



blending for specific outcomes

by Michael Scholes

Michael Scholes is an international aromatic consultant who was trained in England and France and who has spent the last 20 years teaching aromatherapy in the US. Michael has presented over 10,000 hours of aromatherapy classes to over 20,000 students worldwide. He focuses on demonstrating the value of essential oil application in every day life for physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. He offers diploma, certification and basic courses on aromatherapy through home study. In addition, Michael is the president of the Laboratory of Flowers essential oil line where he specializes in organic essential oils and products for body, bath, skin and hair as well as healing products for the practitioner and spas through massage and subtle energy.

*His latest contribution is a Practitioner Kit where over 320 essential oils are featured in 32 kits for physical, emotional and psychological conditions for the practitioner and the client. Michael divides his time between formulating, writing, lecturing, consulting and resourcing essential oils worldwide.
www.labofflowers.com*

Each of us is a complex mix of chemicals that can vary from moment to moment depending on internal and external circumstances. Essential oils are a complex blend of aromatic molecules that can have a profound affect on balancing these chemical imbalances in order to avoid extremes where ones immune system can easily be compromised. The goal of making an effective blend is based on the outcome that you want to achieve. This is where your knowledge of essential oil chemistry, botany, compatibility and personal experience will be vital and will determine how much success you have. Since an aromatic blend captures so much more than the physical properties of the essential oils it is vital that we be conscious, understand, be aware and know what we are doing in order to achieve success

This is the fourth article in this series and we are now focusing on blending for specific outcomes. This article is not an article about what essential oil goes well with each other as this would merely be a shopping list of essential oils to use without fully understanding the process of making a blend. I will not tell you what to blend but instead focus on what is important to look at when making highly therapeutic aromatic formulations.

Since few books teach the art of blending, my suggestion is to study as much as you can and make as many blends as you can. There is no such thing as bad blend, only a learning experience. There are several essential oil books and journals that have multiple blends listed for all types of conditions and this is a good place to begin. However, please use discernment as I am never sure if these blends have been made to begin with or if they have been made if they have been affective. The challenge in making a blend is that most essential oil blends, even bad smelling ones, will still have a positive affect on most conditions and it is often difficult to determine how well a blend has worked. If you are new to blending it is advised to use whatever information that you can find and to blend no more than 4 or 5 oils together in one blend. If you have some experience in blending always write down your formulations (including adjustments) and attempt to customize (starting from scratch) according to your clients needs.

The literal definition of blending is to combine or mix together so that the constituent parts are indistinguishable from one another, where the parts become merged into one or where a

harmonious affect is the result to obtain a mixture of a particular character, quality, or consistency. All these definitions signify that it is more than the addition of one physical substance to another. Although it may appear this way when blending for medicinal purposes (since science dictates medicine) it is completely opposite when blending for emotional or spiritual purposes. Psychological blending is somewhere in between where we attempt to use specific essential oil combinations to work on physical and emotional conditions that affect the mind, our hormones and stress levels simultaneously.

When blending essential oils we are always attempting to combine fragrance in a specific way to be affective for a specific condition. We are combining molecules in a specific order that we will be harmonious to the body and help the body let go of any blockage that is causing discomfort and disease. In this respect essential oil blends assist in altering a pattern of behavior and help us to let go on the physical and emotional level in order that we can be pain free.

It is advised to always treat the symptoms not the condition directly and make one blend for each symptom as opposed to trying to treat all the conditions that an individual may have. It is often difficult to persuade clients that one blend will not work for everything when we come from a place in medicine that tries to combine everything in one dose to treat conditions such as a bad cold. This will mean making up to several blends as there is rarely one blend that can address multiple

symptoms. Some of these blends may be from your stock formulations while others will be customized to the client and charges will be made accordingly.

Affective blending is where you can bring maximum strength to the physical body, balance to the emotional body and penetrate the sub conscious at the level of the spiritual, psychological and core energy levels. In physical blending it is the quality, purity and accuracy regarding dosage that are vital in the blend. For emotional blending balance, beauty and authenticity are the key ingredients on how to make an impact on ones complex emotional life. In this case if it does not smell good there is little chance of passing the threshold of resistance at the heart level. In spiritual blending energy becomes an important component in the blend where subtly overshadows chemistry, dosage and logic. In some cases the less the dosage the more powerful the affect. Sometimes the more subtle the affect the

more deeper the penetration at the level of the subconscious. This in itself defies logic and takes us into the realm of energy medicine where what you cannot see is much more powerful than what can experience through your senses. Just because you cannot smell or feel something does not mean that it does not exist. This is very true for the affect of pheromones that cannot be detected by the conscious mind but are felt at dosages well below our level of conscious recognition.

