

# Essential Oils for Sleep



Photo by [sk8geek](#)



**Essential oils for sleep can help you get a good night's sleep and wake up refreshed and invigorated. Sleep disorders are widespread, especially in today's 24/7 nonstop, always on the go culture. Some estimate that up to 65% of people in Western nations have difficulties getting a good night's sleep. They wake up tired and have periods weariness and fatigue throughout the day. And, at least 10% of the population has such a severe level of sleep dysfunction that they require therapeutic treatment. And, many have resorted to prescription drugs.**

It's no wonder that nearly 40% of people with insomnia turn to over-the-counter medications or alcohol to help fall asleep faster and stay asleep. But, most of these medications have side effects. So, many people are investigating natural botanicals that have calming, relaxing and soothing properties.

Among the botanicals people use are a number of essential oils. Many essential oils have calming effects.

# Scientific Evidence on Essential Oils for Sleep

A number of clinical trials have been conducted to investigate essential oils for sleep disturbances. [One paper](#) reviewed the human studies, many of which were randomized controlled trials, that had been published between 1990 to 2012.

This review indicated that the oils that produced statistically significant results in improving sleep quality included **lavender**, **peppermint** and **jasmine** oil. It indicated that some studies found positive results, though not statistically significant, for **lavender** oil and lavender and **valerian** blends.

The effect of essential oil aromatherapy for improving sleep is much easier to conduct on animals. A [study on rats](#) (which are like humans in many ways) showed that oil vapors that significantly altered sleep time included lemon, rose and valerian. Lemon significantly shortened sleep time while **rose** and **valerian** significantly lengthened sleep time. [Lavender](#) lengthened sleep time, but not significantly.

Many recent studies have examined single oils or an essential oil blend on sleep disturbances. Here are just a few recent studies.

## Lavender Essential Oil

One [hospital study](#) demonstrated that lavender, roman chamomile, and neroli with a 6 : 2 : 0.5 ratio were found to significantly lower anxiety and improve sleep quality in cardiac patients.

Another [study of cardiac patients](#) in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) used lavender essential oil. Those patients using lavender aromatherapy showed significant decreases in anxiety and significant improvement in sleep quality.

A [study of healthy college students](#) demonstrated that aromatherapy using lavender essential oil significantly increased deep or slow-wave sleep (in the first half of the night), percent of time spent asleep, and increased vigor the morning.

Another [study of college students with sleep issues](#) tested the use of lavender essential oil and recommendations for good sleep against only recommendations for good sleep. The lavender group showed significantly improved sleep quality and less daytime fatigue compared to the non-lavender group and these advantages remained for at least 2 weeks after the test.

## **Valerian**

A review of [16 randomized, placebo-controlled trials of valerian](#) for improving sleep quality showed that 6 studies showed positive effects. Most of the larger studies showed an inconclusive, dichotomous outcome of sleep quality (sleep improved or not improved).

A study tested a [combination of valerian, hop, and jujube](#) in capsule form with 120 generally healthy patients with sleep problems (60 using the combination and 60 not). After 10 days patients taking the combination showed significant improvements ( $p < 0.024$ ) over the placebo group in time to get to sleep, nighttime awakenings, and total sleep time. After 20 days the improvements were highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ )

## **Rose Oil**

A [study of rose oil](#) showed that it significantly decreased breathing rate, blood pressure, and perceived alertness with an increase in relaxation and calmness.

## **Recipes Using Essential Oils for Sleep**

Nearly all blends will contain at least lavender, rose, valerian, roman chamomile, neroli, or jasmine oil.

For example, here is a blend [From the Selected Works of Mona Shattell](#)

Bergamot: 2 drops

Lavender: 10 drops

Roman Chamomile: 5 drops

Add to carrier oil: 2 oz unscented lotion or jojoba oil

Apply freely to chest and neck prior to bed

## **Which Essential Oils to Use For Sleep?**

Commercially available blends also contain one or more of the oils proven to help you get a good night's sleep.

