



# Addiction



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# Essential Oils & the Road to Addiction Recovery

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Addiction is so prevalent that you don't have to look far to find someone who is suffering from its influence and effects. Sometimes, you just have to look in the mirror. Addiction can be responsible for diminished self-worth, estrangement from family and friends, dismissal from work, and decline of physical health.

The good news, though, is that there is hope! It's never too late to start fighting addiction, and there are resources and tools available to help—including essential oils!

The book *Modern Essentials* defines addiction as “an obsession, compulsion, or extreme psychological dependence that interferes with an individual's ability or desire to function normally” .

Common addictions include drugs, alcohol, tobacco, video games, work, shopping, overeating, gambling, explicit images, money, etc.; however, addiction can present itself in many other forms as well.

In the early stages of addiction, an individual may still be able to function in society; but as an addiction progresses, it can start to take over a person's life and make it difficult for that person to work, take care of themselves, or have normal relationships. If an addiction isn't controlled, the results can be detrimental to a person's quality of life.

There are many programs and professionals out there that can help with addiction recovery, and we suggest that you get the help that you need. Some helpful suggestions for addiction recovery include finding a support group (have someone you can call in a weak moment), avoiding triggers (stay away from people and places that remind you of your addictive behaviour), distracting yourself with hobbies, exercising regularly, eating healthy, and setting goals.

All of these things can make a difference and be helpful on the road to change. Even if you follow all of the guidelines outlined by a program or a health care professional, the road to recovery from addiction can still be long and difficult; but it is possible. Essential oils can be a big help on this path.

Essential oils are great because they can help with many of the symptoms of withdrawal, such as nausea, headaches, insomnia, anxiety, etc., and they can help boost your mood and increase your energy (See *Modern Essentials* for supporting research) so that you can keep pushing forward on the road to recovery.

Essential oils can also help reduce stress , which is important because stress is one of the biggest reasons why people engage in addictive behaviours in the first place.

If you are the parent, friend, or spouse of someone struggling with addiction, it can be difficult to not get discouraged or wonder if you are somehow at fault for the circumstance. You can't blame yourself though; people make their own choices. All you can do is show support and love and be there to help when the addict is ready to receive help. Arm yourself with the knowledge and resources (essential oils certainly fall in this category) that can help when you are given the chance. Addiction recovery is very possible—especially with the help of essential oils and a good support system. Don't lose hope. Get help, set goals, and get your life back!

*Source: Modern Essentials: A Contemporary Guide to the Therapeutic Use of Essential Oils, 5th Edition, 2013*

# How to Use Complementary Therapies within Your Addiction Treatment

Posted on [December 16, 2016](#)

Some people are able to overcome addiction on their own, while others need more support through professional treatment. Each person needs to take the recovery path that works for him or her. There's no reason to feel weak if you need to rely on professional treatment. Drug or alcohol dependence creates significant changes in your brain and body, especially if you've been abusing the drug for a long time or in large amounts. Professional treatment can provide various tools and techniques to help you change your life. Or you might be someone who thrives more on your own than with the help of others.



Whether you are working on overcoming addiction individually or with the help of professionals, there is a lot you can do on your own. After all, addiction recovery is your own personal journey of making changes and transitioning from an old way of living to a new one. You're doing the work on your own anyway—it just helps to have support, whether that's in the form of holistic therapies, medical/psychosocial treatment, or both!

A range of complementary therapies can add to whatever other steps you are taking without counteracting them. Many intensive treatment programs even offer numerous holistic therapies within their regimens.

## ***About Addiction***

Addiction, which now falls under the designation “substance use disorder,” is a complex health problem that involves all aspects of a person’s life. It affects one physically, emotionally, neurologically, and in other ways. Addiction comes with tolerance and dependence, and it changes the brain and other parts of the body.

Overall, addiction results in many problems to one’s life, and most agree that a person is addicted if he or she doesn’t stop using the substance despite these problems. Addicts are likely to experience at least some problems such as job loss, financial struggles, health troubles, relationship problems or endings, and other problems and losses that the addiction either causes or perpetuates.

Since addiction is a complex problem, it often helps to have a treatment plan that focuses on different aspects of one’s body, mind, and life. Many treatment programs incorporate psychological professionals, doctors and nurses, and other professionals to offer various treatment methods that focus on these different aspects. The specialties work together within a comprehensive treatment plan. Treatment also works best when it’s tailored to each person.

