, helping and bringing relief to millions of people where conventional medicine currently fails. Of this there can surely be no doubt. There is one more area where aromatherapy is more effective than possibly any other healing paradigm.

It has long been understood that preventative measures go a very long way towards protecting the body against all types of illness. Therefore the relaxing and de-stressing influence of essential oils and massage, together with their effect on the immune system, places aromatherapy in the pre-eminent position as the finest preventative medicine.

And no matter what your opinion or beliefs may currently be about the efficacy of aromatherapy, there is one thing that we can all surely agree on: Prevention really is much better than cure.

An explanation of Essential Oils

Essential oils are the fragrant, highly concentrated natural constituents that are found in plants. They are what give the plant its characteristic odors and contain the healing power of the plant from which it was extracted. When used correctly, essential oils bring a wide range of health benefits since unlike modern drugs, they have no side-effects.

See a range of [100% Pure Essential Oils](#) we are happy to recommend or would be pleased to obtain for you.

The essential oils are located in tiny secretor structures found in various parts of plants; leaves (eucalyptus), berries (juniper), grasses (palmarosa), flowering tops (lavender), petals (rose), roots (angelica), zest of fruit (orange), resins (frankincense) and wood (cedar).

How are they extracted?

Mostly, essential oils are obtained by steam distillation although other methods are used. Citrus fruits are [cold pressed](#) by mechanical means, and the oil from delicate flowers is obtained by a more sophisticated method that produces what is known as an [absolute](#). This is because delicate flowers cannot withstand the high temperatures needed for steam distillation.

After extraction, the resulting essential oil is a highly concentrated liquid that contains the aroma and therapeutic properties of the source from which it came. Nothing should be added or removed from this oil if it is to be used in aromatherapy. To achieve maximum therapeutic benefits, essential oils should be exactly as they came from the still, so to speak.

Standardized oils

Some industries process essential oils in order to make them meet a required odour or flavour 'profile'. To achieve this, synthetic chemicals are added to the oil and often certain unwanted non-fragrance components are removed (rectification). This 'standardization' is common practice in the perfumery and flavour industries in order to maintain absolute consistency in fragrance or taste, but totally unacceptable if the essential oil is for use in aromatherapy. To us, this is adulteration - not standardization.

Adulterated essential oils may often smell acceptable to the untrained nose, but because they are extended with synthetics or diluted with vegetable oil it makes them extremely poor value for money. Not only that, but if an essential oil has been standardized, adulterated or adjusted in any way it simply will not be effective.

Look for purity

This is why you should always buy essential oils from long established and trusted aromatherapy suppliers who specialize in clinical grade oils and not the more common commercial grade. To meet the high quality for aromatherapy, an essential oil should be extracted from a single botanical species that has been botanically authenticated and derived from a known country of origin.

To be 100% pure, nothing should be added or taken away from the oil after extraction. To enable us to meet this requirement, every essential oil supplied by Quinessence <http://www.quinessence.com/> has been analytically tested for purity using Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS) to establish its purity. This is why all our oils are guaranteed to be pure, natural and unadulterated.

The science bit

The chemistry of an essential oil is extremely complex, and a typical example of oil will contain an elaborate mixture of aromatic constituents such as alcohols, aldehydes, esters, ketones, lactones, phenols, terpenes and sesquiterpenes that combine to produce a unique set of therapeutic qualities.

This complex mixture of natural chemicals is what makes essential oils such effective healing agents; for example eucalyptus oil is refreshing and invigorating - plus it is a very powerful antiseptic agent. This means that essential oils can be used in a [variety of ways](#) in aromatherapy to promote physical and emotional health and well-being.

Health benefits of Essential Oils

Essential oils possess a wide range of healing properties that can be used effectively to keep you in the best of health as well as looking good. These health-giving benefits include improving the complexion of your skin by stimulating cellular renewal, balancing roller-coaster emotions and fighting bacteria, fungi and other forms of infection. Essential oils have an almost endless list of therapeutic uses.

But only by using essential oils of the very highest quality can you be sure of achieving textbook results. Although cheaper essential oils may appear to save you money, they will certainly not deliver the results that you are entitled to expect. Therefore you will have wasted your hard-earned cash.