- Natural Riches™ Sleep essential oil blend contains Lavender, Clary Sage, Copaiba Balsam, Marjoram, and Chamomile.
- Nexon Botanics™ Zen Sleep Essential Oil Blend consists of Geranium, Lavender and Cedarwood oils.
- Pure Therapeutic Grade™ Good Sleep Blend contains Clary Sage, Copaiba and Lavender
- Edens Garden™ Good Night blend contains Lavender, Sweet Marjoram, Chamomile, Bergamot, Ylang Ylang, Sandalwood, Key Lime, Lime, and Vanilla
- Artizen™ Good Sleep Blend contains Clary Sage, Copaiba, and Lavender
- Plant Guru™ Sleeo Tight Synergy Blend contains Bulgarian Lavender, Spanish Marjoram, Ylang Ylang, Copaiba, Roman Chamomile, Rue, and Sandalwood
- Prime Natural™ SLEEP & RELAXATION blend contains Lavender Bulgaria, Clary Sage, Copaiba Balsam, Marjoram, Roman Chamomile

As you can see, each brand has its own unique blend of essential oils. Investigate these and other oils to see what effect they have on your sleep. Choose a blend that you like

and use it.

## Essential Oils for Sleep References

- [Effects of Aromatherapy on the Anxiety, Vital Signs, and Sleep Quality of Percutaneous Coronary Intervention Patients in Intensive Care Units](#) in the *Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine*
  - [An Olfactory Stimulus Modifies Nighttime Sleep in Young Men and Women](#) in the journal *Chronobiology International*
  - [Effects of aromatherapy on sleep quality and anxiety of patients](#) in the journal *Nursing in Critical Care*
  - [Effect of Inhaled Lavender and Sleep Hygiene on Self-Reported Sleep Issues: A Randomized Controlled Trial](#) in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*
  - [Valerian for Sleep: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#) in the *American Journal of Medicine*
  - [Evaluation of effectiveness and safety of a herbal compound in primary insomnia symptoms and sleep disturbances not related to medical or psychiatric causes](#) in the journal *Nature and Science of Sleep*
  - [The Sleep-Enhancing Effect of Valerian Inhalation and Sleep-Shortening Effect of Lemon Inhalation](#) in the journal *Chemical Senses*
  - [Relaxing Effect of Rose Oil on Humans](#) in the journal *Natural Product Communications*
  - [A Systematic Review of the Effect of Inhaled Essential Oils on Sleep](#) in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*
  - [Healing scents: An overview of clinical aromatherapy for emotional distress](#) From the Selected Works of Mona Shattell
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# Types of Essential Oil Diffusers

Different types of essential oil diffusers are available to help you enjoy the benefits of aromatherapy.

Essential oils are volatile, meaning the oils evaporate into the air at room temperature. A diffuser is merely a device that helps the essential oil molecules move into the air more rapidly than they otherwise would in an open bottle.



Photo by [Valerie Everett](#) 

Diffusing essential oils in the air is a popular way to enjoy the [therapeutic benefits of aromatherapy](#). Massage with essential oils added to a carrier oil is also a way to enjoy aromatherapy.

There are several ways of diffusing essential oils into the air. Some are very simple and inexpensive. Some diffusers can cost well over \$100.

Electronic diffusers often have lights which make the diffuser look pretty while it is working. They also often have timers and speed controls. The timers allow you to determine the duty cycle, that is, how long the diffuser is “on” and “off”. Speed controls determine how quickly oil vapor is disbursed into

your room.

Most electronic diffusers also need to be cleaned periodically because of oil buildup. Look at your operations manual that comes with your diffuser for specific instructions.

Let's take a look at some of the options.

## **Rubbing Oil on Your Hands**

Simply put a drop or two of essential oil on your hands and rub them together. This distributes the oil over a relatively large area so the oil evaporates quickly. Rubbing your hands together helps warm the oil and further encourage evaporation.

Then cup your hands over your mouth and nose and breathe in. Take several deep breaths. Don't get the oil on or near your eyes.

This is a quick way to get the oil absorbed by your skin and the vapors into your lungs. And, this is a great technique for personal use.

## **Adding Oils to Warm Water**

You can encourage essential oil evaporation into the air by adding a few drops of essential oils to warm water.

This is often used in a bath. You can breathe in the vapors while enjoying a relaxing bath.

You can also pour warm water in a bowl and add a few drops of oil. You typically cover your head with a towel and bend over the bowl to concentrate the vapors to the small area around your face.

Either way helps you get the benefits of the oil.

## **Reed Diffuser to Speed Evaporation**

The basic idea of the reed diffuser is to increase the surface area of the essential oil to speed its evaporation into the air. It is very simple and inexpensive to make. But, be aware that some reed diffuser kits you can buy will come with synthetic fragrances which may contain harsh chemicals.