You might find that solely using holistic therapies is the path you need to take to overcome an addiction. Or you might find that some holistic techniques work well with your individualized plan that also includes treatments such as psychological therapy and even temporary medication.

## ***How Complementary Therapies Can Help***

The goal of many addiction treatment techniques is to help you change your way of thinking and behaving. Many holistic therapies can help with that goal.

Learning to relieve stress is often a key component of addiction treatment, since stress is a common trigger for substance use. You can use tools such as aromatherapy, yoga, meditation, and other techniques to cut your stress levels and help you react differently to situations.



Certain complementary therapies can also help ease symptoms of withdrawal and can promote healing to your body and mind.

There is also a lot you can do on your own when you have recovered from an addiction and are trying to prevent relapse. Just as with various health conditions, it's fairly common to relapse when you quit a substance. Nevertheless, it's possible to reduce your risk of relapse, and holistic therapies can provide support toward this goal.

### ***Techniques to Try within Your Addiction Treatment Plan***

Aromatherapy is a natural treatment that can provide benefits for your treatment process. This therapy involves using essential oils in therapeutic ways, such as inhaling them or diluting and applying them to your skin.

In *Yale Scientific*, Cynthia Deng explained that some research has supported the idea that essential oils have a positive effect on mood, adding that “there is something to be said for the consistent mood improvement across studies.” Deng explained that the scent travels to the limbic system in the brain, where it can also play a role in memories. She gave the example that associating a certain scent with something positive could help a person have positive thoughts when smelling it in the future.

So inhaling the scent of essential oils could improve your mood, which could be beneficial if you're experiencing an addiction. This effect has particular potential for easing symptoms of post-acute withdrawal syndrome, which is associated with a variety of emotional symptoms. Plus, you might be able to help train your brain to have new positive experiences by inhaling a scent you like while you engage in a drug-free activity.



There are many additional techniques you can incorporate into your personal process of overcoming addiction. Yoga, meditation, and other relaxing, reflective techniques provide wonderful methods of relieving stress and changing your perspective on life. Through these techniques, you learn to reflect, calm your mind and emotions, and think and act differently. Prayer can offer similar benefits if it fits your life-

style.

Yoga also provides exercise, which takes us to the next point. Fitness and nutrition are incredibly beneficial to healing your body and mind from an addiction. A healthy diet gives your body and brain nutrients to make up for addiction-based deficiencies and to support your brain and body in healing themselves. Both nutrition and exercise help your mood and improve your overall health. Exercise also provides a healthy activity you can commit to rather than spending your time on addiction-based activities.



There is an abundance of other healthy techniques you can use to promote healing and recovery, including:

- Biofeedback
- Acupuncture
- Music
- Massage
- Reiki
- Art therapy

(see, for example, [“Colouring with Essential Oil–Scented Pencils for Mental Health”](http://blog.aromatools.com/coloring-with-essential-oil-scented-pencils-for-mental-health/) at <http://blog.aromatools.com/coloring-with-essential-oil-scented-pencils-for-mental-health/>)

Whether or not you rely on the support of professionals to overcome an addiction, you do have a lot of power to change your own life. These complementary techniques can support you in your journey and make the process a bit smoother. Also, you can support your transition in other ways, such as changing your environment, learning your triggers to avoid or manage them, and filling your life with positive and healthy influences, such as supportive people and enjoyable sober activities.

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# Essential Oils for Symptoms of Addiction and Withdrawal

<https://monq.com/eo/rehabilitation/symptoms-addiction-withdrawal/>

Essential Oils help us shift the need for immediate relief into a new and nourishing relationship with ourselves.

How? Every time we experience a traumatic, negative or degrading experience, whether in childhood or adulthood, a cascade of chemistry occurs in the brain that wires certain neurological pathways, records the external physical environment as well as the state of your body (emotions, sensations such as sadness, anger, self-judgment, low self-esteem) in great detail, thereby ensuring that memory pathway is set.

Let's say it's so traumatic that you find yourself habitually replaying the event over and over in your mind, somehow hoping for a new outcome. That's human, normal and natural to do.

In his groundbreaking book, *Becoming Supernatural*, Dr. Joe Dispenza reminds us of the neuroscience behind this daily phenomenon. Each time we replay a memory in the mind, we send the exact same chemistry through the brain, which lodges impressions throughout the body. The mind has no idea that the event isn't actually happening IN THAT MOMENT, because the brain cannot distinguish between present and past.