Quinessence <http://www.quinessence.com/> are just one of many Companies committed to supplying only the very finest, organic essential oils produced from ecologically grown products. We work closely with farmers to ensure that our essential oils are produced from plants that have not been subjected to the use of pesticides or herbicides. **Amber Health, Beauty and Sports Injury Clinic** has no problem recommending them or others of similar status.

To guarantee this level of quality and purity, every essential oil is subjected to the most searching analytical procedures, including [GC/MS chromatography](#).

For an appointment Phone 01753 751532

The History of Aromatherapy

Pt 1: 3,500 BC - 199 AD

The roots of Aromatherapy can be traced back more than 3,500 years before the birth of Christ, to a time when the use of aromatics was first recorded in human history. In reality, the history of aromatherapy is inexorably linked to the development of aromatic medicine, which in the early days was itself combined with religion, mysticism and magic.

This was a time when the ancient Egyptians first burned incense made from aromatic woods, herbs and spices in honour of their gods. They believed that as the smoke rose up to the heavens, it would carry their prayers and wishes directly to the deities. Eventually, the development of aromatics as medicines would create the foundations that aromatherapy was built upon.

Look to eternity

During the 3rd Dynasty (2650-2575 BC) in Egypt, the process of embalming and mummification was developed by the Egyptians in their search for immortality. Frankincense, myrrh, galbanum, cinnamon, cedarwood, juniper berry and spikenard are all known to have been used at some stage to preserve the bodies of their royalty in preparation of the after-life.

The valuable herbs and spices they needed were laboriously transported across inhospitable deserts by Arab merchants for distribution to Assyria, Babylon, China, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Persia. The most sought after materials were frankincense and myrrh, and because during those early trading years demand outstripped supply they had a value equal to that of gems and precious metals.

Masters of perfumery

The Egyptians loved to use simple fragrances in their daily lives and did so at every opportunity. At festivals and celebrations women wore perfumed cones on their heads which would melt under the heat, releasing their beautiful fragrance. After bathing, they would anoint their bodies with oil to protect them from the drying effects of the baking sun and to rejuvenate their skin.

During the period between the 18th and the 25th Dynasty (1539-657 BC), the Egyptians continued to refine their use of aromatics in incense, medicine, cosmetics, and finally perfumes. Until just a few hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Egyptian perfumery industry was celebrated as the finest in the whole of the Middle East and beyond. So great was their reputation as master perfumers, that when Julius Caesar returned home with Cleopatra after conquering Egypt around 48 BC, perfume bottles were tossed to the crowds to demonstrate his total domination over Egypt.

Enter the Greeks

The richness of the Egyptian botanical pharmacopoeia had already been assimilated by many other cultures during previous millennia; the Assyrians, Babylonians and Hebrews had all borrowed from their vast knowledge of aromatic medicine. As the Egyptian Empire crumbled into decline around 300 BC, Europe became the heart of empirical medicine, where new methods were steadily evolving into a more scientifically based system of healing.

The earliest known Greek physician was Asclepius who practiced around 1200 BC combining the use of herbs and surgery with previously unrivalled skill. His reputation was so great that after his death he was deified as the god of healing in Greek mythology, and thousands of lavish healing temples known as Asclepieion were erected in his honor throughout the Grecian world.

The Father of Medicine

Hippocrates (circa 460-377 BC) was the first physician to dismiss the Egyptian belief that illness was caused by supernatural forces. Instead, he believed the doctor should try to discover natural explanations for disease by observing the patient carefully, and make a judgment only after consideration of the symptoms.

His treatments would typically employ mild physio-therapies, baths, massage with infusions, or the internal use of herbs such as fennel, parsley, hypericum or valerian. Hippocrates is said to have studied and documented over 200 different herbs during his lifetime. He believed that surgery should be used only as a last resort and was among the first to regard the entire body as an organism. Therefore we have Hippocrates to thank for a concept fundamental to true aromatherapy - that of holism.

Founders of botany & pharmacology

After Alexander's invasion of Egypt in the 3rd century BC, the use of aromatics, herbs and perfumes became much more popular in Greece prompting great interest in all things fragrant. Theophrastus of Athens, who was a philosopher and student of Aristotle, investigated everything about plants and even how scents affected the emotions. He wrote several volumes on botany including 'The History of Plants', which became one of the three most important botanical science references for centuries to come. He is generally referred to today as the Founder of Botany.