You can make a reed diffuser easily. Simply fill a small bottle with the essential oil mixture you want to diffuse and insert some porous rattan reeds into the bottle. The oil will “wick” up into the reeds and evaporate into the surrounding air.

This type of diffuser is always “on”, evaporating oil into the room. It is good for small areas like a bedroom or kitchen. But, since it is always helping oil evaporate, it can use up your oil faster than an electrical diffuser you can turn off.

## **DIY Reed Diffuser! Homemade Home Products That Save You Money! (Clean My Space)**

### **Essential Oil Burners**

The essential oil burner uses heat to help speed evaporation the oils into the air. Several types are common.

One example involves putting some oil in a ceramic container and suspending this over a candle flame. Another way is to put oil onto an ornamental terracotta ring and placing this on an incandescent light bulb. Yet another example is a candle scented with an essential oil. These tend to use high levels of heat to speed evaporation of the oil.

Other units use lower levels of heat, often below 200°F. This is below the boiling point of water and is better than a hotter unit.

There is the obvious danger of using a open flame around flammable essential oils. The other drawback is that each essential oil is composed of numerous natural and sometime delicate organic compounds. Some of these compounds can be chemically changed when they are exposed to higher temperatures. This alters their nature and can reduce their therapeutic value.

## **Electric Fan Evaporative Diffusers**

Another way to speed the evaporation of essential oils is to increase the air flow across the oil. This is how the electric fan diffuser works. You add drops of an essential oil to an absorbent pad. The fan blows air across the pad causing more evaporation of the oil. And the air goes into the room. Depending on the size of the unit, this can be effective for one or more rooms.

### **How To Use The Aromatherapy Fan Diffuser**

## **Nebulizer or Atomizing Diffuser**

This diffuser uses the Bernoulli Effect. A thin tube is inserted into a small pool of oil. An air pump blows air across the top of the tube. This creates a partial vacuum in the tube which draws oil up the tube. When the oil reaches the top of the tube the air stream atomizes the oil, dispersing molecules of the oil into the stream of air. The air stream with the oil molecules goes into the room.

Here, the mist you see is the result of the atomized essential oil. This means that you are using oil at a rapid pace. So, you typically turn on the nebulizer for short periods of time.

Some nebulizer diffusers require you to remove the dropper nozzle and screw the essential oil bottle onto the diffuser. So, if you want to diffuse an oil blend, you will need to create the blend and put it into a bottle. Other diffusers

require you to add oil drops to a reservoir which makes blending oils easy.

The size and power of the air pump will determine how quickly oil gets diffused. It will also affect the level of noise the diffuser makes.

## **ORGANIC AROMAS ♥️ Nebulizer Essential Oil Diffuser – Review**

### **Ultrasonic Cool Mist Diffuser**

Perhaps the most popular diffusers are the ultrasonic mist diffusers. You add water and a few drops of your essential oils to a reservoir. Below this is a flexible membrane which vibrates at ultrasonic frequencies. This causes the liquid water and oil to break up into a vapor which then goes into your room.

This cool mist (comprising water and oil vapors) disburses into the room. So this type of diffuser acts as a humidifier because it adds water vapor to a room. So, it's best not to use this type of diffuser in rooms with a mold problem.

And, because the mist is mostly water vapor, not much oil gets disbursed. You typically run these diffusers for long periods of time to get enough oil in the air to be effective.

### **Ultrasonic Aroma Diffuser Instructions**

## **Types of Essential Oil Diffusers Summary**

You've seen examples of the major types of essential oil diffusers. For personal use, rubbing some oil on your hands and breathing in may be adequate. For more long lasting effects and for making a room smell nice you will need an electronic diffuser.

Examine feedback about each diffuser to gauge the user experience before you buy.

And, then enjoy the benefits of aromatherapy.

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## Does Aromatherapy Work?

Does aromatherapy work or is this merely essential oils pseudoscience? Find out what science says about the benefits of aromatherapy.

The [\*National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy\*](#) describes aromatherapy as “the art and science of utilizing naturally extracted aromatic essences from plants to balance, harmonize and promote the health of body, mind and spirit.”

Aromatherapy uses the natural, organic, aromatic compounds found in plant cells. These compounds are typically extracted from the plants using steam or water distillation. Each plant provides its own blend of these aromatic compounds. Some plants provide 20 or so compounds while other plants can provide 100 or more different compounds. The result of the distillation process is what’s called an essential oil.

