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AROMATHERAPY AROUND THE CLOCK

Essential oils can boost your wellness from morning to bedtime **By Cheryl Cromer**

Aromatherapy aficionados will tell you that incorporating essential oils into daily living is an easy and enjoyable way to boost your wellness quotient.

Begin your mornings with a refreshing, caffeine-free burst of energy. Like your favorite juice, citrus oils like **TANGERINE** (*Citrus reticulata*) and **LEMON** (*Citrus limon*) offer a natural wake-up call for your senses. Upon rising, add a few drops to an aroma diffuser to combat fatigue and those Monday-morning blues.

In addition to their therapeutic properties, many essential oils offer cosmetic benefits as well since they can quickly penetrate the skin. Essential oils purify the outer dermis, using vital antibacterial components to ward off airborne germs and hearty antioxidant elements to combat damaging free radicals.

After cleansing, spritz your face with a hydrosol — the by-product of the steam distilling process that captures essential oils from plants. Hydrosols offer the same properties as their parent oils, but in far lower concentrations. Choose sweet **ROSE GERANIUM** (*Pelargonium roseum*) or bracing **TEA TREE** (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) to treat combination or oily skin; lightly floral **ROSE OTTO** (*Rosa damascena*) to bolster dry or mature skin types; and woody **SANDALWOOD** (*Santalum album*) for post-shave skincare. Or make your own skin tonic by mixing 6–8 drops of your favorite skin-loving essential oil in 2 oz. distilled water in a dark glass spray bottle. The bonus? The aromas are soothing and can be applied throughout the day when skin (or mood) needs a little lift.

Instead of reaching for another cup of java midmorning to



boost flagging energy, take a whiff of cooling essential oil of **PEPPERMINT** (*Mentha piperita*), whose invigorating menthol scent will enhance alertness and boost stamina.

Another option is **BERGAMOT MINT** (*Mentha citrata*) when you need to hit the pause button during a too-busy day: As an

adaptogen essential oil, it is simultaneously calming and uplifting. The fragrance is citrusy like Bergamot, but with a slightly sweet hint of mint. Adaptogens offer both stimulating and relaxing constituents that work to balance the nervous system and are a restorative go-to during stressful times.

Stomach growling? Try inhaling **GRAPEFRUIT** (*Citrus paradisi*) essential oil for one minute, which scientific studies indicate helps quell hunger. The tangy aroma provides a quiet, steady energy to hold you until you can sit down for a proper lunch. And along with the herbal freshness of **ROSEMARY** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) — known as a memory

Make Your Own Aromatherapy Blends

Energizing

Workout Blend

2 oz. distilled water
or calendula oil
12 drops lavender
8 drops rosemary
6 drops lemongrass
4 drops eucalyptus

Mood

Booster Blend

2 oz. distilled water
12 drops bergamot
mint
10 drops lavender
8 drops tangerine

Afternoon Energy Blend

2 oz. distilled water
14 drops grapefruit
8 drops rosemary
8 drops lavender

Evening Spice Blend

2 oz. grapeseed or
other carrier oil
10 drops ginger
8 drops vanilla absolute
6 drops cinnamon
6 drops lavender

enhancer — grapefruit is the perfect addition to an afternoon pick-me-up blend.

It's five o'clock, when an essential oil one-two punch of clarifying **EUCALYPTUS** (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and tart **LEMONGRASS** (*Cymbopogon citratus*) is called for. A pre-exercise spritz of an energy mist will help amp up your energy level while supporting respiratory health for a late-day workout. Or blend these companion oils in a carrier oil such as calendula, an excellent choice to treat muscle spasms and swelling, and apply postworkout.

For a blissful evening, choose from the calming members of the spice family such as **VANILLA**

(*Vanilla planifolia*), **CINNAMON** (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*), and **GINGER** (*Zingiber officinale*). These rich essential oils are known for their warming and aphrodisiac properties that inspire relaxation. Blend these grounding oils with 2 to 3 ounces of a carrier oil such as grapeseed or sweet almond to create a comforting blend for moisturizing skin or for massage.

Ah, at last — lovely **LAVENDER** (*Lavandula angustifolia*), the most popular, effective aromatic for instilling tranquility no matter the time of day. I often add lavender to each of my blends simply to promote balance — it's that versatile.

The essential oil's sedative properties, however, make it the prime choice for bedtime. Whether you choose to simply toss a few drops of lavender on your pillowcase or diffuse several drops in an aroma diffuser, the scent will lull you into a peaceful state.

Note: Although these blends contain a small percentage of essential oils, they may interact with some medicine. If you are pregnant or on medication, please check with your physician before using essential oils. Conduct a skin patch test prior to use. And always keep essential oils out of reach of children and pets.

