



## *The Benefits of Herbal & Essential Oils*

Essential oils may just be your ticket to lower stress, improve sleep, manage pain, and more.

**Just Jameen** uses essential oils in our products. We use Lavender, Peppermint, Eucalyptus, Basil, Sage, Lemongrass, Rose, Rosemary, and many others. Soon we will have a luxury Spa line with only essential oils. We use these oils in our lotions and creams, soaps, Luxury mist and shower gel. Our Eucalyptus and Peppermint Spray is extremely popular for repelling bugs if you are at a concert or working in your garden and to help you clear your breathing. For the scents and products, we use go to [www.justjameen.com](http://www.justjameen.com).

Essential oils are bottled plant extracts. They're made by steaming or pressing plants to trap the compounds responsible for their fragrance, according to John Hopkins Medicine. More importantly, their unique aromas have been employed in healing practices for thousands of years and may have healing properties.

“One way they work is through our sense of smell,” says Michelle Davila, ND, a naturopathic doctor with the integrative medicine department of Beaumont Health in Grosse Pointe and Royal Oak, Michigan. When you breathe in an essential oil, the scent molecules travel from the olfactory nerves directly to the brain. Here, they interact with a region known as the limbic system, which regulates emotions, memories, and sensations, Dr. Davila says.

The scent molecules can also be absorbed into the bloodstream when applied to the skin. Once in the bloodstream, essential oils distribute throughout the body to potentially enhance various aspects of overall health, according to Davila.

In other words, essential oils may be a helpful for many health concerns, from stress and insomnia to pain and nausea.

Here are some of the ways that essential oils may boost overall wellness.

# Possible Health Benefits of Essential Oils

## 1. Lower Stress and Anxiety

“Some of the possible benefits of essential oils are reducing stress and calming anxiety, and those two aspects are probably why these oils are used the most.

Studies showed inhaling or ingesting lavender essential oil (diluted and under guidance) can lower anxiety levels. Adding lavender essential oil to massage treatments can help reduce anxiety levels. These effects may be thanks key compounds in lavender that have calming and sedating properties.

## 2. Offer Headache and Migraine Relief

Headaches are one of the most common pain-related health concerns, affecting up to 75 percent of adults worldwide, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Migraine, a more severe form of headache, affects roughly 12 percent of U.S. adults, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. Headaches are a major cause of absenteeism from work and school and, as the Cleveland Clinic notes, can lead to feelings of anxiety and depression.

Some people turn to essential oils like peppermint for relief, and there is some limited research on its use for headaches. According to a review, peppermint oil can potentially help ease a headache when applied superficially around the head and temple. This may be due to menthol, the primary active ingredient in peppermint. Menthol has a cooling sensation, which is thought to have an analgesic (pain relieving) effect.

## 3. Relieve Nausea

Some folks try essential oils to tame queasiness from pregnancy, chemotherapy, and indigestion.

Peppermint essential oil and ginger essential oil, for example, are often used for digestive discomfort, including nausea. According to a review published in March 2018 in *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics*, peppermint relaxes gastrointestinal muscles and lowers inflammation that worsens nausea.

Ginger, on the other hand, encourages the digestive process, preventing food from lingering in your gastrointestinal tract, which can sometimes cause nausea.

Research suggests that these physiological interactions of essential oils and the gut may have real-world benefits.

For example, a study published in September 2020 in the *Journal of Holistic Nursing* revealed that inhaling peppermint oil led to significant reductions in nausea and vomiting among hospitalized patients. The results were comparable to those seen by patients who used aromatherapy and an anti-emetic (anti-nausea) medication.

#### **4. Ease Pain from Menstrual Cramps**

Between 16 and 91 percent of women and girls suffer from menstrual pain (dysmenorrhea).

Other holistic options, such as aromatherapy, may offer a safer alternative or complementary approach for easing menstrual pain and may potentially reduce side effects.

According to the [Cleveland Clinic](#), painful menstrual cramps happen when the uterus contracts so strongly that it presses against nearby blood vessels, cutting off the muscle tissue's oxygen supply. Pain is felt when part of the uterus briefly loses access to oxygen.

#### **5. Encourage Sleep**

Sleep disorders affect nearly 70 million Americans every year, according to the [Cleveland Clinic](#). Common treatments for sleep disorders like insomnia include cognitive behavioral therapy, a prescription sleep aid, or a combination of the two, per the [Mayo Clinic](#). Adding a relaxing essential oil to your nighttime routine may also help.

Lavender oil, for example, contains many beneficial compounds, including the aforementioned linalool and linalyl acetate. These two compounds work to depress the central nervous system activity, with linalool exhibiting sedative effects and linalyl acetate showing narcotic actions, according to a review. ([Merriam-Webster defines](#) “narcotic” as a drug that dulls the senses, relieves pain, and induces profound sleep in moderate doses.)

Research suggests that inhaling lavender oil may help lull you to sleep. In a study of 60 patients in a cardiac intensive care unit, those who inhaled lavender essential oil for 15 days saw significant improvements in sleep quality and anxiety compared with patients who did not inhale the oil.

