

Essential Oil Methods of Application Part 3

Storage and Shelf Life

Store essential oils away from heat and light to preserve their freshness and potency. When stored properly, they have a shelf life of several years. The citrus oils have the shortest shelf life of all essential oils and are best used within one year. The longest-lasting oils, which improve as they age, tend to be the thick resins such as frankincense and myrrh or woods such as sandalwood and roots like vetiver, as well as other oils like spikenard and patchouli.

Carrier oils should be stored away from heat and light to ensure their freshness. The addition of jojoba oil as 10 percent of your carrier oil solution will help extend the shelf life of your blend by slowing down oxidation that leads to rancidity. Vitamin E oil is an excellent antioxidant; adding it to any aromatherapy blend will also help extend the life of most vegetable oils. One or two capsules (200-400 IU) per two-ounce bottle of carrier oil is enough. It is recommended that you make only enough of a blend to last a few months. A refrigerated blend may keep six months or more. Refrigeration of all vegetable oils is highly recommended.

Methods of Application at a Glance

Essential oils are versatile and effective in treating many common problems. The following guidelines are suitable for a single essential oil or a combination of oils. Just remember many problems are best treated by a combination of methods. For example, a cold may be treated with an inhalant, bath, chest rub and compress.

Suggested Dilutions for Various Methods of Application

Massage/Body Oil

2 - 3% dilution (10 - 12 drops per ounce of vegetable oil)
1% for pregnant women, people with health concerns and children (5 drops per ounce of vegetable oil)

Bath

3 - 15 drops per tub, depending on the oil

Compress

5 drops per cup of water

Inhalant

3 - 5 drops in a bowl of hot water
Caution: never do an inhalation during an asthma attack

Douche

3 - 5 drops per quart of warm water
Caution: Choose nonirritant oils only (such as lavender or tea tree).

Foot or Hand Bath

5 - 10 drops per quart of water

Sitz Bath

5 - 10 drops per sitz bath

Fragrant Body Water

5 - 10 drops per 4 ounces of water

Room Spray

20 drops per 4 ounces of water

Gargle or Mouthwash

1 - 5 drops per 1/4 cup of water

Liniment

3% dilution

We hope this article has been informative. This article is part of a series. If you've missed any of this series or would like it in hard copy you can reach us in any of the venues below.

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