Highlight this: a memory registers in the mind as though it's happening in the present. Which is why if you've adopted any addictive habit to escape an awful memory, or prevent more from happening, you're only escaping for as long as the drug or the drink works. When it wears off, that memory is still there, that low vibration has made an impression on your subconscious, and it's waiting for you to replay it and cause the same physiological reaction time and again.

Enter Essential Oils. By introducing new chemistry to the limbic (instinctive) brain, the Oils can transform those pathways of negative memory, bring in new information, and create new, positive pathways. Oils can aid our recovery from low vibrational states that result from addiction to food, dieting, alcohol, drugs, prescription drugs, abusive

people, relationships, unhealthy sexual choices and habits, self-harming, overworking, multi-tasking, hiding, lying, electronic diversions, and even social media – by creating an environment of physical balance and emotional peace in the body. Essential Oils create conditions in which those low vibrations cannot thrive.

By creating new habits and rituals of self-care, Essential Oils change your mind, fortify you emotionally, and help you design and sustain your journey in recovery. Such new rituals shift us into new ways of thinking and being with ourselves and with others. By keeping a consistent, simple routine with your favourite Oils, you can shift memories and help your body find its way to freedom.

### *How precisely do the Oils work?*

When you inhale an Essential Oil, the odor molecules travel via your nostrils to the olfactory membranes in your nose lining. The odor molecules stimulate this lining of nerve cells to trigger electrical impulses to the olfactory bulb in the brain, causing a series of reactions within the cell structures, which results in the creation of new habits of feeling, thinking, seeing and being. The olfactory bulb transmits those impulses to the amygdala, where your emotional memories are stored. This is also the control center for automatic functions such as your breathing and your heart rate, so those impulses can instantly shift your state.

The premise of aromatherapy: Essential Oils enable you to access stored, forgotten memories and suppressed emotions, in order to acknowledge, integrate and/or release them.

Recovering from addiction to anything from drugs and alcohol to gambling and compulsive overeating can be a challenge. The initial discomfort and withdrawal symptoms are well worth it in the end, however, considering the benefits gained by overcoming addiction. Fortunately, there are several ways to help reduce these symptoms. One way of doing so is through aromatherapy. For an easy remedy, use an essential oil diffuser.

## ***The Need for Overcoming Addiction***

Addictions have serious effects on the brain. Some drugs disrupt normal brain communication by attaching to the neurons, which tricks the brain into thinking they are neurotransmitters, like nicotine which stimulates the VTA dopamine-releasing neuron. Other drugs like amphetamines and cocaine prevent dopamine—the pleasure hormone—from being removed from the synaptic cleft—the space between two neurons. The third category of drugs, like opium and heroin, decrease the activity of the inhibitory neuron preventing overproduction of dopamine by the VTA neuron.

Drugs can cause the brain to release up to 10 times more dopamine than the amount released during pleasurable activities. Additionally, the feeling produced generally occurs faster and lasts longer. Soon, activities that used to make the user feel good no longer produce the same effect, which can result in despair and lack of motivation. This produces addiction, which, with some drugs, can occur after a single use. Because drugs affect the reward system in the brain, addiction changes reward circuitry and result in craving the independence of pleasure.

To the brain, all addictions have similar damaging effects. When the brain starts expecting these substances but fails to receive them if the individual chooses to enter recovery, the body experiences a variety of generally unpleasant physiological and emotional responses.

## ***Common Withdrawal Symptoms***

- **Agitation:** Restlessness, the need to move around constantly, or a general “antsy” feeling.
- **Anger:** Feeling an intensive, unexplained rage, annoyance, the need to lash out, or losses of temper with no apparent cause.
- **Anxiety:** Panic attacks, feelings of fear and worry, or a constant state of hyper-excitability. Anxiety is one of the most common symptoms of addiction withdrawal, and typically emerges or intensifies during the first few stages of withdrawal. Some individuals will experience anxiety almost constantly for a significant pe-

riod of time, and others will find that the anxiety comes and goes in waves.

Those who have had a history of anxiety prior to addiction and/or recovery often report that the anxiety experienced during recovery was different: bordering on terror and extremely intense.

- Depressed Mood: Flat affect, feeling hopeless and unmotivated.
- Exhaustion: Constantly feeling a lack of energy or extreme tiredness, weakness, and sluggishness.
- Insomnia: Difficulty falling or staying asleep for a prolonged period of time.