Similarly, taking a whiff of lavender essential oil prior to bed may have helped improve sleep quality. Subjects reported feeling “higher vigor” the next morning. Researchers attributed this to a potential increase in slow- and deep-wave sleep patterns, compared with a control night during which participants did not sniff lavender.

#### **6. Offer Antimicrobial Effects**

Many essential oils also have antimicrobial effects when applied to specific sites on the body.

Eucalyptus essential oil, for example, shows potential in fighting oral bacteria. This bacteria contributes to periodontitis, an inflammatory disease that destroys the tissues around teeth. The main component in eucalyptus, 1,8-cineneol, has been used in oral hygiene products like mouthwash.

It is possible to add a few drops of essential oil to water, which you then gargle and spit out for certain essential oils and indications. However, some experts warn against using this technique.

“When you take a drink of that water, the essential oil is going to launch right into the membranes of your mouth,” Dechen says. Over time, it may create scar tissue and irritation.

Tea tree essential oil is another option that is packed with antimicrobial properties. Test tube studies show that tea tree (*Melaleuca*) essential oil prevents the herpes virus from multiplying, according to the *Molecules* review. Meanwhile, a randomized, controlled study of patients with recurrent herpes labialis (cold sores) revealed that a 6 percent tea tree essential oil gel may offer some benefit as a treatment when applied topically. However, the authors acknowledge that the small sample size makes it hard to gauge the treatment’s effectiveness.

## 7. Tames Muscle Pain

Mixing a few drops of essential oil into your massage oil may offer benefits for various causes of muscle pain, including chronic back pain. Research is limited at this time — here are two small studies on this topic, which are not conclusive.

For a study in Thailand, researchers assigned older adults with chronic back pain to receive a 30-minute Swedish massage (a gentle massage style aimed at relaxation) with ginger oil or a 30-minute Thai massage (an active massage style that uses firm pressure) with no oil twice a week for five weeks. While both groups experienced significant improvements in pain, the Swedish massage with ginger oil group saw better long-term outcomes, as found by assessments taken 15 weeks after treatment. However, it is hard to know if the improvements were due to the ginger oil, the massage technique, or the two in combination. Essential oils may also help lower muscle pain after a workout.

### The Bottom Line: Who Might Want to Use Essential Oils as a Complementary Therapy?

If you’re looking for a complementary therapy that may help with stress and anxiety, sleep, pain, nausea, and headaches or migraines, essential oils might be worth a try. Just be sure to do some research beforehand, as some essential oils may cause allergic reactions or interfere with medications. Check that there are no safety issues or contraindications for the essential oils you are thinking of trying. When in doubt, it is best to discuss with your primary care doctor or practitioner trained in the use of essential oils for health concerns.

## Which Essential Oils Are Best?

There are dozens of essential oils, all with different fragrances and chemical makeups. Which essential oils are best depends on what symptoms you are looking to ease or fragrances you prefer. Some of the most popular essential oils include:

- **Lavender oil:** Many people find the lavender scent relaxing. It is often used to help relieve stress and anxiety and promote good sleep.
- **Tea tree oil:** Also called melaleuca, this essential oil was used by Australia’s Aboriginal people for wound healing. Today, it’s commonly used for acne, athlete’s foot and insect bites.

- **Peppermint oil:** There's some evidence peppermint essential oil helps relieve [irritable bowel syndrome \(IBS\)](#) symptoms when taken in an enteric-coated capsule (from a trusted health supplement provider). It may also relieve tension headaches when applied topically.
- **Lemon oil:** Many people find the citrusy scent of lemon oil a mood booster. It is also often used in homemade cleaning products.

### **Here are some tips to help you shop for pure essential oils:**

- **Look at the label:** It should include the Latin name of the plant, information on purity or other ingredients added to it, and the country in which the plant was grown.
- **Evaluate the company:** Purchase products from a well-known and reputable aromatherapy company that has been around for several years.
- **Choose dark-colored, glass containers:** Pure essential oils are highly concentrated. They can dissolve plastic bottles over time, tainting the oil. Most companies package essential oils in small brown or blue glass bottles to protect the quality.
- **Avoid "fragrance oils":** Fragrance or perfume oils are made from essential oils combined with chemicals or entirely from chemicals. They are not suitable for aromatherapy — instead, look for bottles that contain a single essential oil in its purest form (100% essential oil with no other fillers).
- **Compare prices:** Essential oils range in price, depending on how involved harvesting and production are. Within a line, there should be a wide variety of prices — rose absolute or sandalwood oils will be more expensive, while sweet orange oil will be on the less expensive end. If you find a rock-bottom price for an expensive essential oil, it probably is not pure.

Essential oils can lift your mood and make you feel good with just a whiff of their fragrance. For some people they may even help alleviate the symptoms of various conditions. For more information on how to incorporate them into a healthy lifestyle, consult an integrative medicine expert.

To find the clinical or Latin names for essential oils visit:

[https://www.ingredientstodiefor.com/item/Essential\\_Oil\\_Common\\_Name\\_and\\_Botanical\\_Name\\_Index/1336?category=79](https://www.ingredientstodiefor.com/item/Essential_Oil_Common_Name_and_Botanical_Name_Index/1336?category=79)