

# Aromatherapy - the world of fragrances

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## Health corner

### Aromatherapy – the world of fragrances

I'm pretty sure you all have heard about aromatherapy before. It seems to be very trendy nowadays. Today, many lotions, candles and beauty products are sold as "Aromatherapy." However, many of these products contain synthetic fragrances that do not have the same properties as the essential oils used in aromatherapy.

In fact, the history of aromatherapy goes back a few thousand years.

**Did you know that the ancient Chinese, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans used essential oils for therapeutic purposes for nearly 6,000 years?**

The Egyptians used essential oils for bathing, massage and for embalming their dead nearly 6000 years ago. The Greek Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, used aromatherapy baths and scented massage. He even employed aromatic fumigations to rid Athens of the plague. Essential oils were also commonly used for spiritual, therapeutic, hygienic and ritualistic purposes.

**Did you know that aromatherapy was used during World War II?**

The French army surgeon Dr. Jean Valnet used essential oils as antiseptics.

**Did you know that the dawn of the modern era of aromatherapy is attributed to the French chemist Rene Maurice Gattefosse in 1930?** Gattefousse coined the term aromatherapy for the therapeutic use of essential oils. He was fascinated by the benefits of lavender oil in healing his burnt hand without leaving any scars. As a result, he started investigating the effect of other essential oils for their healing and psychotherapeutic benefits.

Later, Madame Marguerite Maury elevated aromatherapy to a holistic therapy. She started prescribing essential oils as a remedy for her patients. She is also credited with the modern use of essential oils in massage.

**Did you know that a perfume is "Aromatherapy" as well?**

Perfume is a mixture of fragrant essential oils or aroma compounds, fixatives and solvents used to give the human body a pleasant scent. The odoriferous compounds that make up a perfume can be manufactured synthetically or extracted from plant or animal sources.

**Did you know that every year tons of essential oils are processed for food flavours?**

The primary markets for essential oils are the flavour and fragrance industries, including soft drink, food, and cosmetic companies. Essential oils are of value especially to the food and beverage industries, due to their uniform quality and lack of colour.

**So then, what can you use aromatherapy for in your daily life? What is aromatherapy used for by a therapist?**

Very simply: Aromatherapy is the controlled use of essential oils and plant essences that are used to improve physical and emotional health. Aromatherapy works at a holistic level. It can be used for general well-being, help to relieve stress, muscle aches and pains, depression, arthritis/gout, skin problems and much more.

**But what are essential oils?**

Essential oils are highly concentrated essences extracted from aromatic plants, flowers and trees which evaporate easily. They are distilled, expressed or extracted with solvents from the material of one plant species. As a general rule, they must be diluted in a carrier oil, cream or lotion, or water before they are used on the body.

**And how does Aromatherapy work?**

Essential oils have a simple molecular structure and so can easily enter into the body system.

**How to use essential oils?**

For an Aromatherapy massage, a unique blend (essential oil diluted in a carrier oil) will be mixed especially to meet your needs. The blend is then

applied by massaging it into the skin. Aromatic oils pass through the skin into the bloodstream and release their amazing effects on the whole system. Inhalation is the best way to fight a cold and boost the immune system in winter. Using essential oils in a burner helps to keep bugs away, boosts the immune system, makes you feel uplifted or relaxed (depends on oil you use) or just leaves your home with a pleasant smell. Those are the most common applications in daily life.

**Are essential oils safe to use?**

When used appropriately, essential oils and aromatherapy products are safe for the entire family. As with all things in life though, some common sense precautions should be observed when using essential oils as they are highly concentrated.

**Safety Precautions**

Keep out of the reach of children - babies and children are very sensitive to essential oils and they should be used in minute amounts. If you are pregnant, you must seek the advice of your doctor, midwife or aroma therapist before using any essential oils.

Essential oils are highly flammable - keep them away from a naked flame. Only use the best quality oils available - when in doubt, seek out your nearest qualified aroma therapist

**Why I like being an Aroma/Massage Therapist?**

Because of its physical, spiritual and mental benefits, I am passionate about giving a quality massage to promote health and wellbeing, and rejuvenate my clients. I think there is nothing nicer than having a happy client walk out of my clinic, feeling much better than before.

For more information, visit [www.aromayoung.blogspot.com](http://www.aromayoung.blogspot.com) or find aromayoung on facebook.

By Alexandra Jung

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Massage & Aromatherapy