To seasoned aromatherapists and perfumers there is no doubt that blending is more about alchemy than formulations. It is through distillation, a traditional alchemical process, that captures the concentrated medicinal qualities of the plants as well as capturing the essence of the plant. One should not underestimate the addition of just one drop of a specific essential oil. Sometimes the essential oils are so strong that even removing the lid can be overwhelming. In some

BLENDING GUIDELINES

1. Find the purpose of the blend
2. Make a list of the oils that will be effective
3. Work out the individual constituents
4. Figure out what kind of constituents are compatible
5. Chemistry guides the oil choices - science
6. Pick the optimum oil combination or (combinations)
7. Intuition guides the dosage - alchemy
8. Smell the oils before deciding on your end choice
9. Decide on the final dosage
10. Visualize the smell of the end blend
11. Begin blending and adjust as one goes along
12. Let the blend sit and then make your final evaluation

instances just having a bottle of precious essential oil in your possession is a healing experience.

How much you know about the complexities of essential oils will determine how well you can blend. Your blends are an expression of everything that you have studied, practiced and experienced. It is not what you know but how well you can blend that counts. The goal of blending is to create synergies that are affective for the condition being treated that are safe, smell good and work physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually taking into consideration the client's health. There needs to be a synergistic response where the sum of the parts is greater than the individual components and where individual notes are

difficult to recognize or identify. You know that your blend has merged when it takes on another dimension and where it does not even smell like an aromatherapy blend but instead takes on a new identity and of something that has not existed before. This entails listening through the nose and evaluating a person's condition and transferring this information into essential oil choices. This is not unlike arranging the oils as in a musical score to create the most dynamic, harmonious and balancing blends that will work on opposing imbalances and thus cancel out any negative charge that is affecting an individual's health.

The goal of making an affective blend is to match the blend with what is missing in the individual so as not to add anything

specific but to give back what is missing. What we are doing is putting back what life has taken out due to 21st century living. That is why dosage is so important and something that needs to be customized to the individual and condition. This may be something analgesic for aches and pains, something uplifting for depression or something stimulating for low energy. This blend can be inhaled (diffuser), rubbed under one nose (as in a perfume), applied directly in a dilution to the lungs for respiratory challenges (as in massage oil) or applied neat to a targeted area such as the Kidneys. I like the idea of using single dose applications, for extreme conditions, where pure essential oils formulations are used just once in high dosage that can shock the body back to health. This is not something I typically repeat but extreme cases demand extreme action.

It is this author's belief that all disease is emotionally based caused from imbalances in one's energy, emotions, thinking, beliefs and lifestyle. While circumstances can affect this so can our genetics, childhood experiences, diet, sleep patterns, stress levels and the amount of exercise can also have an affect. All in all people's personalities permeate through their pores and everything that you have experienced in this life has led you to this moment. That translates into your personal smell that reflects underlying conditions whether physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual. It is not uncommon for cancer to be detected by a pet dog whose heightened sense of smell may pick up the condition, months if not years before

FIVE TYPES OF BLENDING

- 1. MEDICINAL/FIRST AID** - where a specific blend is made for a specific condition
- 2. PHYSICAL** – where a blend is made to create a desired affect whether for exercise, increased chi, increased energy or for personal care. The more physical the blend the stronger the blend and use of therapeutic smelling oils.
- 3. EMOTIONAL** - where a specific emotion is evaluated and a blend made and applied in a multitude of applications. For emotions the dosage is less with the goal being an aesthetically pleasing blend (primary fruits and florals).
- 4. SPIRITUAL** – where a blend is made to honor the higher self, increase the subtle energy within or to connect with the divine. For spiritual blends the dosage is miniscule with the oils chosen reflecting plants that have been used traditionally in ceremony
- 5. PERFUMERY** - where one's opposite moods and emotions are captured in the blend to enhance how one feels on the outside in order to feel a specific way on the inside. Perfume blends are often made as attractants to the opposite sex. They are a combination of base notes, middle notes and top notes.



someone seeks out medical intervention. By the time the average persons show symptoms their underlying condition is often well advanced and it is only the onset of pain and suffering that pushes the patient to take action, either allopathic or alterative.

