



## Complementary methods to help you sleep: Aromatherapy & Essential Oils



Troubled mind, tired body, stressed out, fear, anxiety, exams, projects, travelling & jetlag, are common in our lives making falling asleep and sleeping well a problem. Nothing feels more defeating than checking the time in the dark and realizing you haven't been able to sleep yet another night. Sleep is a necessity for maintaining health, performance and safety. An occasional night without sleep is not dangerous although it may affect our daily routine, however chronic lack of sleep affects our overall health in many ways. Read more [The Art of Sleep](#)

Sleep issues tend to be one of the most common symptoms that accompanies stress and anxiety. According to the American Sleep Association, about *50-70 million* American adults have some type of sleep disorder with insomnia being the most common. There are a number of complementary methods and practices that can help the body relax in order to be able to enter into deep sleep. Some of these techniques are Aromatherapy, Visualization, [Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#) and [Tapping](#).

### What is Aromatherapy?

Aromatherapy sometimes called essential oil therapy is a holistic method that uses natural plant extracts to promote health and well-being.

### What are Essential Oils?

- Concentrated, aromatic plant extracts created with the use of distillation or cold pressing.
- Used for thousands of years for emotional, cosmetic, medical and even spiritual purposes.
- The term "essential oil" comes from "quintessential oil", Aristotle believed that in addition to the four physical elements (fire, air, earth and water) there was a fifth element, quintessence. The "spirit" or life.
- Back in the 17th and 18th centuries, physicians including Hippocrates, promoted the therapeutic use of scents, even the plague was treated with fragrances!





## Prepare to sleep

- Before going to bed, avoid caffeine, your computer, phone or anything else that stimulates your mind or body.
  - Take a bath, meditate, pray, do some exercises to help induce sleep like gentle stretches, yoga, breathing exercises, drink some herbal tea, listen to relaxing music
  - Use Essential oils to calm you and help you sleep (see next page)
  - Once in bed observe your breath and appreciate its perfection. Say calming words to yourself such: I am safe, I am joyful, I enjoy the calm and peace that I have, I am becoming a more relaxed
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- If you should wake up in the middle of the night, tell yourself its ok. Bring up comforting images and thoughts to your mind and go back to observing your breath. Focus on bringing in relaxation to the present moment and releasing/letting go of any tension or racing thoughts keeping you awake.
  - If you can't manage to sleep in more than 20 minutes, get up, go to another room, and do a quiet, soothing activity, like applying oil/cream on your face and hands, meditate, read a book, or sip a cup of chamomile or herbal tea. Keep the lights dim to remind you that it's still nighttime. Avoid using your phone, tablet, laptop, or TV screen. Avoid checking the time as it may add to the stress of not being able to sleep. Your goal is to be mindful and concentrate on the present moment, calming your mind and letting go of the tension or racing thoughts that are keeping you awake. Once you give yourself a break, return to bed, bring to mind you're the comforting images and once again concentrate on your breath





### How to use Essential Oils

- ✓ In a Burner: Use 3-7 drops of essential oil dissolved in water
- ✓ Stick: Burn sticks before you go to bed and ventilate the room well or burn outdoors
- ✓ In bath water: Add 2 to 12 drops (depending on essential oil) into bath water (2 in 1: good for your skin as well)
- ✓ In body oil: Dissolve 2-12 drops in 200 ml almond oil spread on your body after shower/bath (2 in 1: excellent skin moisturizer as well)
- ✓ In a face/body cream: add essential oil to unscented facial or body creams and lotions or create your oil mix (200 ml vegetable oil: almond, coconut, argon mixed with 20 drops of essential oil) Use for massage or to soften and soothe the skin as well as address emotional issues and help you sleep. See [Spa Treatments at Home.pdf](#)

### Essential oils uses

<b>Stress</b>	Lavender, lemon, bergamot, peppermint, pine, ylang ylang
<b>Insomnia</b>	<b>Lavender, chamomile, jasmine, neroli, rose, sandalwood, sweet marjoram, ylang ylang</b>
<b>Anxiety</b>	Lavender, bergamot, rose, sage, citrus, chamomile, sandalwood, rose, geranium
<b>Mood</b>	Peppermint, chamomile, lavender, jasmine
<b>Pain</b>	Lavender, chamomile, sage, juniper, eucalyptus, rosemary, peppermint, green apple
<b>Nausea</b>	Mint, ginger, lemon, orange, ginger, dill, fennel, chamomile, clary sage, lavender
<b>Memory</b>	Sage, peppermint, cinnamon
<b>Energy</b>	Black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, clove, angelica, jasmine, tea tree, rosemary, sage

### Other benefits of essential oils/Aromatherapy

Besides helping you get a good night sleep essential oils can help you manage a number of issues

- Manage pain
- Improve mood
- Reduce stress, agitation, anxiety
- Soothe sore joints
- Treat headaches and migraines
- Ease discomforts of labor
- Fight bacteria, virus, or fungus
- Improve digestion
- Boost immunity





## Words for the Wise: Secrets to sleeping well

- 1. Exercise Boosts the effect of natural sleep hormones** such as melatonin, people who exercised had an easier time falling asleep. Just watch the timing of your workouts. Exercising too close to bedtime can be stimulating. A morning workout is ideal. Exposing yourself to bright daylight first thing in the morning will help the natural circadian rhythm.
- 2. Reserve bed for sleep.** It is not an office: no phone calls, emails, no late-night TV there. Your bed needs to be a stimulus for sleeping not for wakefulness.
- 3. Keep your bedroom comfortable,** calm, quite, dark, cool in the summer and warm in winter
- 4. Start a sleep ritual.** When you were a child and your mother read you a story and tucked you into bed every night, this comforting ritual helped put you to sleep. Even now, bedtime rituals can have a similar effect as they signal the body and mind that it's time to sleep. Drink a glass of warm milk, chamomile, take a bath, listen to calming music to unwind
- 5. Eat, but not too much.** A grumbling stomach can be distracting enough to keep you awake, but so can an overly full belly. Avoid eating a big meal within two to three hours of bedtime. If you're hungry right before bed, eat a small healthy snack (such as an apple with a slice of cheese or a few whole-wheat crackers) to satisfy you until breakfast.
- 6. Avoid alcohol and caffeine.** If you have a snack before bed, wine and chocolate shouldn't be part of it. Chocolate contains caffeine, which is a stimulant. Alcohol has a similar effect. You may think it makes you sleepy, but it's actually disrupts sleep. Stay away from acidic food (such as citrus fruits and juices) or spicy foods, which can give you heartburn.
- 7. De-stress.** Stress is a stimulus. It activates the fight-or-flight hormones that work against sleep. Give yourself time to wind down before bed. Try journaling, breathing exercises, massage, tapping, essential oils, bedtime exercises and meditation.
- 8. Sleep and Nap like a Pro.** Eight quality-sleep hours and a short power nap in the afternoon have numerous benefits



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