Insomnia is quite common with psychiatric drug withdrawal. Individuals report difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep too late, waking too early, and generally having restless, poor-quality sleep. The sleep deprivation that results from this leads to irritability and often limits proper function during the day.

Withdrawal-induced insomnia can last for quite some time, and the amount of time it lasts varies on a case-by-case basis. Some people have reported that they get better sleep over a matter of weeks, while others have reported that it took months or a year for the condition to improve.

- Irritability: Feeling easily annoyed by small, seemingly insignificant matters.
- Obsessive Thoughts: Intrusive, repetitive, unwanted or looping thoughts. Feelings of utter fixation on issues, to the point where it is difficult to move forward.

## ***What are Essential Oils?***

For centuries, human beings have sought after natural ways to promote good health and wellness. Essential oils have proven to be some of the best sources of natural healing, providing a range of health benefits.

Essential oils are cultivated and distilled from trees, plants, flowers, shrubs, seeds, roots, and bushes. The oils are often extracted through the process of distillation. They generally contain oxygenated molecules that transport the various nutrients to body cells. Oxygen allows the nutrients to be assimilated into the body to achieve wide-ranging effects.

Therapeutic grade essential oils bring positive effects to the body through direct absorption into the skin, olfactory, or digestive organ systems. The stimulating, calming, soothing, and cleansing properties of essential oils work to bring balance to all body systems.

## ***What Is Aromatherapy?***

Aromatherapy is generally classified as a class of holistic treatment involving the use of aromatic ingredients and plant materials to produce scents beneficial to physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Aromatherapy relies on essential oils, which deliver their properties through inhalation, ingestion, or topical application. However, there are many different kinds of essential oils that can be used in a variety of ways for a multitude of purposes.

Although essential oils are common in products like soaps, candles, and beauty products, their concentrated forms can be potent substances. For aromatherapy purposes, essential oils are put into desktop diffusers for inhalation as vapor, are used with a portable, personal essential oil diffuser, or are mixed with carrier oils like almond oil, olive oil, coconut oil, or massage oil, and applied to the skin. Based on the kind of essential oil used, the effect can be stimulating or relaxing.

## ***Aromatherapy for Recovery from Addiction***

For people in addiction recovery, holistic remedies can be an effective supplement to treatment. Strong evidence supports the efficacy of many alternative treatment options like acupuncture, yoga, and aromatherapy.

Aromatherapy can be beneficial in a number of ways when it comes to overcoming addiction:

### ***Controlling Cravings***

One of the fiercest battles individuals who undergo recovery face is curbing the urges to go back to the habit they're trying to drop. Cravings are actually known to go hand in hand with addiction, and both have physical and psychological roots. Fortunately, some of the properties in certain essential oils can effectively reduce these cravings.

### ***Gaining Mental Clarity***

The first few weeks of recovery from addictions, especially from alcohol, can be underscored by the feeling of having a "fuzzy brain." This is not only a common occurrence but also an expected symptom of Post Acute Withdrawal Syndrome (PAWS). Essential oils like rosemary can help in providing added mental clarity, which will provide an additional layer of relief when paired with a recovery program.

### ***Staying Present***

Among the principle tenets of holistic wellness and mindfulness is making time to be present. This doesn't naturally occur to most people, as they find themselves wrapped up in thinking about the past or the future. Some of the best healing, however, comes from being in the moment, which can be done through meditation while diffusing essential oils. Some essential oils can help individuals fall into the meditative state more easily or allow for improved sleep quality, which assists in overall relaxation.

### ***Easing Physical Ailments***

PAWS often brings physical symptoms such as muscle tension, joint pain, restless legs, headaches. Using essential oils whether in massage or aromatic use through a vaporizer or diffuser can allow for a reduction in some of this physical discomfort. Though it is advisable to consult with a medical professional if this pain is severe and persistent.

### ***Regulating Emotions***

During the initial stages of sobriety, emotions may seem more scattered. This is because the brain and the body are used to regulating themselves with external substances. In other words, they need to re-learn how to operate without these substances present. Expecting this to occur during the early recovery stage is setting the bar too high. Some essential oils are effective at just helping an individual relax, which can ultimately allow for better emotional control.

Of course, essential oils are not the end-all answer for individuals on the path to sobriety. Nevertheless, a large body of research suggests that the addition of aromatherapy and other holistic treatment to an existing recovery program may ease the symptoms of withdrawal and potentially improve results.