Traditional Chinese Medicine support this way of thinking where each of the five elements needs to be in balance in order that the individual functions at the highest level. If any element is too strong or too weak then the whole system will show signs of imbalance and symptoms will occur until the underlying imbalance is regulated. This system does not remove the part of the body that is in pain of focus just on the symptom, instead it evaluates through logic and understanding what needs to be done in order to restore order. This does not just involve acupuncture but the internal use of Chinese herbs and the encouragement to understand the natural flow or cycle of life.

Any blend that you make will have an affect on all aspects of the body simultaneously. That is physically (through the body), emotionally (through the sense of smell) and spiritually (through energy). What you affect the most is dependant on whether the blend is more therapeutic (physical), balancing

(emotional) or sacred (spiritual). How long you use the blend is dependant on when the body, mind or emotions are restored to a place of equilibrium. One should not use a blend indefinitely and use the general rule of three weeks on and one week off for reoccurring conditions. Once the symptom is under control it is advised to use a lower dose blend or another blend to contain the symptom.

Blending does not always mean making a complex formulation. Some specific conditions are better treated with single oils as opposed to blends whereas other conditions are better treated with a combination of several oils.

As for dosage, this can be anywhere from 1-5% (1% for sensitive people and 5% for those suffering from more severe conditions). It is even possible to use oils pure or neat but one needs to be confident and knowledgeable to be able to do this safely.

An important question is, is it possible to create a blend that is chemically proportional, botanically balanced and esthetically pleasing. Believe it or not it is and we would all be able to do this if we were absolutely tuned in as we would feel what we were doing like a master chef in a gourmet restaurant. For the rest of us we

need to relearn what we do not know, unlearn what we think we know and practice, practice, practice. To assist you one needs to know about aromatic chemistry, botany, psychology, odour intensity, volatility, what blends with what, dosages, odour descriptions and the profiles of at least 100 out of the 250 readily available essential oils. In addition knowledge of fragrance, classifications will be helpful and will assist you in being able to differentiate between different and complementary notes (see table 1). By classifying all the citruses together, for example, it allows you to see the full range of fragrance within this classification and also allows you to be able to substitute one citrus for another if you do not happen to have this particular oil in stock.

In regard to chemistry, essential oils are made up of over 3,000 aromatic molecules. Chemistry identifies these molecules and then gives a framework for how these molecules can best be combined for therapeutic affect. Many essential oils comprise a few components like rosewood while others are a complex mixture such as rose that has over 275 components. Specific constituents have specific properties and most essential oils are made of many types of constituents. Essential oils can be divided into several

TABLE 1 -Fragrance Classifications

These fragrances (essential oils, absolutes and oleoresins) can be classified into the following categories

CLASSIFICATIONS	USE	ESSENTIAL OILS		BLENDS WELL WITH
1. ABSOLUTES & OLEORESINS Notes that are rich and exotic, highly concentrated and very expensive. Absolutes and oleoresins are not considered essential oils and need to be used in small concentration. Absolutes are solvent extracted and oleoresins are extracted with alcohol.	minuscule amounts.	Bakul (India) Black currant Boronia (Australia) Broom Carnation Hay Jasmine (India) Kewda attar Lentisque Linden Blossom (France)	Mimosa Narcissus Oppoponax oleoresin Orange Blossom Osmanthus Rose absolute Tonka Bean Tuberose Vanilla oleoresin Violet leaf	aldehydes, exotic florals, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, resins, spicy, woody
2. ALDEHYDE NOTES Note: lemon scented and are found in many perfumes.	in moderate amounts and can be used as the main component in the blend	Citronella Eucalyptus staigeriana (Brazil) Lemon verbena Lemongrass	Litsea cubeba Melissa (France) Palmarosa Thyme linalool - Lemon	absolutes, air notes, aldehydes, exotic florals, florals, floral leaves, fruity, green, medicinal, musky, resins, spicy, woody
3. EXOTIC FLORALS Note: rich, sweet and naturally derived using steam or natural solvents such as animal fat.	in small amounts	Jasmine enfleurage (France)	Neroli (Tunisa) Rose	absolutes, aldehydes, exotic florals, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, resins, spicy, woody
4. FLORALS Note: adds a rich floral top note	in small amounts	Geranium (Madagascar)	Lavender Ylang Ylang	absolutes, aldehydes, exotic florals, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, resins, spicy, woody
5. FLORAL LEAVES Note: lie between citrus notes and florals. Citrus leaves are excellent to use because they are more exotic than citrus fruits without the expense of expensive floral notes like orange blossom (neroli).	in moderate amounts and can be used as the main component in the blend	Petitgrain lemon (France) Petitgrain mandarin	Petitgrain orange Petitgrain sur fleurs (France) Petitgrain Lime	absolutes, air notes, aldehydes, exotic florals, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, resins, spicy, woody
6. FRUITY Note: uplifting, refreshing and add a joy to any blend. Use in moderate	in moderate amounts and can be used as the main component in the blend	Bergamot Blood Orange (Israel) Grapefruit Lemon Lime Mandarin	Orange Sweet Orange Tagetes Vervaine Yuzu (Korea/ Japan)	absolutes, air notes, aldehydes, exotic florals, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, resins, spicy, woody