Some of these natural compounds found in essential oils include:

- [Geraniol](#)
- [Geranial](#)
- [Menthol](#)
- [Limonene](#)
- [Linalool](#)
- [Eucalyptol](#)
- [Eugenol](#)

Essential oils have been used to improve health and mood for 6,000 years. The people of China, India, Egypt and Rome have all a long history essential oil use. These oils have positive physical and psychological benefits.

## **Aromatherapy Today**

While doctors once took full advantage of essential oils, modern Western medicine has primarily focused on pharmaceutical drugs to manage disease. But, many doctors are reawakening to the potential of natural botanicals for maintaining and restoring health.

Aromatherapy is typically administered through inhalation or through topical application such as massage.

You inhale essential oils dispersed in the air. You can disperse several drops of the essential oil in the air around you by using a diffuser or a spray. Or you can also place a few drops of an essential oil in a bowl of hot water or a bath and breath in the vapors.

You can also dilute an essential oil with a neutral carrier oil and apply the mixture to your skin. You add a few drops of essential oil to a carrier oil such as olive oil or jojoba oil. You can just rub this on your skin or use it as a massage oil.

## **How Aromatherapy Works**

Essential oils are made up of aromatic compounds that usually smell good. The aroma can influence your body. But, the smell is not the major reason to use aromatherapy. Molecules of these compounds enter the blood stream where they can affect all parts of the body..

The authors of the article ([Aromatherapy On Central Nerve System \(Cns\): Therapeutic Mechanism AndIts Associated Genes.](#)) which appeared in the journal *Current Drug Targets* give us the latest thoughts about how essential oils used in aromatherapy

produce their effects. They indicated that:

*In contrast with current oral drugs used for the treatment of psychiatric disorders, essential oils produce pharmacologic effects, not only by the absorption through the skin and upper respiratory tract (URT), but also via the sense of smell.*

This simply means that molecules from the organic components of essential oils can

1. enter the bloodstream through the skin or via the lungs to influence various part of the body, or
2. affect the sense of smell so that aromas or scents can alter such states as alertness, relaxation and joyfulness.



**Does Aromatherapy Work? What Does**

# Scientific Research Say About Aromatherapy?

Since aromatherapy does not use pharmaceutical drugs, doctors are reluctant to use natural substances like essential oils in their treatment. Using unauthorized, alternative treatments methods could be a cause for disciplinary action. But, when all other remedies have been exhausted, non-traditional or alternative protocols can be used.

Such is the first study here. Cancer patients on death's door are a pretty extreme case. Here cancer patients with at least 3 months to live were permitted aromatherapy massage as a way of trying to reduce their anxiety.

## Does Aromatherapy Work for Cancer Patients?

An article ([Effectiveness of Aromatherapy Massage in the Management of Anxiety and Depression in Patients With Cancer: A Multicenter Randomized Controlled Trial](#)) appearing in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* describes this study.

The study recruited 288 very sick cancer patients with an estimated prognosis of more than 3 months. Even so, 8% of these patients died during this 10 week trial. The patients had full- or borderline-case anxiety and/or depression. Of these patients, 221 completed the final assessment.

All the patients had access to psychological support services. 144 patients also participated in the aromatherapy treatment. This aromatherapy treatment consisted of 4 scheduled weekly hour-long massage sessions using 20 essential oils and massage techniques appropriate for the patient. 20 patients received only 1 aromatherapy session while the remainder received from 2 to 4 sessions.

Initially, patients participating in the aromatherapy treatments showed highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) improvements compared to non-treatment patients in their anxiety or

depression. Evaluation at 6 weeks (2 weeks after the end of the aromatherapy sessions) showed significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) more of the aromatherapy patients improvement in their anxiety or depression scores than non-aromatherapy patients.

But, at 10 weeks, the differences between the aromatherapy and non-aromatherapy patients were negligible.

The authors conclude that, "We have shown that four weekly sessions of aromatherapy massage improves clinical anxiety and/or depression experienced by cancer patients up to 2 weeks after the end of the intervention. This benefit is not, however, sustained at 6 weeks postintervention."

Another study on cancer patients ([The ToT Study: Helping with Touch or Talk \(ToT \): a pilot randomised controlled trial to examine the clinical effectiveness of aromatherapy massage versus cognitive behaviour therapy for emotional distress in patients in cancer/palliative care](#)) reported in the journal *Psycho-Oncology* reported on a comparison between aromatherapy massage and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) for anxiety. Both aromatherapy and CBT were initially effective in significantly reducing anxiety. But, the effects of CBT persisted longer when it came to a 3 month followup.

