

Building an Aromatic Holistic Framework



Holistic Aromatherapy and other Complimentary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) therapies focus on healing the individual patient by addressing the nature of the disease within the context of the whole person. The analysis of physical, nutritional, environmental, emotional, social, spiritual, and lifestyle values are considered to optimize physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health and well-being. Using aromatherapy within the holistic framework helps to stimulate and support the body's own natural healing abilities, compass the entire person at an individual level, address the underlying issues or causes of an illness, education on the nature of essential oils and their benefits, and prevent health issues. All of these important themes adopt the philosophy of Hippocrates "First, do no harm."

Basic Safety Guidelines

As a consumer of aromatherapy, it is critical to educate yourself prior to purchasing and using essential oils and work with a qualified aromatherapist. Use common "scents" and discretion. Not all essential oils and plant materials are created equal especially when we need to be super mindful to what we are coming in contact on a regular basis. Some may be used more liberally while others should be completely avoided or limited. Negative skin reactions include: irritation, sensitization and phototoxicity - also referred to as photosensitization. There are also properties of essential oils that make them hazardous for expecting mothers and infants or even the elderly such as: hemorrhaging, neurotoxicity, oxidation, affects blood pressure and circulation, etc.

The top 10 reasons a person in the United Kingdom (U.K.) seeks an aromatherapist are:

1. Stress/anxiety
2. Headaches/Migraines
3. Insomnia
4. Musculoskeletal problems
5. Hormonal problems
6. Respiratory problems
7. Arthritis and rheumatism
8. Skin problems
9. Chronic fatigue
10. Sinus problems

These general safety guidelines are highly recommended for essential oils to provide the best outcome.

1. Keep essential oils out of reach of children.
2. Use citrus essential oils with caution and avoid direct exposure to sunlight or any UV light for 24 hours. The cold-pressed (aka expressed) citrus rinds are likely to produce essential oils that are phototoxic, or photosensitizing, and may cause dermal irritation, whereas the steam distilled essential oil like lime or lemon are not reactive to the sunlight. Orange (sweet), mandarin and tangerine are generally safe.
3. Choose cold-pressed, organic citrus essential oils and carrier vegetable and herbal oils. And organic, wild-crafted, steam distilled or supercritical extracted essential oils whenever possible.
4. Avoid continual use of the same essential oil to prevent sensitization.

5. Avoid essential oils that you have not researched. It is important to educate yourself for maximum benefit. It is important to know the safety data on the essential oils that you do use. I recommend building an aromatic and herbal home library.
6. Know the species! They can have unique therapeutic benefits as well as contraindications.
7. Read and understand the ingredient label.
8. If sensitive skin is an issue, there may be increased chances of a negative reaction. Apply a skin patch test to make sure there is no irritation. If dermal irritation occurs do not wash the essential oil off with water, instead use milk or a vegetable oil to bind to essential oils and gently wipe off the skin.
9. Keep essential oils away from eyes and all mucous membranes.
10. Do not use internally. If person accidentally swallows or drinks an essential oil, have them drink whole or 2% milk. If a negative reaction occurs a call to the poison control center may be necessary.
11. Use essential oils in a well ventilated environment.
12. Essential oils can be highly flammable so avoid from direct contact of heat and flames.
13. Dilute essential oils with carrier base for proper application. See below for more information about dilution and measurements.

Special Considerations:

Epilepsy

Avoid: rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*), sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), sage (*Salvia officinalis*), camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*), spike lavender (*Lavandula latifolia*), tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), sweet birch (*Betula lenta*), and thuja (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Blood Pressure

Avoid: Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), sage (*Salvia officinalis*), thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*), black pepper (*Piper nigra*), camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), and peppermint (*Piperta mentha*)

Blood Coagulation

Essential oils to inhibit blood coagulation are: sweet birch (*Betula lenta*) and wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*). Both of these essential oils are 96-98% methyl salicylate, also found in aspirin, which thins the blood and may cause major health issues especially if a fall, accident or emergency surgery occurs.

Diabetes

Significant adverse reactions seen in people with diabetes using essential oils occurs when taken orally. Essential oils may interact with diabetic medication. This should not be an issue because

essential oils are not recommended for internal use and other safer application methods, like diffusion, usually have more positive results anyways.