CLASSIFICATIONS	USE	ESSENTIAL OILS		BLENDS WELL WITH
7. MUSKY - EARTHY - ANIMAL NOTES Note: grounding, centering and used as fixatives	small amounts	Amber (Middle East) Angelica Root (France) Beeswax Bakul (India) Carrot Seed Clary Sage Davana (India)	Hay Absolute Hibiscus Seeds (Equador) Oakmoss Orris Root Patchouli Spikenard (Nepal) Tobacco Vetiver	absolutes, florals, floral leaves, fruity, resins, spicy, woody
8. RESINS Note: heavy (sometimes sweet), sacred, adds base note and often used as a fixative	small amounts	Benzoin Cistus Elemi Frankincense	Galbanum Myrrh Peru Balsam Vanilla	absolutes, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, spicy, woody
9. SPICY Note: pungent and intense (often familiar)	small to minuscule amounts	Aniseed Ajowan (Indian Thyme) Basil Bay Black Pepper (Madagascar) Caraway Cardamom Cassia Cinnamon	Clove Coriander Cumin Galbanum Ginger Wild/Co2 Marjoram Nutmeg Oregano (Morocco) Pimento Tarragon	absolutes, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, spicy, woody
10. WOODY Note: light, centering base notes (except rosewood and ho wood that are middle notes)	in moderate amounts (except agarwood)	Agarwood/Oud/ Aloeswood/ Eagles Wood) - Cambodia, Laos, Vitenam Cade Cedarwood (Atlas, Morocco, Texas)	Fokenia Guiac Wood Ho Wood Rosewood Sandalwood Siam Wood Tree Moss	absolutes, air notes, aldehydes, exotic florals, florals, floral leaves, fruity, musky, resins, spicy, woody

OIL CATEGORIES THAT GO WELL TOGETHER:

Citrus and conifers (pine, spruce, fir)

Florals and woods (ylang ylang and sandalwood)

Florals and spices (neroli and cinnamon)

Florals and citrus (lavender and grapefruit)

Woods and citrus (cedarwood and lemon)

categories based on their chemistry - calming, anti-inflammatory, wound healing, antiseptic, anti-infectious, purifying and energizing. Chemistry will help you specifically with blends for physical ailments as well as understand what molecules will be beneficial for hormonal regulation, calming the nervous system and uplifting one's mood.

As for botany, each plant that is extracted belongs to a botanical family. Botanical families have characteristics in common to other plants in the family. By looking at the family it is possible to see similarities within the essential oils themselves. Please note that many plants within the family are very different in their characteristics so study is required. It is only through the

“... is it possible to create a blend that is chemically proportional, botanically balanced and esthetically pleasing? ”

botanical name that will differentiate the essential oil from a lesser known species and from a species that may have a similar common name but is not the oil that you need for your blend. Becoming familiar with multiple species from multiple countries of origin will only assist you in being able to differentiate between the odour molecules. For instance, one of my favorite geraniums is from geranium bourbon from Madagascar. This geranium has

subtle fruity notes that are very calming and perfect for skin care or subtle energy work. This differs considerably from geranium from Egypt that seems quite strong, is not really subtle and is better suited for say a circulation blend, mixed with cypress and juniper. For diffusing I always use the Egyptian or even Chinese geranium where the price of the Chinese geranium is perfectly suited for environmental fragrancing where the blend will be cost sensitive.