The authors concluded: " Both CBT and AM may be beneficial for anxiety in the short term, but CBT may have an advantage over AM for treating depression in the longer term."

## **Does Aromatherapy Work for Cardiac Patients?**

An article ([Effects of Aromatherapy on the Anxiety, Vital Signs, and Sleep Quality of Percutaneous Coronary Intervention Patients in Intensive Care Units](#)) in the journal *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* describes how aromatherapy reduced anxiety levels of cardiac patients in the intensive care unit.

This study involved patients about to undergo "Percutaneous

Coronary Intervention". Most people know this by the older term of angioplasty. This is where a stent is inserted through a thin flexible tube into the heart to open up blood vessels in the heart.

Patients about to undergo this procedure are in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the hospital for examinations and a variety of testing procedures. They have typically experienced a heart attack with severe chest pain. They are now separated from their families and in unfamiliar surroundings. Their level of psychological stress is high. Their stress, anxiety and insomnia can cause further heart damage, arrhythmia, and complicate their treatment and recovery.

Because aromatherapy has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety and improve sleep quality in various patients in other situations (cancer, dialyses, colonoscopy), this study assessed the value of aromatherapy in patients about to undergo stent insertion.

The experiment involved 28 patients in the aromatherapy group and 28 patients receiving traditional treatment.

The study tested the effect of a blend of lavender, roman chamomile, and neroli oil on anxiety, sleep, and blood pressure. The oils were blended at a ratio 6 : 2 : 0.5 as prescribed by an aromatherapist. Lavender reduces heart stimulation and lowers blood pressure; chamomile is calming and helps relieve stress and anxiety; neroli is calming and helps treat insomnia.

The aromatherapy group breathed in the vapors of two drops of the blend both before and after their procedure. And, an aroma scented "stone" was placed under the patient's pillow until the morning after the procedure.

The results showed a very significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) reduction in anxiety and improvement in the sleep scores in the aromatherapy group compared to the control group. There was no

significant difference in blood pressure due to aromatherapy.

The authors concluded that “aromatherapy reduced anxiety, increased sleep, and stabilized the BP of patients undergoing cardiac stent insertion.”

## **Does Aromatherapy Work for the Immune System?**

An article ([Immunological and Psychological Benefits of Aromatherapy Massage](#)) appearing in the journal *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* described an experiment to examine aromatherapy’s effects on the immune system.

The experiment used subjects who experienced massage with both a carrier oil (sweet almond oil) alone or with the carrier oil with essential oils (lavender oil, cypress oil and sweet marjoram oil).

A skilled massage therapist massaged the back, shoulders, arms, hands, lower legs and feet of the subjects for about 20 minutes during each massage session. The subjects were tested and gave blood and saliva samples before and after the massage sessions.

The results showed that the stress and anxiety scores dropped after massage for both the aromatherapy group and the control massage with carrier oil only group. The CD8<sup>+</sup> cells and CD16<sup>+</sup> cells significantly increased after the aromatherapy massage but not after the control massage.

CD8<sup>+</sup> cells (also called cytotoxic T cells) and CD16<sup>+</sup> cells (human monocytes) are components of the immune system. The authors conclude that, “These results suggest that aromatherapy massage is a valuable relaxation technique for reducing anxiety and stress, and beneficial to the immune system.”

# Does Aromatherapy Work? More Clinical Studies Planned

The evidence indicates that aromatherapy is not simply essential oils pseudoscience. There is growing interest in aromatherapy within the medical community. This is evidenced by the results of clinical studies and the large number of clinical studies planned using aromatherapy. Here are a few such studies being planned as of this writing.

- [Aromatherapy as Treatment for Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy](#)
- [Investigate the Efficacy and Effectiveness of Aromatherapy for the Management of Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia](#)
- 3. [Investigate the Efficacy and Effectiveness of Aromatherapy for the Management of Chronic Pain](#)
  - [Aromatherapy for Integrated Cancer Care](#)
  - [Assessment of the Aromatherapy to Alleviate Peri Operative Anxiety in Ambulatory Elective Upper Limb Surgery Under Loco-regional Anesthesia \(AROMA\)](#)
  - [Aromatherapy in Management of Postoperative Nausea in Post-Bariatric Surgery Patients](#)
  - [Aromatherapy for Chemotherapy-induced Symptoms](#)
  - [Aromatherapy Randomization of Pain Management in Adults \(AROMA\)](#)