The next great luminary was the Greek military physician Dioscorides (40-90 AD) who served in Nero's army. In order to study herbs, Dioscorides marched with Roman armies to Greece, Germany, Italy and Spain, recording everything that he discovered. He described the plants habitat, how it should be prepared and stored, and described full accounts of its healing properties. His results were published in a comprehensive 5 volume work called 'De Materia Medica', also known as 'Herbarius'.

This epic publication was the first ever systematic pharmacopoeia and contained 1000 different botanical medications, plus descriptions and illustrations of approximately 600 different plants and aromatics. His magnificent work was so influential he has been bestowed the accolade, the Father of Pharmacology.

Of gladiators and emperors

Perhaps the most brilliant and influential of all Greek physicians was Claudius Galen, who lived from 129-199 AD and studied medicine from the age of seventeen. He began his medical career aged 28 under Roman employ treating the wounds of gladiators with medicinal herbs. This unique experience provided him with the opportunity to study wounds of all kinds, and it is said that not a single gladiator died of battle wounds while under the care of Galen.

Due to his phenomenal success he quickly rose to become the personal physician to the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, and since Rome was a thriving academic center during the lifetime of Galen it was the ideal place for him to conduct further research. Galen was the last of the great Greco-Roman physicians, and within 100 years of his death the Roman Empire would begin to decline, plunging Europe into the dark ages.

As the Romans began pulling out of Britain, much of their medical knowledge was discarded and all progress in the Western tradition of medicine came to a halt for hundreds of years. During this period, Europe sank into the lowest depths of barbarism recorded in history, and it would be the turn of another culture to carry the torch of aromatic medicine forward.

The History of Aromatherapy Part 2: 529 AD - Today

It was the Persians who next made the most enduring contributions to the knowledge of aromatics and medicine. Al-Razi (865-925) is considered one of Persia's finest physicians, and during his lifetime he penned a phenomenal 237 books and articles covering several fields of science, half of which concerned medicine. Born in the town of Rayy near Tehran, Al-Razi was known in the West as Rhazes and he had an enormous influence on European science and medicine.

His most influential work was a medical encyclopedia covering 25 books called 'Al Kitab al Hawi', which was later translated into Latin and other European languages, and known in English as 'The Comprehensive Work'. His medical accomplishments were legion, and he also developed tools such as mortars, flasks, spatulas and phials which were used in pharmacies until the early twentieth century.

A legend is born

Next came Ibn Sina (980-1037), also a Persian, who was probably the most famous and influential of all the great Islamic physicians and known throughout Europe as Avicenna. His life truly was the stuff of legend. At the age of 16 he began studying medicine and by 20 he had been appointed a court physician, earning the title 'Prince of physicians'. He wrote 20

books covering theology, metaphysics, astronomy, philology, philosophy and poetry, and most influentially, 20 books and 100 treatises on medicine.

His 14 volume epic 'Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb', which means 'The Canon of Medicine' was over one million words long and contained the sum total of all existing medical knowledge. This monumental medical encyclopedia included the Hippocratic and Galenic traditions, describing Syro-Arab and Indo-Persian practice plus notes on his own observations, becoming the definitive medical textbook, teaching guide and reference throughout Western Europe and the Islamic world for over seven hundred years.

Anglo-Saxon remedies

The oldest surviving English manuscript of botanical medicine is the Saxon 'Leech Book of Bald', which was written between 900 and 950 by a scribe named Cild under the direction of Bald, who was a friend of king Alfred the Great. ('Leech' is an old English word meaning healer). This early text contains a mixture of herbalism, magic, shamanism and tree lore, and describes 500 plants, their properties, and how they can be used in amulets, baths or taken internally.

When the Crusaders returned from the Holy Wars they brought back rose water, perfumes, aromatics and remedies that were previously unknown. Fragrant plants became more popular, with aromatic herb garlands decorating homes and rose water being used to wash the hands of those who could afford it. The availability and range of aromatic medicines continued to increase over the next few hundred years, but the knowledge of the Eastern physicians had not yet begun to arrive on our shores.