Measurement Conversions

1 oz	=	29.57 ml (we use 30 ml for simplicity)
1 liter	=	1000 ml
1 liter	=	33.81 oz
500 ml	=	16.9 oz
250 ml	=	8.45 oz
100 ml	=	3.38 oz
50 ml	=	1.69 oz
25 ml	=	.84 oz
15 ml	=	.507 oz = 1/2 oz
10 ml	=	.33 oz = 1/3 oz
5 ml	=	.16 oz = 1/6 oz
4 ml	=	.135 = between 1/7-1/8 oz
2 ml	=	.06 = 1/16 oz
1 gallon	=	128 oz
Typically 1 ml	=	20-30 drops (20 for thicker oil and 30 for thinner oil)

You may be asking why psychology is important in blending. This has more to do with the psychology of scent than actual psychology but the bottom line is that the more you understand how fragrance works on the mind the better able you will be to blend. It is always suggested to work on calming and balancing mental activity at the same time as working directly on a specific challenge. People who are in pain, for example, are always certainly irritated, have irregular sleeping patterns and suffer from high stress.

In regard to odour intensity, this refers to how the fragrance impacts your olfactory system. Some oils, like peppermint are very intense and affect you immediately with the inhalation of only a few molecules. On the

other hand, sandalwood needs the warmth of the skin to heat up and has low intensity. Volatility is also important so you can blend according to the principles of perfumery using top, middle and base note to create harmonious blends where the top notes affect the mind (what you smell first), the middle the heart (the bulk of the blend) and the base the physical body (grounds the blend and draws it into the skin). Since essential oils are extracted from all parts of the plant (root, wood, leaves, fruits, flowers and seeds) combining essential oils from all areas of the plant gives the user the best opportunity to process physical, emotional and spiritual conditions simultaneously.

Volatility refers to the airborne nature of the essential oil. Thicker oils are less volatile while many oils, especially the essential oils of citrus fruits, will evaporate quickly. This is why

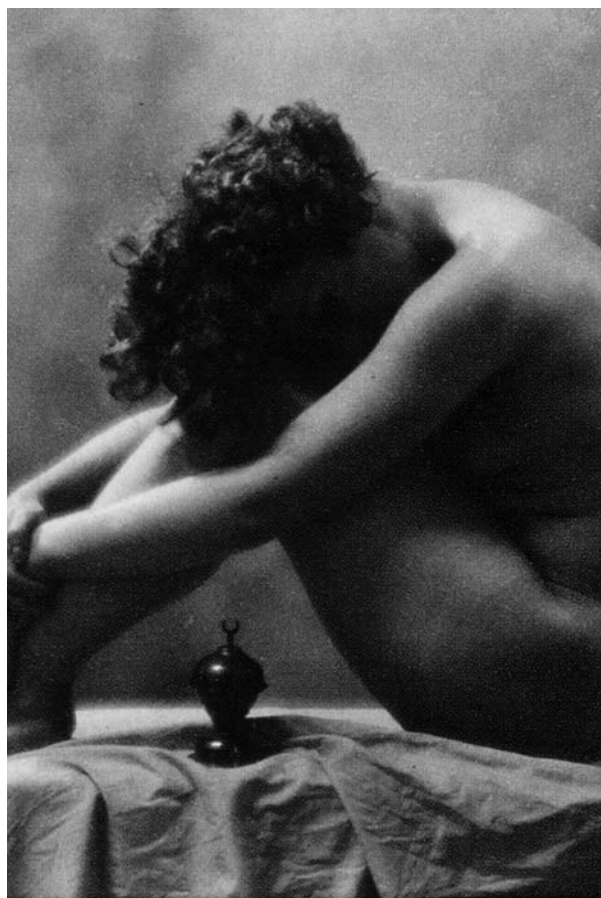
citrus essential oils are used to fragrance the environment where as vetiver and benzoin (less volatile) are used for centering the body and mind and within rituals. What blends well with what is also useful information. Each oil will have several recommended oils that blend well with it depending on the condition being treated. Making your own reference charts will be helpful when blending as knowing what goes well together will be a good beginning at creating the blends foundation.

Finally, odour descriptions can be useful at putting words to what the individual notes feel like. Since odours are so difficult to describe through language, it is often difficult to express how one smell differs from another. By expanding ones vocabulary and using language borrowed from cooking, music and poetry it is possible to understand the

fragrance by the way it makes you feel. Eventually, you will feel what you are making and all your knowledge will dissolve through your intuition and this will be a great day as you make a dynamic blend.

In conclusion, blending can take time and practice and a lifetime to fully experience (as opposed to understanding). Work backwards by seeing what your clients would like to achieve and then making individual blends that will help your client reach their goals. Please note that there is no substitute for knowledge. Be patient and use the oils that you know well first and learn others one at a time. It takes time to know how to blend just like it takes time to know how to cook. Get to know the plants and what goes well together and most important than anything, have fun in the process.

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