

Holistic Benefits of Aromatherapy

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Relaxation is an essential part of health and well-being. In our modern world it seems difficult to attain, in these times of high stress it seems we have forgotten what relaxation is and where to find it.

Holistic therapies are an excellent way to give time to ourselves, relax and to support the body's own healing mechanisms & help create the right conditions for recovery.

Holistic therapies take into account a person's emotions, mental attitudes, lifestyle, diet, physical dispositions, past experiences, relationships etc. The synergy of all these things is greater than the sum of the individual parts. Holistic therapies help the individual as a whole to return them to their highest state of health.

There are various methods of holistic healing that have been popular in the last decade. More and more people are aware of the healing modalities such as Acupuncture, Aromatherapy, Bowen therapy, Color therapy, Crystal healing, Flower essence therapy, Meditation, Reiki, Pranic healing, NLP, Hypnotherapy, Shiatsu to name a few.

Some of these therapies one can learn and heal oneself where as other modalities need good therapist to heal.

One such therapy which one can learn to heal oneself or have a therapist heal is Aromatherapy, which is healing by extract from flowers, fruits, leaves, roots, barks, resins. Essential oil extracted from the different parts of the plant are used for healing.

Aromatherapy has its origin in Egyptian, Arabic, Indian, Greek and Chinese traditions.

Contemporary Europeans have conducted laboratory experiments, which have supported ancient traditional knowledge with modern research.

Aromatherapy works at various levels. At the physical level through massage and baths to facilitate absorption to penetrate the skin. Essential oils such as chamomile, lavender and eucalyptus have properties such as antibacterial, antiviral, pain relieving, and anti-fungal to name a few.

The holistic approach that aromatherapy has taken considers plants actions on the

at the physical level is good for digestive disorders and pain relief, at the mental and emotional level it helps clear the mind and emotional confusion and at the subtle or the energy level its vibrations resonates with the 'ajna chakra'.

One can learn Aromatherapy through various short and extensive courses worldwide depending on whether it is for

personal use or professional interest. Results obtained even from basic knowledge for personal use are good, however there are many precautions that need to be taken and there needs to be an understanding of the properties of the essential oils and how to blend them. Caution in using essential oils is of utmost importance in case of pregnancy, infants, high/low blood pressure, and epilepsy. Certain oils are toxic and cannot be used in practical aromatherapy.

In India, the awareness of aromatherapy is increasing. Courses are being conducted by private institutes as well as the government

*bodies such as at the FFDC at Kannauj. Essential oils such as the flowers of Mogra, Champa, Tuberose, Lotus, Saffron are being manufactured and used in aromatherapy. Essential oils such as Jatamasi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Dhavana (*Artemisia pallens*), Neem (*Azadirachta indica*.) known to have healing properties according to Ayurveda are now a branch of Ayurvedic Aromatherapy.*

Today, Day Spas are coming up in great numbers, often aromatherapy is offered as a service. It is important to be aware that the blends of essential oils that are used for services such as Manual Lymphatic Drainage or Swedish massage need to be personalized to suit the individual after a consultation, to get desired results and to continue the feeling of relaxation much after the aromatherapy treatment is over.



mind, which is through inhalation. When essential oils are inhaled, they act on the olfactory nerves in our brain. Sedative odours such as marjoram cause brain to stimulate the raphe nucleus, which then releases serotonin, a sedative neurochemical. The uplifting, calming, sedating and stimulating qualities of essential oils such as orange, patchouli, lavender are great for relieving stress.

At the subtle level, essential oils have vibrations that convey something of the life energy of the plant and it is this energy that we draw upon to heal at the energy level of an individual. Essential oils such as sandalwood have been used since ages for meditation and the vibrations resonate with the crown 'chakra'.

To understand this better here is an example of the essential oil of basil which is common in India. Essential oil of basil