## **Opiate Addiction**

Pain is a reality of life, ranging from muscle pain to headaches, back pain, and even toothaches. This pain may force a person to seek out a quick and easy fix, especially for a recurring problem. Since human beings are creatures of habit, a regular neurological and behavioural pattern of using painkillers to ease pain might make a person physiologically and psychologically dependent on them in the long run, even after the pain passes.

Addiction to opiates (narcotic pain relievers) is one of the fastest growing problems in the world. Many individuals are dealing with opiate addiction or are attempting to undergo the recovery process and experiencing withdrawal.

During the first stage of opiate withdrawal, the experience might seem overwhelming. The individual may experience extreme anxiety, confusion, and stress as the brain responds to the lack of the drug.

### ***Which Oils are optimal for recovery?***

There are many. I'll include a few images here to illustrate the magnificence of the plants and how they work in your recovery; feel free to share and ask questions as they arise.

### ***Best Essential Oils for Opiate Withdrawal Symptoms***

In addition to a recovery program, essential oils with sedative properties will help the body to relax and remain calm during the recovery process.

#### ***Lavender Oil***

The sweet scent of lavender oil is one of the most popular in the world of essential oils. This multipurpose essential oil is derived from the steam distillation of lavender leaves and flowering tops and is utilized for its relaxing, calming effects.

For use, apply 2 to 3 drops of the oil into a clean handkerchief and breathe in the aroma. Alternatively, use it through a vaporizer, a room diffuser, or a portable aromatherapy diffuser.

#### ***Ylang Ylang Oil***

Ylang Ylang oil is derived from the fragrant flowers of the tropical trees called *Cananga odorata*, or the Cananga tree. This flowering plant is native to Indonesia and produces a mild floral scent that makes it ideal for inducing sound, uninterrupted sleep. The oil is also helpful in relieving nausea, as well as fear and agitation.

Add a few drops of ylang-ylang oil into a bath to experience its calming effects, or use it aromatically in a room diffuser or personal aromatherapy diffuser like Zen, Sexy, or Ocean MONQ.

### ***Eucalyptus Oil***

Eucalyptus essential oil is derived from the steam distillation of the leaves and twigs of the eucalyptus tree. The oil produces a stimulating effect on the body and mind. This reduces the lethargy that may be experienced during opiate withdrawal.

A topical massage of a few drops of the oil diluted with a carrier can help relieve fatigue, aches, and discomfort in the body.

### ***Cinnamon Oil***

The spicy, warm, fragrant cinnamon oil is derived from the aromatic Indian spice: cinnamon. The essential oil can help boost the activity of adrenal glands, in addition to providing relief to confusion, stress, fear, or doubt. Because of its health benefits, cinnamon essential oil is found in Healthy, Sexy, and Love MONQ.

### ***Ginger Oil***

This essential oil is extracted from the roots of the ginger plant. When extracted via CO<sub>2</sub>, it contains large amounts of gingerol, a powerful antioxidant, as the main active ingredient. Ginger essential oil has a strong, aromatic fragrance, and can help to suppress opiate cravings. When used in a room diffuser, personal aromatherapy diffuser like Forest, Vibrant, and Love MONQ, or in a massage, ginger essential oil can relieve fatigue, muscle aches, and stress.

### ***Grapefruit Oil***

Grapefruit essential oil is distilled from the peel of grapefruits and possesses both sedative and stimulating properties that influence the lymphatic system. Therefore, the oil can bring relief to opiate withdrawal symptoms.

### ***Peppermint Oil***

Peppermint essential oil is derived from the menthol-flavored peppermint herb. Since peppermint oil has a high menthol content, it produces rejuvenating and calming effects on the senses. The oil is also

helpful in clearing a fuzzy brain, relieving nausea, tension, and headaches, all of which are symptoms of opiate withdrawal.

The oil can be applied topically when diluted with a carrier oil or used in aromatherapy in a vaporizer, room diffuser, or portable essential oil diffusers like Forest, Vibrant, Ocean, and Mountain MONQ.

## **Substance Addiction**

Aromatherapy is one of the best alternative therapies for withdrawal symptoms from cocaine, amphetamine, or heroin addictions when used in conjunction with a recovery program.

The first step is understanding as much as possible about the facts of the respective drug that caused the addiction and work from there to fight the symptoms. This way, beating the habit will be easier and will put one grounded on the path towards leading a happy, long, drug-free life.

