

Stress and Essential Oils: The Science, Art, and Practice of Using a Plant-Based Approach to Treating and Preventing Common Symptoms

By Becky Pope



Abstract

According to the world health organisation, stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. What's clear is that stress affects almost all of us at least sometimes. Although a huge 63% of people in the UK are stressed at least weekly – up from just over a third 6 years ago. Therefore, for many of us, it's a very frequent occurrence. We've seen Covid lockdowns, a cost-of-living crisis and lowering living standards in the past few years, which is a likely contributor to why the proportion of those stressed at least weekly has increased so much. Women in particular, almost a quarter say they experience stress every single day and for over two-thirds of them (68.41%) stress is at least a weekly occurrence and don't know how to relieve symptoms. There needs to be more direction for people in general on natural prevention techniques in the first place or stress relief options, especially on which essential oils could be beneficial to support stress symptoms. Stress affects our mood, body (skin) and our relationships. It can make us feel anxious, unfocused, and irritable, lower our self-esteem, and even make us ill. It's not the events in our life that stresses us, it's the way we deal with them that does. This paper defines stress, describes the key hormones implicated, and suggests potential plant essential oils that could be used as remedies. This document researches the potential benefits of essential oils on the symptoms of stress. It's possible to use essential oils that have already been shown to have a demonstrated positive impact on many common symptoms experienced during stressful modern living and daily use to prevent chronic stress illnesses.

Introduction: When Doctors can't help chronic illness due to stress

When I was 38 years old, I developed a series of worrying neurological symptoms after family stress, including loss of my Mum in Law, working full time and home schooling in covid, Richie my husband developing skin cancer to name a few. At first it was numbness and tingling in my right side including my face, I felt like I was having a stroke. I went to my local GP who referred me to get a MRI, ECG, EMG testing to make sure it was not epilepsy or a brain tumour. To my relief, tests came back "normal". I went back to the GP to be given a misdiagnosis of hemiplegic migraine. I was prescribed many migraine allopathic medicine Betablockers, Amitriptyline, and Naproxen all of which are to treat anxiety, depression and blood pressure, which unfortunately made my symptoms worse. I was also taking paracetamol; little did I know I was on medication over use and worryingly very unwell. I was a financial contributor to the household and was struggling to cope with going to work and managing a household with my husband and two daughters. I found a local private neurologist (expensive!) to check the diagnosis and he immediately suggested it was not hemiplegic but medication misuse, but I did have chronic migraine with aura. He suggested stop taking everything I had been prescribed and to take Vitamin B2 - the next few weeks would be difficult due to the amount my body had gone through with medication misuse. The migraine aura is a process of your body changing in vision, speech, or sensation. It can be a scary, daunting and an awful out of body experience place to be. The auras for me last 3 to 4 hours and at my worst 24 hours and then I have the post syndrome of feeling dizzy, drained, and washed out for a couple of days before I return to feeling nearly 99.9% me. Also no one explains to you about when you have chronic migraine this means you will experience symptoms daily (mind blown!), mine include sinus throbbing, vertigo and back of head pain tightness, neck stiffness and shoulder blade tingle, tingle like coldness under my right eye and ear under water (all my symptoms are on the right side). I am finally after three years episodic by setting to work to improve my symptoms with a lifestyle overhaul. This included having a routine (no lay ins!) self-care micro morning habit, ayurvedic nutrition, spices, herbs, and seasonal cleanses, eating regularly every 3-4 hours with no snacking and sipping boiled water. Holistic practices with acupuncture, reflexology, crystal clearing

chakras, sound therapy, essential oils and taking supplements magnesium citrate, b2 vitamin 400mg daily. Daily exercise (walking/body balance). The main importance was to listen to my body and understand any signs that may cause me to trigger. To take time for me and running on empty would not help me and my family.

Over the years, I've shared my story with others who have had similar symptoms. Could some of the cost, time, and worry have been avoided if I had been evaluated correctly who had some understanding of looking at lifestyle and its stressors as a whole?

