

Sniff Away Your Stress

Aromatherapy Can Help You De-Stress Naturally



According to a new study by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, people with anxiety can experience a heightened sense of smell and are able to sniff out things that calmer folks might miss.

It turns out that when we feel anxious, our body naturally goes into survival mode, heightening our ability to identify threats—and the nose often takes the lead. As anxiety levels rise, so does our ability to correctly sniff out a strong or unusual stench. This could be a sign you're more stressed than usual.

The upside? You can use this anxiety-heightened sniffing ability to tackle the annoying side effects of stress, such as indigestion and insomnia. How? With aromatherapy, the practice of using essential oils—concentrated from flowers, leaves, fruit, bark, and roots—to ease stress.

Here are five simple ways to sniff your way out of stressful situations with essential oils:

For Constant Worrying - Sandalwood

Dab a few drops on your chest, and then practice a simple mindfulness exercise: Close your eyes, sit up straight, and rest your hands on your lap. Breathe slowly and count your inhaleds: Inhale one, inhale two, inhale three, inhale four, etc. When you lose count, start back at one and keep counting until you feel your tension ease.

For Light-Headedness or Depression - Peppermint

Place two drops along the back of your neck or on the crown of your head. Then take 10 to 15 deep breaths with the bottle of oil under your nose (you will feel a noticeable tingling sensation).

For Acid Reflux, Headaches, or Indigestion - Sweet Marjoram

After a warm shower, put three drops in the palm of both hands, and add a tablespoon of unscented body oil or lotion. Rub your palms together and spread the blend on your abdomen and chest in circular, clockwise motions.

For Sleeplessness - Clary Sage

Before you head to bed, take a hot bath with several drops of clary sage in the water. Once in bed, place three drops on a tissue, turn off the lights, and take 10 to 15 deep breaths through the tissue. Keep the tissue on your nightstand while you sleep.

For a Panic Attack - German Chamomile

Put a drop of oil in the palm of each hand, and cup them over your face. Start to slow your breathing by silently counting your exhaleds in your head. The oil combined with the mindful breathing will leave you feeling much calmer.