### ***Essential Oils for Substance Withdrawal Symptoms***

#### ***Clary Sage Oil***

This essential oil is derived from the *Salvia sclarea* (clary sage) herb, which is native to southern France, Syria, and Italy. Clary sage essential oil has proven effective in alleviating mental fatigue, paranoia, and anxiety. Additionally, it has been shown to relieve back pain, headaches, and muscle cramps, as well as calm the nervous system.

To use this essential oil, mix a few drops with a carrier oil such as olive or coconut oil and apply to areas where pain relief is needed. Alternatively, diffuse 3 or 4 drops in a room diffuser to reduce stress or negative thoughts.

#### ***Bergamot Oil***

Bergamot essential oil has proven effective in delivering relief from compulsive behavior or anxiety. It is often used in conjunction with treatment for cocaine and heroin addiction because of its calming effect. The oil also helps relieve tension and regulate appetite.

For use of bergamot essential oil in aromatherapy, diffuse a few drops in a room diffuser or personal aromatherapy diffuser like Vibrant MONQ to alleviate anxiety, or rub a few drops onto the palms for an additional calming effect. Using bergamot essential oil in the shower can make for added benefits. Add a few drops of the oil to a carrier oil and apply the mixture to the skin while showering. Inhale deeply to experience the calming aroma while enjoying its purifying benefits on the skin.

For topical application, combine a few drops of the oil with a carrier oil and massage onto the neck and shoulders to relieve nervous tension.

For internal use, add a drop of bergamot essential oil into tea, not only enhance flavor but to promote feelings of confidence and serenity, while relieving tension.

### ***Lemon Oil***

Lemon essential oil uplifts the mood and alleviates anxiety by helping the body produce an alkalizing effect, promoting detoxification of the liver kidneys, and reducing dehydration.

To use lemon essential oil as part of aromatherapy, diffusing a few drops of the lemon oil into the air with a room diffuser, or use it in a vaporizer or personal essential oil diffuser to help enhance mood. Alternatively, rub a few drops of the oil on palms and inhale to invigorate the body and mind.

For topical application, dilute the oil with a carrier oil for cleansing a specific area of the body. Lemon oil is photosensitive so stay out of the sun for several hours after application.

Using lemon essential oil internally requires placing a couple of drops in a glass of water, mixing it with a few drops of raw honey for immune-boosting effects or placing a drop of lemon oil onto a toothbrush or onto the tongue for cleaner, fresher breath.

### ***Peppermint Oil***

This essential oil has the effect of relieving headaches and nausea, making it highly effective for managing the withdrawal symptoms of

hard substance abuse. Peppermint essential oil has been shown to provide relief from painful emotions, support healthy digestion, invigorate the body and boost alertness, and relieve inflammation.

For use in aromatherapy, place a few drops of the oil into a diffuser to boost energy and stimulate the senses or rub onto the palms and inhale directly.

The soothing compounds found in the peppermint essential oil make it perfect for oil massages. For topical use, dilute with a carrier oil and use the mixture in a massage to enjoy its sweet, relaxing aroma. For added invigorating effects, dilute the oil with a carrier oil and rub onto the temples.

Peppermint essential oil is a great addition to your daily routine when used aromatically. It helps clear airways and promote healthy respiratory function.

### ***Rosemary Oil***

The effects of rosemary oil include boosting self-confidence and alleviating stress or anxiety. It's also been shown to be effective at managing substance addiction withdrawal symptoms. Rosemary essential oil provides benefits like improving concentration and memory, relieving pain and stiffness in the joints, or relieving stomach cramps.

The chemical composition of rosemary essential oil gives it potent energy-boosting properties, especially when the oil is used in aromatherapy through a diffuser.

When trying to relax, the regenerative properties of rosemary essential oil can help soothe the body at the end of a long day. Add the oil to a warm bath to create a relaxing environment and provide stress relief to the mind and body.

## **Alcohol Addiction**

Most individuals recovering from alcohol addiction experience serious psychological symptoms related to anxiety, stress, and depression.<sup>1</sup> Because essential oils are known for their anti-anxiety properties, certain essential oils can provide much-needed support for those experiencing alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

## *Essential Oils for Alcohol Withdrawal Symptoms*

### ***Lavender Oil***

Lavender oil is one of the best choices for use in aromatherapy to manage the anxiety and psychological stresses related to recovering from alcoholism. Furthermore, the oil is great for relieving conditions such as hypersensitivity and insomnia related to alcohol withdrawal. The oil is also known to act as a stress-reliever and sedative with calming properties.