Cultural Insight - Women trying to do it all aren't taking time out of their busy days to combat stress, reaching a point of almost chronic tension.

Modern stress never stops. When will our nervous systems catch up with the 21st century?

Emma Beddington



The new age of aromatherapy

No more time-consuming massages — it's time for instant satisfaction.
Our writer reports on the new wellbeing products that will do the job in
half the time

“There is a shift occurring,” says the aromatherapist Michelle Roques-O’Neil, founder of Roques O’Neil Therapie. “People are realising that taking care of your wellbeing is not indulgent but essential.”

When I started this course, I became interested in the various ways in which essential oils might be therapeutic for people experiencing chronic stress. I decided to do a research paper about the therapeutic qualities of these plants, backed by scientific research, but grounded in the experience of those under great stress, including myself. I hope this paper offers some new insights into how essential oils might be used to support people going through modern stress and how essential oils play an important role in preventative chronic measures.

Why do we have a stress response?

Stress is how we react when we feel under pressure or threatened. It usually happens when we are in a situation that we don't feel we can manage or control. Stress is the body's way of responding to anything that requires extra energy or effort. It's a natural and essential part of life. Stress can be helpful in small doses, providing the extra energy or focus needed to meet a deadline or handle an emergency. But when stress is constant or overwhelming, it can

have serious consequences for our physical and mental health. However, in today's fast-paced, constantly connected world, we're often bombarded with stressors that don't require a physical response. The stress response is there to help us deal with potentially dangerous or life-threatening situations. Digestion, detoxification, and immune functions are only turned on when your body is in a parasympathetic state. That can't happen when we are stressed.

When stress is on, our ability to heal is turned off. We should optimally be in a parasympathetic state 80% of the time, but many people struggle to be in this state at any point during the day. This is because stress inhibits the parasympathetic response and the body's essential healing processes shuts down.

What Causes Stress?

In today's world, we don't often find ourselves in life-or-death situations. But our bodies still respond to stress, like when chased by a bear or tiger. The problem is that this constant state of stress takes a toll on our bodies over time. Many things can cause stress. You might feel stressed because of one big event or situation in your life. Or it might be a build-up of lots of smaller things. An individual, for example when you have lots of responsibilities that you are struggling to manage.

- Part of a group, for example if your family is going through a difficult time, such as bereavement or financial problems
- Part of your community, for example if you belong to a religious group that is experiencing discrimination.
- A member of society, for example during natural disasters or events like covid

The Key Stress Hormones at Work

Stress hormones are designed to help us deal with stressful situations by increasing our heart rate, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels. However, chronic stress can take a toll on our bodies and minds over time. When we sense danger, our body kicks into gear and prepares us to either fight or take flight. The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis is the key system controlling how our body reacts to and copes with stressors. The hypothalamus in the brain detects threats and triggers the pituitary gland to secrete adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH). This stimulates the adrenal glands to produce cortisol, the primary stress hormone. Cortisol increases blood sugar, suppresses the immune system, and alters brain activity to prepare for fight or flight. This is done by releasing a surge of hormones — including vasopressin, adrenaline, and cortisol — which give us extra energy and strength. The “fight or flight” mode triggered by stress is a survival mechanism that dates back to our days as hunter-gatherers. When faced with a dangerous situation, we fought or took off running. As a result, our heart rate and blood pressure increased, and we released adrenaline and other stress hormones like cortisol. This stress response gave us the energy and strength to confront the danger or quickly escape. In modern times most people know that too much stress is bad for them, but many don't realise the full extent of the damage it can do. Stress hormones can wreak havoc on the body, and chronic exposure can lead to various health problems. Stress affects how our brains process serotonin, a chemical responsible for regulating mood. It can also disrupt other systems in the body, including the endocrine and immune systems, which can further contribute to feelings of anxiety and depression. So, here's a closer look at some of the main stress hormones and their role:

Cortisol

Known as the stress hormone, cortisol is a steroid that is produced in the adrenal glands and is our key hormone that contributes to our well-being and main role is to help the body respond to stress. Cortisol suppresses non-essential functions like digestion, reproduction,

and immunity. This allows the body to redirect its resources to more pressing matters — like dealing with a stressful situation. It's connected to many different bodily functions including sleep, blood sugar levels, inflammation, and memory. Usually, our cortisol is activated in response to a stressful event, and then returns to normal. Many of us, however, operate in an elevated state of stress due to family, work, health, and pandemic pressures. Cortisol imbalances are common which can exacerbate symptoms. Unlike catecholamines — a group of stress hormones released in large bursts — cortisol is released in smaller amounts but more constantly. This is because cortisol is involved in the body's long-term stress response.

While cortisol is an important hormone, too much can be a problem. When cortisol levels are constantly high, it can lead to *sleep issues (chronic fatigue), weight gain, anxiety, depression, IBS, hair and skin problems, and wears down our heart and ability to think clearly.*

Catecholamines

Catecholamines are a group of hormones that includes epinephrine (adrenaline), norepinephrine (noradrenaline), and dopamine. These hormones function as neurotransmitters in the human body, sending signals between nerve cells (neurons) to help the body respond to stress. Catecholamines are released in response to emotional stress and help to increase heart rate, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels. Catecholamines also play a role in the “fight or flight” response, which is the body's natural way of dealing with perceived threats.

- **Epinephrine (Adrenaline)** - known as the "fight or flight" response. It's released in large amounts and has a number of effects on the body, including increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Epinephrine also boosts energy production and blood flow to muscles. While epinephrine can be helpful in short-term situations, *too much can lead to anxiety, irritability, and difficulty sleeping.*
- **Norepinephrine (Noradrenaline)** - Similar to adrenaline but is released in smaller amounts and has the same effect in increasing the heart rate and blood pressure. Noradrenaline also boosts alertness and vigilance. Like epinephrine, too much norepinephrine can lead to *memory loss, anxiety, irritability, and difficulty sleeping.*
- **Dopamine** - Our reward hormone, a neurotransmitter that plays a role in mood, motivation, and pleasure. Dopamine is also involved in the stress response and is essential for coping with stress because it allows adaptation to various environmental stimuli. *Low levels can lead to a weakened immune system, irritability, concentration problems, difficulty sleeping and memory loss.*

Vasopressin

This antidiuretic hormone helps regulate blood pressure and water metabolism in the body. Vasopressin is produced in the hypothalamus (a region of the brain) and stored in the pituitary gland (a small gland located beneath the brain). It is released into circulation when the body experiences physical or psychological stress. Once in the bloodstream, vasopressin binds to receptors on blood vessels and increases blood vessel constriction. This results in an increase in blood pressure. In addition, vasopressin signals the kidneys to reabsorb more water from urine, which leads to less urine production and helps prevent dehydration during times of physical stress (for example, during exercise). It is key to regulating the circadian rhythm — the periods of sleepiness and wakefulness in a 24-hour cycle. Vasopressin also helps maintain the body's internal temperature, its blood volume, and the proper flow of urine from the kidneys. Too little vasopressin can cause frequent urination and can lead to dehydration, as well as low blood pressure and sleep rhythm

difficulties. *Too much vasopressin, your kidneys may retain water causing inflammation in the body and stiffness in the joints.*

Allopathic Ways of Treating Stress

Allopathic medicine tends to treat stress with various medications due to symptoms, which is intended to balance hormones using synthetic hormones. This would begin with hormone testing to identify imbalances, after which a treatment plan would be developed from the symptoms presented. Prescribed treatment can include:

- **Sleeping pills or minor tranquillisers**, if you're having trouble sleeping. *Side effects include: excessive drowsiness, problems with concentration, and sometimes allergic reactions*
- **Antidepressants**, if you're experiencing depression, anxiety or even migraine symptoms alongside stress. *Side effects include: excessive drowsiness, seizures, problems with concentration, and sometimes allergic reactions*
- Medication to treat any physical symptoms of stress, such as **irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)** or **high blood pressure** (betablockers) *Side effects include: digestive issues, seizures, change in heartbeat and libido and allergic reaction like skin rash, itching or hives, swelling of the face, lips, or tongue.*

The role of essential oils: an evidence-based approach

The positive association to a particular smell may help someone become at ease if they are trying to ground themselves while suffering from stress. "When we inhale essential oils, especially certain ones that can create a sense of calm and peace, these oils can quickly stimulate our bodies to influence our emotions through olfactory receptors in our nose that can stimulate the brain in 22 seconds," Jaclyn Tolentino, senior doctor at Parsley Health. "Essential oils used via aromatherapy can also influence the body's endocrine system. For example, the cortisol hormone is often heightened during anxiety, and a series of slow breaths with the aroma of an essential oil can calm down the cortisol response (the stress hormone) and create a grounding and soothing effect."

In general, I was pleased to find research studies of a few different plant groups to what helps alleviate symptoms of stress considering over 50% of the population experience chronic stress at some point in their lives due to modern day living, it was exhilarating to know we are open to looking at alternative preventative therapies to help. The studies I was able to find, while not detecting aromatherapy-specific effects on stress, provided the evidence that manipulating expectancy by verbal suggestion of aromatherapy effectiveness might underlie some changes in behaviour and brain function after exposure to aromatherapy. *Lavandula angustifolia/ Lavender* was included in the study *Expectancy of Stress-Reducing Aromatherapy Effect and Performance on a Stress-Sensitive Cognitive Task* helped lower cortisol levels in patients undergoing stress (Irina Chamine, Barry S. Oken, 2015). Research indicated that Essential Oils regulate cortisol levels by smell by entering the bloodstream through the lungs and interacting with hormone receptors. Their anti-inflammatory properties protect any damage to stop cortisol levels rising and modulate stress hormones to restore healthy HPA axis function. A study on the effects of the inhalation method using essential oils on blood pressure and stress responses of clients with essential hypertension found that inhaling lavender, ylang ylang, and bergamot oils once daily for four weeks reduced cortisol levels, psychological stress, and blood pressure in people with essential hypertension. (Jin-Hee Hwang, 2006). An additional clinical study concluded that both cortisol and systolic blood pressure declines after inhalation of a combination of lavender, ylang ylang, marjoram, and neroli oil in those with high blood pressure or pre-high blood pressure.

Here are some other evidence-based essential oils included from my research:

- **Lavandula angustifolia/ Lavender:** is well-known for its overall therapeutic qualities, especially for its ability to calm and soothe the nervous system. It's been shown to reduce stress and anxiety and to support sleep (Malcolm and Tallian 2018).
- **Citrus Aurantium Dulcis/ Sweet orange:** is an oil that can be used to support sleep disruption, anxiety, and depression due stress with its uplifting aroma.
- **Pelargonium graveolens/ Geranium:** It's beneficial for hormonal balancing studies have shown it can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression and increase libido. Benefits for people with neurodegenerative diseases that include neuroinflammation.
- **Boswellia carterii/ Frankincense:** Studies have shown frankincense can calm a busy mind, reducing the feelings of anxiety. It can diminish the feelings of stress, helping to improve your mood and your concentration while improving memory. With the relaxing, grounding properties that frankincense possesses, it can also give you a more restful night's sleep. Frankincense has also been shown to reduce depression and anxiety behaviours in animal studies along with decreasing the stress biomarker corticosterone.
- **Citrus lemonum/ Lemon:** cleansing and uplifting to support anxiety, depression helping to keep a clear mind and helps fight fatigue. It keeps the immune system strong and helps manage stress.
- **Metha Piperita/ Peppermint:** has antiseptic properties, cools inflammation of the joints, headaches and muscular aches and pains.
- **Eucalyptus Globulus Leaf/ Eucalyptus:** is head-clearing and helps muscular fatigue and reduces inflammation in the body caused by stress.
- **Rosmarinus officinalis/ Rosemary:** there's evidence that rosemary can counteract the brain fog that accompanies chronic cortisol levels.
- **Jasminum officinalia/ Jasmine absolute:** Jasmine has been used as an aphrodisiac for centuries. It's worth considering using it in formulations addressing problems with sexual libido.
- **Citrus aurantium/ Neroli:** a small study showed that inhalation of neroli had beneficial impacts on stress, sexual desire, and blood pressure (Choi et al 2014)
- **Chamaemelum nobile/ Roman Chamomile:** is particularly beneficial for reducing anxiety and insomnia.
- **Citrus bergamia/ Bergamot:** could prevent spikes in the stress hormone corticosterone, the rodent equivalent of cortisol, when rats were exposed to stressful experiences. (aromatic studies)
- **Cananga odorata/Ylang Ylang:** is believed to balance the central nervous system, calm blood pressure and support mental relaxation, all of which help to calm depression and nervousness. It has been also reported to have a blood pressure lowering effect suggesting its potential use in managing hypertension.

