

## Home use of oils

There are many ways essential oils can be used at home:

### AROMATIC BATHS

This method is useful for self-use and may be used between treatments to reinforce the treatment given by an aromatherapist.

#### Method

Essential oils may be added directly to the bath water, blended in a carrier oil first (be aware that bath will become slippery) or you could blend the essential oil in milk (full or half fat). If adding the essential oils directly to the water, take care to disperse in the water as the oils will not dilute in the water, but will float on the top.

A safe amount of essential oil to add to the bath to use is up to six drops of most oils. *Note:* Oils such as lemon and peppermint need to be restricted to two or three drops only, as they could cause adverse skin reactions if used to excess.

**Never use undiluted oils in the bath for babies, young children and those with sensitive skin: always dilute them in a carrier oil first. Remember the bath will become more slippery!!**

If making up an aromatic bath oil, the same dilution rate of 2% essential oil to carrier applies. You can also buy base products, which will disperse in a bath.

Always ensure you label the blend as it all too easy to forget what has been put into an unlabeled container. Usually one or two capfuls will be sufficient for a bath.

### HAND AND FOOT BATHS

These can be useful to treat areas, which cannot be massaged, for example an arthritic or otherwise injured limb.

#### Method

The amount of essential oils would be restricted to 2-4 drops for a hand bath and 2-6 drops for a footbath, depending on the choice of oils.

The hands and feet are highly penetrative areas and if someone cannot be obviously treated with massage, then it is a useful way of absorbing the oils into the bloodstream for therapeutic benefit.

### STEAM INHALATION

This method is especially suited to sinus, throat, chest infections and hay fever.

#### Method

A single drop may be enough, and four drops maximum. Try one drop only the first time. **Use caution if you have a history of asthma or allergies.**

Provided this is well tolerated, you can then increase the amount of oil used and lengthen the treatment time to five minutes or more.

## COMPRESSES

This is very effective way of using essential oils to relieve pain and reduce inflammation.

### **Method**

A hot compress may be made by filling a bowl with very hot water and then adding two or three drops of essential oil (depending on the oil). Dip a piece of absorbent material such as a flannel or lint into the water, squeeze out the excess and then place over the affected area until it has cooled, then repeat. Hot compresses may be particularly useful for backache, earache, rheumatism, arthritis, abscesses and toothache.

Cold compresses are made in a similar way, using ice cold water rather than hot water. These may be useful for headaches, sprains, strains and hot, swollen conditions.

## BURNERS AND VAPORISERS

This method is used for vaporising essential oils in a room. The simplest form of burner involves a night-light and a section that is filled with water.

### **Method**

Up to 12 drops of essential oil may be added to the water section of the burner. The heat of the night-light evaporates the water and the essential oil, vaporising the odour into the atmosphere.

Another way of diffusing essential oils into the atmosphere involves a small heating element and a small pad onto which the drops of essential oil are placed - this is more commonly known as a vaporiser.

## BLENDING WITH CREAMS

Essential oils may be blended into base creams or carrier oils. It is sometimes easier and more convenient to apply a cream or lotion than an oil, as it is easily rubbed into the skin without leaving a greasy residue.

### **Method**

- Take an unperfumed cream or lotion or carrier oil such as sweet almond oil (be aware of any allergies).
- Fill the pot or jar with three-quarters of the required cream/lotion and then add the essential oils at 2 drops to 10ml of base cream or lotion and shake or stir well.
- Add the rest of the cream/lotion and leave a 10% air gap to ensure an even blend of oils.
- Label and use when required.

Base creams or lotions may be bought from good essential oil suppliers. They should be unperfumed and made from pure and natural plant substances.