Medieval apocalypse

During the 13th and 14th centuries in Europe, medicine was almost entirely governed by the Catholic church. They considered illness and disease to be a punishment from God, and the standard form of treatment administered by the priests was prayer, and perhaps a session of blood-letting. When the 'Black Death' first arrived in 1347, it was devastating. Almost 50% of London's inhabitants succumbed within the first year, and up 40% of the entire population of Europe would die within 3 years. The basic Anglo-Saxon botanical remedies such as wearing sachets of dried lavender and amulets of thyme proved no match for this deadly pandemic.

In 1597 John Gerard published 'Herbal, or General Historie of Plantes' which is now considered a herbal classic. Although the very first essential oils such as juniper, lavender, rosemary and sage had arrived in Britain around this time, he makes no mention of them. Gerard's book proved highly influential, and the apothecaries which had previously only sold the medicines prescribed by doctors, began to to prepare and compound their own medicines too. New style apothecaries that dispensed medicines and attended to the patient began appearing throughout England, but not quickly enough it seems.

The second visitation of the Black Death in 1603 hit almost as hard as the first, and virtually every available aromatic was burned in houses and on the streets to keep the pestilence at

bay. Benzoin, styrax, frankincense and various spice oils were all used to prevent the spread of this deadly disease, but to little effect. It was reported the only people not to succumb to the plague were the workers involved in aromatics and perfumery, and this is undoubtedly due to the highly antiseptic properties of the essential oils.

Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654) was one of the most influential herbalists who also introduced the concept of astrological herbalism. In his most famous work, 'The English Physician' (1652), Culpeper's descriptions of herbs, oils and their uses were intermixed with astrology. Other notable herbalists such as Joseph Miller and John Parkinson would also leave a rich botanical legacy, paving the way for later generations to expand upon. The essential oil industries throughout Europe flourished, providing oils for the pharmaceutical, flavour and fragrance industries.

Champions of modern aromatherapy

The term 'aromatherapie' was coined by a French chemist named René-Maurice Gattefossé (1881-1950) who studied the medicinal properties of essential oils for many years whilst working in his families perfumery business. He had the opportunity to personally test his innovative theories when an explosion in his laboratory caused a severe burn to his hand.

He plunged his hand into a vessel of pure lavender oil which immediately reduced the swelling and helped accelerate the healing process. Most impressively, he was left with no scar. He was a prolific writer covering many subjects, but it was his passion for researching essential oils that eventually led to the publication in 1937 of his ground-breaking book, 'Aromathérapie: Les Huiles essentielles hormones vegetales'.

A French doctor named Jean Valnet followed the work of Gattefossé, and during World War 2 whilst working as a surgical assistant he used essential oils of chamomile, clove, lemon and thyme to treat gangrene and battle wounds. After graduating as a surgeon at the end of the war, Valnet continued to use essential oils to treat illnesses, and was the first ever to use them to treat psychiatric conditions. His inspired book, 'Aromathérapie - Traitment des Maladies par les Essence de Plantes' was released in 1964, and in 1980 translated into English and released under the new title of 'The Practice of Aromatherapy', putting aromatherapy on the English map.

Madame Marguerite Maury (1895-1968) was an Austrian born biochemist who became interested in what was to become aromatherapy, after reading a book written in 1838 by Dr Chabenes called, 'Les Grandes Possibilités par les Matières Odoriferantes'. This was the man who would later become the teacher of Gattefossé. Her influential book, 'Le Capital Jeunesse' was released in France in 1961 but sadly did not initially receive the acclaim that it deserved. In 1964 it was released in Britain under the title of 'The Secret of Life and Youth' and has at last been recognised for the great work that it was.

After her death, the work of Maury continued through her protege, Danièle Ryman, who is now herself considered an authority on aromatherapy. The work of Valnet and Gattefossé stimulated and influenced Englishman Robert Tisserand, who in 1977 wrote the very first aromatherapy book in English entitled, 'The Art of Aromatherapy'. This book became the

inspiration and reference for virtually every future author on the subject for almost two decades.

Today we are at last unfolding the final secrets of the Egyptian mysteries, revealing aromatherapy to be one of the finest ways to combat the detrimental effects of stress, restoring the beauty, tranquility and harmony of Nature into the lives of everyone.

For an appointment Phone 01752 251552