In addition to these essential oils above, it's worth considering further essential oils for the common symptoms experienced by people going through stress, depending on their symptom; digestive issues, joint pain, migraine, loss of libido, sleep, or fatigue support to provide some relief.

<i>Stress Symptom</i>	<i>Implicated Hormone</i>	<i>Essential Oil Support</i>
<i>Sleep issues</i>	Increased cortisol levels	Lavender, ylang ylang, roman chamomile, neroli, petitgrain, Frankincense
<i>Fatigue Issues</i>	Increased catecholamines	Sweet Orange, Rosemary, Frankincense, Eucalyptus,

		peppermint, lemon, lemongrass
<i>Cognition - Memory issues</i>	Decreased catecholamines especially dopamine levels	Rosemary, peppermint, basil, sage, vetiver, lime, Frankincense
<i>Depression</i>	Increased cortisol levels lower levels serotonin	Bergamot, Sweet orange, mandarin, petitgrain, vetiver
<i>Anxiety</i>	Increased cortisol levels	Lavender, bergamot, clary sage, Frankincense, Lemon, Peppermint
<i>Musculoskeletal issues: Joint pain</i>	Increased vasopressin levels	Eucalyptus, Turmeric, lavender, cypress, tansy, Peppermint, Lemon, Lemongrass, basil, wintergreen
<i>Neurological impacts: migraine</i>	Increased cortisol levels	Peppermint, Lemon, Lavender, Sweet orange, mandarin
<i>Digestive: IBS, urine issues</i>	Decreased vasopressin levels. Increased cortisol levels	Peppermint, ginger, fennel, oregano, Grapefruit, coriander, clary sage and cypress
<i>Sex drive: lack of Libido, hormones</i>	Decreased catecholamines	Rose, jasmine, neroli, ylang ylang, geranium
<i>Thinning Hair</i>	Increased cortisol levels	Rosemary, tea tree, peppermint
<i>Aging Skin</i>	Increased cortisol levels	Frankincense, geranium, lavender, rosehip seed oil, sweet almond oil, Carrot seed oil,
<i>Acne Skin</i>	Increased cortisol levels	Tea Tree, Lavender, peppermint, sweet almond oil, roman chamomile, oregano
<i>Skin Rashes: eczema, rosacea</i>	Increased cortisol levels	Vetiver, Lavender, sweet almond oil, roman chamomile, helichrysum, geranium, frankincense, peppermint, rosehip oil

Case Study

Jenny is a 46-year-old woman experiencing stress symptoms from being perimenopausal, juggling a full-time job with its commute, two teenage daughters and modern stressors including household duties. I sent her a questionnaire (in the Appendix) asking her about her symptoms and to rate the severity of them, along with stating which symptoms bothered her the most. She indicated experiencing increased migraine with aura, more anxiety and lack of sleep by disruption at 3am. This indicates to me a spike in her cortisol levels. I decided to give her five remedies, one for each symptom and to use for a month as a new self-care routine. Any of the remedies used on her skin to perform a patch test (inner elbow) and wait 24 hours.

