

Aromatherapy - It Smells Great, But Does It Work?

Is it voodoo? Is it mindplay? Is it because we're cheap? Or is it just because human beings would rather heal themselves by smelling a scent, then by taking a needle or swallowing a pill. Is aromatherapy the new feel good drug, well, actually no! Aromatherapy dates back centuries. India and Egypt have been widely accepted as the countries where aromatherapy originated. In Egypt, the use of aromatherapy was a privilege, and thus only the Pharaohs and high priests were allowed to indulge in it. Even Cleopatra was a known believer in aromatherapy. From Egypt, the echoes of this new found healing spread to Arabia. From India it spread to China, Japan and Tibet. Dating back to the earliest stages of humanity, the use of aromatic type fumes has been apart of the daily lives and religious ceremonies for a lot of people, to the point of being sacred. Unfortunately, with the 19th century came the advent of modern medicine, and as is to be expected, people started to turn away from aromatherapy and wanted to experience the new medicine. Thanks to French chemist Rene-Maurice Gattessosse, the 1920s saw a revival in aromatherapy. As the story goes, Rene severely burned himself in his lab and in order to stop the pain, he put his arm in the only cold substance that was available, which happened to be a container of lavender essential oil. His burns healed quickly, with very little scarring. From that point on, Rene spent the rest of his life studying aromatherapy, or the healing power of scented healing oils. Aromatherapy found it's way into Britain in the 1950s; but it wasn't until the 1980s when people in the United States began to become aware of aromatherapy. So, what is aromatherapy? Aromatherapy is the practice of using volatile plant oils, including essential oils, for physical and psychological well being. Essential oils are the pure essence of a plant. It is important to remember that perfume oils, also known as fragrances, are not the same as essential oils. Perfume oils and fragrances contain unnatural chemicals and can't provide the benefits of essential oils. Aromatherapy has been used to treat everything from the common cold to central nervous system disorders and diseases. Many people also look to aromatherapy to help relieve their mental and emotional disorders, such as depression and anxiety. Many essential oils have antibacterial and antiviral properties, these elements allow essential oils the ability to help eliminate stress, increase energy, enhance memory and stimulate natural healing. Aromatherapy sounds nice, smells great and appears easy, but like everything else in life, there's a catch and aromatherapy is no different. The basic elements of aromatherapy are essential oils. These oils are highly concentrated liquids that can be harmful if not used properly. Essential oils should always be diluted before you put them on the skin. Some oils can cause allergic reactions in some people. Everybody is different. Just because a certain oil doesn't irritate your skin, doesn't mean it won't irritate someone else. Some essential oils should be avoided during pregnancy and also by those with asthma, epilepsy and other health conditions. Not all essential oils should be used in aromatherapy. Wormwood, penny royal, onion, camphor, wintergreen and rue are a few of the oils that should be avoided. Aromatherapy is not the be all and end all, it's just another step in the potential healing process. It's not a miracle drug! It can't cure major illnesses!

About the Author

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