

# Integrative Therapies

## Aromatherapy 01

### **Aromatherapy and essential oils**

have become very trendy and we are suddenly hearing a lot about them. What, exactly, is it all about?



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### **Aromatherapy**

Aromatherapy is the use of **essential oils** for therapeutic purposes. It is a branch of naturopathy and phytotherapy. The properties of essential oils have been known and used since ancient times on certain continents. Essential oils were used as perfumes, healing aids and for embalming purposes. Their use disappeared little by little as modern medicine advanced.

In Northern countries, we waited until 1928 when Maurice Gattefossé (a french perfumer) -plunged his severely burned hands following an explosion in a Lavender essential oil bucket. His intuitive gesture and the observations he made following this episode are at the roots of the rediscovery of aromatherapy. Then, Jean Valnet, M.D. was the first person to experiment with the benefits of aromatherapy when he was in a war zone. Jean Valnet is now considered to be the pioneer of aromatherapy.

### **What is an essential oil (EO)?**

The volatile smell fraction extracted from appropriate plant material is an EO.

**EO is both liquid and viscous.**

### **What are the properties of essential oils?**

Each EO has its own characteristics and contains **more than 70 active substances**.

Their properties are as diverse as the huge variety of plant material from which they are extracted. Moreover, the soil quality in which the plant grows determines its unique profile and quality. In other words, the characteristics of a lavender EO extracted from a plant grown in Bulgaria will be different from an EO extracted from a lavender plant grown in south of France.

It is thus of utmost importance to know **each individual essential oil and its particularity**.

To give you a sampling of their virtues, simply know that certain of their compounds **are anti-infective, anti-inflammatory, anti-viral or anti-fungal**. Some EOs are wound healing; others strengthen blood vessels or aid the digestive process... **their various properties make them real therapeutic treasures**.

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**Why use them?** Thanks to their various properties, EOs are very useful to treat **numerous types of health problems**. These active substances **quickly penetrate the blood stream**, enabling them to rapidly begin their healing role. While quick acting, they **do not cause habituation**. Moreover, the antibiotic- like effect of designated EOs could represent an alternative to chemical antibiotics in certain cases. This could be of particular interest because we now know that a huge number of germs have become antibiotic-resistant.

### **How is an EO efficient/effective ?**

Applying a blend of specific EO and vegetable oil to the skin on certain areas enables the active substances **to rapidly enter the blood stream and play its particular role**.

It is in the vast world of EO that **the greatest anti-infective** substances have been found!

Numerous scientific studies have shown the **efficiency and effectiveness of EOs on germs, viruses and bacteria**.

### **Who can use EO?**

**The use of EO is of interest at all times and during one's entire life**. As a precaution, it is not recommended to use them on children until the age of 3.

One or two drops of a very gentle EO could be spread over a pillow or poured into an **atmospheric diffuser** but more is not recommended. When so doing, it is very important to use a quality atmospheric diffuser to avoid heat destroying the EO molecules. Always seek the advice of a specialist.

### **Various uses of EO**

EOs are commonly used for massages, cosmetology, olfactory-therapy, atmospheric diffusion and skin application. They act locally and globally. They are real remedies **supporting the person in a holistic manner**.

### **How to chose an essential oil?**

For an EO to deploy all its benefits, it is of utmost importance to choose a high quality essential oil. EOs have to be 100% organic, manufactured according to strict rules and chemotyped.

(A chemotyped EO contains approximately 75 active molecules).

EOs are identified by their **Latin names**. This is importance to avoid any type of confusion among or between EOs. The properties of a Lavender EO (*Lavendula Officinalis*) are very different from the properties of a Lavandin EO (*Lavandin Abrialis*) although their smells could easily be confused.

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### How can EO help me?

EOs can be of help in a wide array of problems such as **mood disorders, digestive problems, women's health, colds, joint pain and sleep disorders**. EOs can support your immune system, help prevent diseases and much more...

### Contraindications

As explained above, EOs contain **active ingredients** which are the **reason for their efficiency**. This is also why their use can generate **side effects**. If you are under medication, you must inform your therapist accordingly. Otherwise, your therapist might prescribe an EO that would interfere with your medication. Also note that some EOs are photosensitive, others can provoke allergies, and some have quite strong smells that some people may dislike. We therefore recommend great caution and consultation with a qualified expert.

If, however, the EO is carefully selected, the appropriate dose is strictly respected, one is able to measure the positive effect of the treatment very fast. It is also very effective to use them in **synergy\*** which increases their positive effects **exponentially**.

### To conclude

Aromatherapy is a real science. Eos should therefore be used with great care. Most importantly, **learn how to use EOs under the supervision of a qualified professional**.

### Want to learn more?

I would recommend beginning with one or two EOs. You will learn their properties, their smell, how to sparingly and carefully use them and also how comforting they can be ...

Once you have experienced for yourself how useful and precious they are, you will be able to increase and develop your knowledge for your own well being and that of those most precious to you. (or "and that of your loved ones.")

**Should you wish to learn more about essential oils, you can contact me at [c.leproux@outlook.com](mailto:c.leproux@outlook.com)**

I wish you good health and some fun while discovering the virtues of essential oils!

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**EO** Essential oil

**Synergy** A specific blend of EO that enhances their effect.

**NB** **Only use EOs under the supervision of a qualified professional.**

**EOs must always be diluted in a neutral support before any type of use.**

**Never ingest any EO**

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