Migraine

For her migraine with aura, similar symptoms to myself, please refer to my introduction. I made her a 10ml rollerball of sweet almond oil blended with *Lavandula angustifolia*/

Lavender and *Mentha piperita*/ Peppermint at a dilution rate of 15%. I instructed her to use her rollerball on her acupressure points at the onset of any symptoms, following these steps:

- Using a firm, deep pressure, massage the pressure points (mainly the third eye, temples, ears and back of her neck). Rotate your fingers in a circular or up-and-down motion for several minutes at each point, focusing on one at a time.
- Repeat the massage treatment two or three times during the day as well as to apply ice to the base of her neck and top of her head (ice compression).

Anxiety

To diffuse the post migraine to help alleviate anxiety and boost mood. **Aroma diffuser** blend directions, based on adding to 100ml of cool water in a diffuser for 30-minute intervals:

- Add three drops *Lavandula angustifolia*/ Lavender
- Add two drops *Mentha piperita*/Sweet Orange
- Add two drops *Boswellia carterii*/ Frankincense
- *Lavandula angustifolia*/ Lavender calms and relaxes the nervous system.
- *Citrus Aurantium Dulcis*/ Sweet Orange known for its uplifting and refreshing properties, it brings cheerful, bright aroma helps to ease tension and reduce feelings of anxiety.
- *Boswellia carterii*/ Frankincense to help calm a busy mind, reducing the feelings of anxiety by grounding her thoughts, supporting mental clarity.

Using same **roller ball** of sweet almond oil blended with *Lavandula angustifolia*/ Lavender and *Mentha piperita*/ Peppermint apply to adrenal glands (on the lower mid-back, one fist above the 12th rib on each side) which help regulate your metabolism, immune system, blood pressure, response to stress. Working away tension is easier if you mindfully relax your muscles. Roll your neck a few times and shake your shoulders to loosen up. Vagus nerve stimulation naturally triggers the Parasympathetic state to reset “fight or flight, rest and digest” bringing your nervous system into balance by applying one hand after the other in a rolling motion, smoothing out tension on the sides of your neck. Focus on the scent of the oil. Apply 2- 3 times daily or as needed during anxious moments.

Fatigue

To diffuse in the day to help boost energy levels. I suggested she pop on the kettle and dance to her favourite song (somatic movement) to boost energy levels and then sit and enjoy a cup of herbal rooibos tea (hydrating helps energy levels) while diffusing for 30 minutes. Aroma diffuser blend directions, based on adding to 100ml of cool water in a diffuser for 30 minutes:

- Add three drops *Eucalyptus Globulus Leaf*/ Eucalyptus
- Add two drops *Mentha piperita*/Peppermint
- Add two drops *Citrus lemonum*/ Lemon
- *Eucalyptus Globulus Leaf*/ Eucalyptus essential oil is head clearing providing the focus to carry on with her busy day.
- *Mentha piperita*/Peppermint essential oil recharges energy levels if sleep pattern has been disrupted from too much cortisol.
- *Citrus lemonum*/ Lemon essential oil It's earthy, citrus aroma is uplifting and refreshing.

Sleep Support

An hour before bed to set a bedtime routine of no blue screen light and winding down with a bath and body oil massage to trigger natural release of melatonin and drainage of toxins in

lymph nodes (back of knee, groin, shoulder/armpits, abdomen, collar bone – above and below and each side of neck) to help blood flow and release tension.

