

— HAVE YOU TRIED —

Aromatherapy?

AROMATHERAPY USES PLANT-BASED ESSENTIAL OILS TO BENEFIT MIND, BODY AND SOUL. WE FIND OUT MORE

Words: Karen Young

As well as being aromatic, essential oils contain special properties that can be used therapeutically to enhance health and wellbeing. Each oil has a unique chemical composition and its tiny but powerful molecules are absorbed into the bloodstream via the lungs when inhaled, and when applied onto the skin.

Combined with massage to soothe away muscular tension, aromatherapy treatments can be either deeply relaxing or invigorating and uplifting, depending on the oils and massage techniques used by the therapist.

Before your treatment begins, your therapist will carry out a full consultation, asking questions about your medical history, general health, diet and lifestyle. This will enable them to select a small number of essential oils appropriate to your individual needs, which will then be blended into a carrier oil or cream and applied throughout the massage. The areas treated will come down to your personal preference, but would typically be a full body massage, or a neck, back and shoulder massage, with towels used to protect your modesty.

At the end of the treatment, your therapist may recommend that you use certain essential oils at home – for instance, in the bath or on a tissue for inhalation – to enhance the benefits gained from your aromatherapy massage.

Appointments last from 30 minutes to an hour or more, with prices ranging between £20 to £65, depending on the length of treatment and location – if you're looking to treat yourself, luxury spas may charge £100 per session.



While essential oils offer many health benefits, they can also be a risk to health if used inappropriately.

“Certain essential oils can result in skin damage if applied shortly before exposure to sunlight or ultraviolet light, while others should be avoided during pregnancy. This is why it’s really important to see a professional therapist, whether it’s for a treatment or advice on using essential oils safely at home,” explains aromatherapist and FHT Vice President, Mary Dagleish.

“Only use high quality essential oils and ensure that these are stored safely and disposed of according to the supplier’s recommendations. And never ingest essential oils, as this can be dangerous.” @

The Federation of Holistic Therapists (www.fht.org.uk) is the UK and Ireland’s largest professional association for complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists.

5 benefits of aromatherapy

1 It’s often said that a good day starts with a good night’s sleep. For those who struggle to drop off, essential oils such as lavender, Roman chamomile and neroli can help to induce a peaceful slumber.

2 Those who suffer from skin problems, including acne, eczema and psoriasis, can greatly benefit from aromatherapy blends made specifically for the individual and their skin.

3 If you’re facing an exam or important meeting, lavender or sweet orange essential oils can help to soothe the nervous system and reduce anxiety.

4 Staying focused on a task can be difficult, particularly in a stressful or noisy environment, or for those with memory problems. Rosemary, peppermint, grapefruit or lemon can stimulate the mind and aid concentration.

5 For those who love to travel but sometimes feel held back by motion sickness, peppermint and ginger can be very useful in combating nausea.

BEFORE YOU GO
Aromatherapy should be used alongside standard medical care, and not as an alternative. Always consult your GP, midwife or other health professional for medical attention and advice.