

Traditionally, certain essential oil application methods have been preferred or used exclusively. However, as the research surrounding essential oils continues to develop, a greater understanding of application methods is now understood. Essential oils are usually administered by one of three methods: aromatically, applied topically to the skin, or taken internally as a food additive. They can be used a single oil at a time or in complex blends in one of three methods:

Aromatic

The sense of smell is a tool that can elicit powerful physiologic, mental, and emotional responses. Essential oils are quickly absorbed by the smell receptors, which have a direct link to the limbic system by way of the olfactory nerve. The limbic system is part of the brain that supports a variety of functions including smell, emotions, behaviour, and memory. For this reason, essential oils have an especially powerful effect via aromatic application.

Some essential oils induce uplifting or invigorating effects, while others are more calming. Diffusion is one of the simplest methods for using essential oils aromatically. Diffusers that use cold air or water are ideal. However, using essential oils aromatically does not require any special diffusing devices.

You can achieve the same benefits by simply placing a few drops of essential oil in the palm of your hand that is then cupped around the nose as you breathe deeply.

Additional aromatic uses For Essential Oils Include:

- Apply oil to a cotton ball and place in the air vents of your vehicle
- Mix oils in a spray bottle with water and mist over furniture, carpet, or linens
- Add oil to a batch of laundry or to dryer sheets
- Use in household surface cleaners

Topical

Topical application is a very effective method for applying essential oils. Because essential oils are lipid soluble, they easily penetrate the skin. Once

absorbed, they stay in the applied area for a localised benefit.

Although essential oils are readily absorbed, there are many ways to increase absorption. Using a light massage will increase the blood flow to the area of application, in turn improving distribution throughout the body. Use of a carrier oil can also increase absorption, especially in skin that is dry or flaky as it helps moisturise the skin and slow evaporation of the oil.

To decrease the likelihood of developing a skin sensitivity, especially on young or sensitive skin, it is advisable to use a carrier oil (such as Fractionated Coconut Oil) to dilute more potent oils and when trying an oil for the first time. The recommended dilution ratio is typically one drop of essential oil to three drops of carrier oil.

It's always advisable to use several small doses throughout the day rather than a single large dose. Start with the lowest possible dose (1–2 drops). A topical dose can be repeated every 4–6 hours as needed. Because every individual is unique, the dose will vary for each individual based on size, age, and overall health status.

Beneficial Areas You Can Apply Essential Oils

- Neck
- Forehead and temples
- Chest and abdomen
- Arms, legs, bottom of feet

Other Effective Methods of Topical Application

- Add a few drops of oil to a warm bath
- Make a hot or cold compress by soaking a towel or cloth in water, adding essential oils, and then applying to the desired area
- Add oil to a lotion or moisturiser and then apply to skin

Sensitive Areas to be Avoided:

- Some facial areas, such as the skin around the eyes
- Eyes and inner ears
- Broken, damaged, or otherwise injured skin

Food Additive

Certain essential oils have a rich culinary history and can be used as food additives. When you sprinkle cinnamon on your oats, sip a mug of peppermint tea, or add fresh basil leaves to your spaghetti, you are actually consuming some volatile aromatic essential oil compounds.

Essential oil contributes many benefits as well as flavouring and aromatic properties to foods. When in their concentrated form, essential oils can be used as dietary supplements for more targeted and potent benefits. Use as a food additive is effective because of the sophisticated physiologic processes of our bodies.

When ingested, essential oils directly enter the blood stream via the gastrointestinal tract, where they are transported throughout the rest of the body. Essential oils are lipid soluble so they are readily transported to all organs of the body, including the brain. Then, like all things we consume, essential oils are metabolised by the liver and other organs and are then excreted.

The composition of essential oils is highly complex. Each constituent possesses a unique set of biochemical properties that react with cells and organs in different ways. Although these mechanisms of action are not completely understood, the positive end results have been demonstrated. However, the body is only equipped to handle appropriate doses of essential oils.

Proper dosing according to labeling recommendations and other professional guidelines should be strictly followed to avoid toxicity.

Effective Methods of Internal Application

- Use oils in recipes for cooking or baking to replace fresh or dried herbs and spices
- Remember that essential oils are much more potent than dried or fresh herbs and spices, so start with a very small amount
- For more potent oils, it may be better to administer them by toothpicks (dip the end of a clean toothpick into the oil and then add to the food) rather than drops
- Add essential oils to water, smoothies, milk, tea, or other drinks
- Add a small amount of essential oils to yoghurt