Bath blend:

Directions to blend essential oils with salts:

- Find a container, sprinkle in 3 cups epsom salts (500g)
 - 8 drops Lavender, 6 drops Frankincense, 6 drops Geranium 60ml carrier oil base sweet almond oil and poured into salts.
 - Shake, pop in your bathroom ready to use.
 - Run the bath, sprinkle 1-3 spoonful into the water and soak, relax and reset.
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- *Lavandula angustifolia*/ Lavender calms and relaxes.
 - *Pelargonium Graveolens*/ Geranium Bourbon to balance hormones (perimenopausal symptoms) and stress from the day
 - *Boswellia carterii*/ Frankincense to help calm a busy mind, reducing the feelings of anxiety.

Body Oil blend:

Directions to blend essential oils with oil base:

- Into a dropper bottle add 60ml sweet almond carrier oil base, add 8 drops Lavender, 4 drops of each Roman Chamomile, Ylang Ylang, Bergamot, 2 drops Neroli and shake.
 - While the skin is damp and warm after your bath
 - Pour a teaspoon amount into your hands to warm, cup your hands and inhale for a few seconds, massage into your hands.
 - Apply oil in circular motions starting at the feet and upwards towards the heart. If time does not allow a full body massage to drain the six lymph nodes. To watch for technique www.stopchasingpain.com/the-big-6-tm/
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- *Lavandula angustifolia*/ Lavender calms, to help relax the mind to get to sleep.
 - *Chamaemelum nobile* /Roman Chamomile sedative effect to help relax the mind to help get to sleep.
 - *Citrus aurantium*/ Neroli lowering of cortisol levels to help you remain asleep (to alleviate 3am cortisol spike and liver/gallbladder struggling to detoxify Chinese medicine)
 - *Cananga odorata*/Ylang Ylang: to balance the central nervous system, calm blood pressure and support mental relaxation help you remain asleep (to alleviate 1am blood sugar spike and pancreas/liver struggling to detoxify according to Chinese medicine)
 - *Citrus bergamia*/ Bergamot: lowering of cortisol levels to help you remain asleep (to alleviate 3am cortisol spike and liver/gallbladder struggling to detoxify Chinese medicine)

Results

Jenny reported little change with her migraine from the roller ball of *Lavender* and *Peppermint*, but the aroma did give her some comfort by having something natural to reach for in her hour of need especially when she placed it on her temples to soothe her discomfort with an ice pack at the back of her neck. Understanding acupressure points and where to place the oils to support cortisol balance was a new practice and learning.

She reported feeling better when using the diffuser blend—feeling less anxious and more grounded. She loved the alternative blend with *Eucalyptus*, *Lemon* and *Peppermint* to give her more energy, especially taking 30 minutes to have some mindful fun and cup of tea!

Having time out for a bath and massage with aromas helped her get to sleep with ease and didn't wake up in the night. Success! The suggestion of a routine and taking some time out to de-stress from her hectic schedule, has set an intention to create more self-care practices with essential oils. She liked to start with just the bath and built up to creating time for massage, taking an hour for her bedtime routine. Creating these habits are helping her live a more stress-free lifestyle and the aroma helped her transition into a sleep routine to relax.

Conclusion

Besides making your home feel like a spa, using essential oils for stress has risen in popularity in recent years. Whether one is adding these compounds extracted from plants to a bath or drops in the corner of the shower for relaxation or diffusing them in the bedroom to promote a long night's sleep, the holistic use of aromatherapy to heal physically and mentally is something worth looking into if it helps ease any stress or anxious thoughts. It is not necessarily the stress that causes illness, but how we react to and deal with it. I am finding with more scientific based evidence the public are more open to trying a preventative daily self-care routine but need more guidance and understanding on how to blend their own essential oil remedies instead of a quick fix via allopathic treatment when chronic stress is upon them. Increased stress is due to our dash of modern society lifestyles, and we must learn to recognise our own limitations and be aware of our levels of anxiety or physical exhaustion. If we can educate further and help others understand that taking some time in self-care rituals by integrating some stress-management tools, including meditation, physical exercise, relaxation breathing with essential oils and massage easing taut muscles, acupuncture points (vagus nerve and adrenal glands) with essential oils, journaling - and of course eating well and getting enough rest may prevent symptoms of chronic stress from modern living. If the body and mind are calmed into a rest and digest state, the whole body will have a chance to heal when we stress less. In conclusion we can balance our nervous system using a plant-based approach to treating and preventing common symptoms with use of essential oils, backed by science to help our sleep, hormone levels, drainage of lymph nodes with oil massage, gut health and balance our immunity we just need to integrate them more into our daily routines and trust in the process of prevention.

