

Oil, Essentially for the Doldrums

By Mary Germanotta Duquette

mary@maryduquette.com

Published on A1Nutrition.com



It can be difficult coping in this complex world and fast-paced culture. At times, we need a hand in getting past all the murky parts – safely and naturally.

To relieve your stress and anxiety, you might take a walk. Or, sometimes you might sit quietly and read a book. And other times, you might find that the scent of a rose garden, or breathing in your chamomile tea, is the most refreshing and relaxing experience – enough to calm your thoughts, and to uplift you.

Different aromas can certainly make your mood better, and this is exactly why essential oils can be an important part of the healing process – or you can use them simply as a way to wind down and feel better after a difficult day.

What will Essential Oils do for me?

Essential oils provide you with a clean, safe pick-me-up. These plant-based oils do wonders in helping your body maintain its own natural equilibrium, by stimulating olfactory receptor cells that send a message to the limbic system – which in turn affects breathing, blood circulation, and hormonal balance. So by using essential oils, you're actually helping to guide your body closer to its natural state.

Essential oils contain hormone-like properties, are derived from the part of the plant that gives it a scent, and act as infection police - protecting the plant from disease and fungus. And essential oils also contain ingredients similar to human blood and tissue, making them compatible with our own physiology – which is part of the reason why we are so drawn to, and affected by, these aromatic oils.

Emotional Rescue

Our olfactory sense is highly attuned to the emotions. Notice that when you smell something, you're instantly brought back to a time in your memory. This could be a survival method that has carried the human species from long ago to present day – or, it could be a way for us to tune into our emotions, or into our own well-being. The bottom line is, our sense of smell elicits definite feelings and thoughts – and most of the time, we have an immediate reaction.

According to The Ananda Apothecary in Boulder, Colorado, researchers found that essential oils provide a boost to various brain functions, including the limbic, or

emotional, function. In a Korean study, it was found that by using essential oils in massage, patients experienced positive effects in mental aspects of wellness.



While essential oils do not cure depression, they do provide a valuable get-out-of-bed-and-look-at-the-day attitude, which then enables you to concentrate on the source of your depression. Many naturopaths believe that by using essential oils to help combat your depression or anxiety, you're creating a balance within your body that allows you to heal quickly and more effectively.

The Oils

Sample essential oils you can use for depression:

- **Bergamot.** A fresh, citrusy oil, Bergamot helps in depression, loss of appetite, and stress.
- **Chamomile.** With decidedly calming properties, chamomile can help to relieve irritability. It also effectively relieves symptoms associated with menstruation, menopause, and PMS.
- **Jasmine.** Known as the “king of flowers,” you can use jasmine for fatigue and general sluggishness.
- **Lavender.** With the Latin name “Lavare,” which means “to wash,” Lavender helps aid in nervous tension and can act as a pain reliever.
- **Neroli.** Produced from the blossoms of the bitter orange tree, Neroli helps to relieve insomnia, stress, and nervousness.
- **Rose Absolute.** Different from Rose Otto, in that it has a purer rose scent, Rose Absolute is better suited for perfumery - and so might be the better choice, in terms of effectiveness for the relief of symptoms of depression. Which one you decide to use is up to you – try them both and compare!
- **Rose Otto.** A strong, powerful oil, Rose Otto can be used for general depression and grief, and is used widely for relief from PMS and menopause. Note that any rose oil must be diluted down quite a bit before using, since the scent can be overwhelming.

Carrier Oils

Make sure you include the use of carrier oils when you begin your olfactory regime. Carrier oils are mild oils that are used to dilute the essential oils – which can be potent, and might irritate your skin if you use them by themselves. Try experimenting by using different amounts of each, to see what combination works for your particular skin type.



Some carrier oils to try are:

- **Avocado.** Since the avocado is inherently fatty, this oil feels dense and thick on the skin – but it's sweet and nutty, and has a shelf life of twelve months. Avocado oil is best kept unrefrigerated.
- **Grapeseed.** Light and sweet, grapeseed oil goes on lightly, and leaves very little film on your skin.
- **Hazelnut.** Hazelnut oil goes on smoothly, and penetrates well into your pores. It's great for those with particularly oily skin.
- **Jojoba.** Not quite as sweet as the nut oils, Jojoba absorbs quickly and has a pleasing scent.
- **Rosehip Seed.** This mild oil goes on lightly, and virtually disappears after you apply it - leaving almost no oily feeling to your skin.
- **Sesame.** With a slight scent, sesame oil leaves a film on the skin. This oil is best use for massage purposes.
- **Sweet Almond.** Light, sweet, and quickly absorbed, sweet almond oil is considered a good, basic carrier oil. *Note: Don't use if you are allergic to tree nuts.*
- **Sunflower.** This sweet oil penetrates into your pores very well, and doesn't leave an oily residue behind. It's also relatively inexpensive, and has a shelf life of twelve months.

Remember that you should only use essential oils as an initial approach for clinical depression – not as a complete antidote. If you are clinically depressed, you should seek a doctor's advice. But do remember that these oils will help restore your balance, no matter what your condition, so that you can start on your path to feeling better and whole again.

Here's to a healthy lifetime of olfactory delight!

Try it topically

Try treating your feelings of depression and anxiety with essential oils in a few different ways. You'll feel like you're relaxing at the spa – in the comfort of your own home!

- **Bathe.** Add ten drops into your bathtub and sit in the bathtub for at least fifteen minutes. Light some candles and put on soothing music. Close your eyes, and relax. Breathe in deeply and let the scent wash over you.
- **Massage.** If you are lucky enough to know someone who will give you a massage, add a few drops to your carrier oil and hand it to them. Then slip away into oblivion as you relax the hour away. Heaven!
- **Inhale.** Use the oils to simply inhale – but not literally. Just breathe them in as if you were sniffing a beautiful flower.



Sources:

- *The Ananda Apothecary, 245 30th Street, Boulder, Colorado, 80305*
<http://www.anandaapothecary.com/index.html>
- *A World of Aromatherapy, © 2001-2007*
<http://www.Aworldofaromatherapy.com>
- *A2Z of Health, Beauty, and Fitness*
<http://health.learninginfo.org/>
- *Organic Facts*
<http://www.organicfacts.net/>
- *Aroma Web*
<http://www.aromaweb.com/>
- *Nature's Gift Aromatherapy Products*
<http://www.naturesgift.com/>

###