### ***Lemon Oil***

Lemon is high in limonene which many studies have shown can have a positive effect on alleviating depression and supporting the immune system. This essential oil is extracted from the lemon rind. The resulting fresh, citrus oil has rejuvenating effects on the mind and the body.

Lemon oil is a great companion as a healing agent in dealing with withdrawal on the path towards recovery. Excessive alcohol consumption takes a toll on the health of the liver, which is responsible for many metabolic functions in the body.

As the liver metabolizes the consumed alcohol, the process releases toxic byproducts including acetaldehyde which damages the liver cells further. Lemon oil helps initiate the gentle detoxification of the liver and kidneys. It also helps rebalance the pH level in the blood and reduce dehydration caused by alcohol.

### ***Black Pepper Oil***

Black pepper essential oil is a popular Indian spice with a range of uses in cooking, perfume, and medicine. This oil is derived from the dried fruit, known as the peppercorn, and contains many health benefits. According to a study, black pepper oil can help reduce cravings in most addictions, and effectively relieves withdrawal symptoms like anxiety and stress.

The oil contains powerful antioxidants that boost oxygenation in the body, helping prevent dehydration of cells. Furthermore, black pepper essential oil has been shown to boost serotonin and dopamine levels

in the brain. The oil also naturally works as a diuretic. Applying the oil topically can help detoxify the body through stimulation of sweating and urination.

### ***Ginger Oil***

Ginger is a powerful rhizome with remarkable therapeutic benefits. The medicinal use of ginger can be traced back 4,700 years to China and India. The oil is derived from the ginger rhizome through steam distillation. The oil contains high amounts of gingerol, which produces its therapeutic effects.

Addiction to alcohol results in both physiological and psychological damage to the body. A number of studies suggest the ginger oil has liver protecting, or hepatoprotective, effects on the body. Since alcohol overconsumption is known to damage the liver, the benefits of ginger oil can support the healing process.

### ***Roman Chamomile Oil***

Roman chamomile oil is derived from the steam distillation of the flowers of the chamomile plant. It is one of the most ancient medicinal plants in the world. It's also a popular oil in aromatherapy, renowned for its stress relieving and mood-boosting capabilities. The Roman chamomile essential oil is rich in antidepressant and mildly sedative properties. This means that it can directly influence the brain, induce a sensation of relaxation, and calm your nervous system.

The oil is a nervine and has a positive effect on the nervous system. This can help with emotional triggers during alcohol withdrawal, helping reduce irritability and anger.

There are a number of ways to use the essential oils mentioned above to help alleviate withdrawal symptoms. Some of the most effective ones include internal use, aromatherapy, an essential oil bath, and topical application.

### ***Aromatherapy***

Add three to five drops of lavender, lemon, or chamomile essential oils to a diffuser for stress and anxiety relief. Alternatively, pour a few

drops of each of these onto a tissue or handkerchief and breathe deeply.

### ***Internal Use***

Add 1 to 2 drops of black pepper, chamomile, lemon, or ginger essential oils to a glass of warm water with a teaspoon of raw honey. Sip this relaxing tonic two times a day to boost the immune system and relieve stress and anxiety.

### ***Topical Application***

Mix 2 to 4 drops of lemon, black pepper, ginger, or lavender oil with one tablespoon of a carrier oil such as almond or coconut oil. Gently massage the blend on the neck region, temples, chest, and the bottoms of the feet. Repeat this two to three times a day to help calm the nervous system and for relief from withdrawal symptoms.

### ***Detox Bath***

Add 10 drops of chamomile oil, 15 drops of ginger oil, 10 drops of lavender oil, 10 drops of lemon oil, and 100 mL of coconut oil to a bath filled with warm water. Soak in the tub for 15–20 minutes to experience the detoxifying effects.

Recovery from alcohol addiction is often long and strenuous. The individual recovering should be supported by their environment as well as the individuals close to them. The essential oils discussed above are effective as complementary treatments in conjunction with other withdrawal treatments and therapies, such as meditation and counseling. The most important help that comes from these essential oils is the psychological support needed during the withdrawal phase of alcohol addiction.