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Appendix

Aromatherapy Consultation for Stress

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City, State, postcode: _____

Home: _____ Telephone –
Mobile: _____ Birth date: _____

Partner status: _____ # of children: _____ Occupation: _____

Pronouns: _____

Is there a possibility that you are pregnant? Yes ☐ No ☐ Are you nursing? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you experience any allergic reactions to any substances (food, environmental, etc)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please describe: _____

_____ Do you currently smoke? Yes ☐ No ☐

How many cigarettes per day? _____

Are you currently on medication? If Yes, please list medication (so I can check for possible plant/drug contraindications)

Medical History

Please check any conditions that may apply to you.

General:

- ___ Allergies
- ___ Cancer
- ___ Dizziness
- ___ Epilepsy
- ___ Fainting
- ___ Fatigue
- ___ Migraine
- ___ Mood disorder
- ___ Nervousness
- ___ Numbness

Muscles & Joints

- ___ Arthritis
- ___ Backache/Upper

Gastro-intestinal

- ___ Belching
- ___ Constipation
- ___ Abdominal pain
- ___ Colitis
- ___ IBS

Urinary

- ___ Excessive urination

- ☐ Water retention
- ☐ Backache/Lower
- ☐ Broken bones
- ☐ TMJ/jaw pops
- ☐ Mobility limitations
- ☐ Spinal curvature
- ☐ Sprained tendons/muscles
- ☐ Stiff neck
- ☐ Swollen joints
- Cardiovascular:
- ☐ Heart attack
- ☐ Heart disease
- ☐ High blood pressure
- ☐ Low blood pressure
- ☐ Pain in Heart Area
- ☐ Poor circulation
- ☐ Swelling of Ankles/Joints ☐
- Previous Heart Stroke/Murmur ☐
- Ears, Eyes, Nose, Throat
- ☐ Asthma
- ☐ Ear aches
- ☐ Eye pains, Dry/Wet
- ☐ Failing vision
- ☐ Glaucoma
- ☐ Sinus infection
- ☐ Sore throat
- ☐ Sinus congestion

Skin:

- ☐ Boils
- ☐ Acne
- ☐ Dryness (lacking oil)
- ☐ Dehydrated (lacking water)
- ☐ Itching
- ☐ Varicose veins
- ☐ Inflamed/sensitive.

Respiratory:

- ☐ Asthma
- ☐ Chest pain
- ☐ Difficulty breathing
- ☐ Dry cough
- ☐ Spitting blood
- ☐ Congestion

Exploring stress symptoms. Please review this list and check off any you are currently experiencing.

YES/NO

- ☐ Sleep Issues
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Muscle Aches and Pains
- ☐ Hair loss
- ☐ Skin rash
- ☐ Skin acne
- ☐ Skin aging
- ☐ Digestive issues circle one IBS/Constipation

- ☐ Leaking Urine
- ☐ Memory loss and difficulty concentrating
- ☐ No sex drive.

Anything that is not on this list?

Of everything listed above, what are your top 3 concerns and areas you would like to focus on?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are there any aromas you love?

- ☐ Earthy
- ☐ Woody
- ☐ Floral
- ☐ Fresh and Clean
- ☐ Fruity
- ☐ Citrus?

Any you hate/dislike?

Any Allergies?

Do you have an aromatherapy diffuser at home?