Elderly

As we age, our skin undergoes a lot of changes including: thinning of the epidermis, transepidermal water loss causing greater permeability and dehydration of skin, and higher risk of dermal irritation or sensitization. Safe practice of aromatherapy is possible with following stricter safety guidelines, such as use 1% dilution (1 drop of essential oil per one ounce or 2 tablespoons of carrier base); do not apply to skin with open sores; and select gentler essential oils (lavender, roman chamomile, etc).

Pregnancy

During pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding there are extra cautious measures that need to be taken. Some essential oils may be used safely whereas others can cause complications. It is best to work with a qualified aromatherapist and other healthcare professionals to gain proper insight and develop a healthy aromatic plan. There are special considerations for using essential oils around infants and toddlers.

Choosing Your Aromatherapist

“Holistic therapies focus on healing the patient by addressing the nature of the disease within the context of the whole person. The holistic therapist seeks to understand the potential contributing factors of disharmony as well as the potential pathways for supporting the body in reaching its optimal state of being” ~ David Crow and Jade Shutes, Floracopeia Aromatherapy Foundation

The primary safety goal when using essential oils is the state of being free from risk or occurrence of injury, harm or danger. Important factors that influence the safety of essential oils are: quality of essential oil being utilized; chemical composition of essential oil; method of application; dosage and dilution to be applied; integrity of skin; and age of client. It is also extremely important to educate the aromatherapist and consumer of essential oils along with follow proper storage guidelines, safety precautions and measures. Refer to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and other appropriate literature to determine application/usage methods. And to always purchase essential oils that are authentic, genuine products derived from best method specific for each species.

Working in partnership with a properly trained aromatherapy professional will help the consumer be more informed on the sources of high quality essential oils and how those aromatic plants are grown and harvested. This is very important to have the integrity of the plant to remain intact. I personally choose essential oils and other herbal ingredients to be wild-crafted, cultivated or organic. Wild-crafted is collected from the plant's wild, native environment. Cultivated plants are grown for the ultimate purpose of being harvested and distilled. Organic plants are grown without the use of pesticides and the farming techniques focus on protecting the cropland and soil, supporting the biodiversity of other plants and animals, and respecting the balance of nature.

Preferred Aromatic Directions & Ingredients

Spritzer - This sample blend contains therapeutic essential oils diluted with distilled water and enzymes (all natural, plant derived, biodegradable ingredients of water, oxidoreductases, transferases, lyases, hydrolases, isomerases, and ligases) that may be applied to preferred area of body. A spritzer may also contain various hydrosols or witch hazel. Recommend to gently shake before

spritzing the blend on heart chakra at the sternum or at the crown as needed throughout the day. Do not have the blend contact the eyes.

Synergy - Blends that are pure, concentrated essential oils that can be diffused (active or passive) for community immunity and cleansing of air or diluted with your choice of carrier base, like coconut oil, unscented lotion, etc. Synergies are not recommended to use directly on the skin unless already diluted with a carrier base. Be careful not to take internally or contact eyes or other mucous membranes. If a burning sensation occurs it is best to remove with a cloth and carrier base like milk or vegetable oil or unscented lotion.

Roll-On - Apply the roll-on applicator with continuous movements along muscle fibers alternated with constant pressure to one specific area on sore muscles in neck and shoulders, base of skull, temporal areas near the ears and hairline, sinus pressure points, inside area of wrists, or any fleshy area that could use some aromatic attention. Avoid contact with eyes and keep in mind touching the oils with your fingers which could later contact the eyes. Carrier base of jojoba oil (*Simmondsia chinensis*) is a very stable liquid wax that can remain freshness for over two years. It supports and nourishes the skin, balances the pH, acts as an anti-inflammatory, has regenerative properties, and is generally safe for all skin types.

Lotions, creams and butters are also available on demand. These are made in a limited manner to keep the inventory fresh and allows for the client to have more of a customized experience. Aromatic lotions are made with various essential oils with an unscented lotion base made by *Just Making Scents* and ingredients include: Distilled Water, Glycerine, Emulsifying Wax, Hazelnut Oil, Emu Oil, Fractionated Coconut Oil, Jojoba Oil, Stearic Acid and Optiphen. Creams and butters are created with the finest, organic and earth based ingredients like vegetable carrier oils, beeswax, shea butter, aloe vera, hydrosols and custom synergy of essential oils designed with mindfulness so that each ingredient contributes to the overall therapeutic value. Creams and butters do not contain any water to help maximize the quality of the product without using harsh preservatives. Massage the product into the desired area, while avoiding broken skin.