## **Tobacco/Nicotine Addiction**

The millions of people who struggle with tobacco addiction are a testament to the fact that quitting smoking is not easy. Some attempt to quit smoking cold turkey, but later struggled with withdrawal symptoms. Many seek the help of nicotine chewing gums, nicotine patches, herbs, electronic cigarettes, medications, acupuncture, and even hyp-

nosis and meditation. However, essential oils can be beneficial when it comes to dealing with tobacco or nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

The oils are absorbed into the bloodstream via aromatic use and topical application to produce the effect. The essential oils used for smoking cessation usually work by reducing cravings and soothing the nervous system, as well as alleviating stress and anxiety.<sup>1</sup>

## ***Essential Oils for Nicotine Withdrawal Symptoms***

### ***Black Pepper Oil***

Black pepper oil is widely regarded as the most effective essential oil for withdrawal symptoms when quitting smoking. A study tested the effect of a substitute for nicotine that delivered the vapor of black pepper essential oil, menthol, mint, or an empty cartridge (placebo) on 48 smokers. The participants were deprived of nicotine and cigarettes overnight and were asked to smoke one of the smoking devices with one of the four vapours.

Results showed that cravings for cigarettes were substantially reduced among the members of the group breathing black pepper oil. The oil also alleviated anxiety levels in comparison to the unflavoured placebo.

### ***Lavender, Bergamot, and Chamomile Oils***

Essential oils for smoking cessation and withdrawal symptoms are not only effective when their vapors are used aromatically, but also when applied topically. A study was conducted with 48 female students participating in a smoking cessation program. The group was taught to perform a self-massage on the hands with a blend of lavender, bergamot, and chamomile essential oils. The success of this group in the program was then compared with a control group.

The study found out that the smoking cessation program that applied aromatherapy massage resulted in a significant reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked per day, as well as nicotine cravings, smoking-related anxiety, and withdrawal symptoms.

## ***Citrus Oils***

Citrus oils are ideal for smoking withdrawal symptoms because they can be blended with other oils to deal with specific symptoms. For example, an individual who is feeling nervous, anxious, angry, or irritable, can use citrus oils such as grapefruit, lemon, or orange blossom to alleviate the symptoms and produce an uplifting effect.

A blend of these oils would also be ideal for a feeling of lethargy. One study found that the scent of lemon works almost as effectively as a nicotine patch in helping quit smoking.

## ***Ylang-Ylang Oil***

Ylang-ylang essential oil is ideal for assisting to curb nicotine cravings an individual would experience during the night. When dabbed on a cotton square and placed on pillowcases, the oil can help reduce these cravings.

In a study featured in the book *Clinical Aromatherapy: Essential Oils in Practice* by Jane Buckle, participants reported relief from stress and anxiety after smelling ylang-ylang essential oil at the times when cravings hit.

Other essential oils to help with withdrawal symptoms while quitting smoking include clary sage, clove, cinnamon, and marjoram.

To make a “smoking cessation” blend at home, mix five drops of orange, lime, or lemon essential oils oil, five drops of clove oil, five drops of helichrysum, five drops chamomile, 10 drops of Marjoram, 10 drops lavender, and 15 drops grapefruit essential oils. Diffusing this blend will effectively reduce cravings, calming the nerves, refreshing the body, and balance the mood.

To help alleviate irritability and anxiety, diffuse chamomile, lavender, or ylang-ylang essential oils in a candle or room diffuser. The oils can also be used to make a massage oil, which can be massaged into the chest or neck region to further reduce withdrawal symptoms.

## Caffeine Addiction

Cutting caffeine out of a daily routine is a daunting task, especially because it is so prevalent in essentially every home and work environment. But consuming too much caffeine can bring a wide range of negative side effects. This includes emotional swings, insomnia, muscle tension, and impaired digestion. Excess caffeine is known to increase heart rate, decrease blood circulation to the brain, and elevate blood pressure.

Using essential oils is a great way to manage the symptoms of caffeine withdrawal and substituting its energizing effects. Essential oils ideally work as potential alternatives to conventional stimulants, such as caffeine.

There are a number of options available for this. Some oils will help to boost energy, others will improve the mood, some aid in managing tension and headaches, while others help with focus and attention.

### ***Peppermint Oil***

Peppermint oil helps relieve mild headaches while providing the body with an energy boost. Application of this oil to the temples, when diluted with a carrier oil, is ideal for fastest results.

### ***Orange Oil***

Orange essential oil provides a refreshing citrus scent that uplifts mood and increases focus. It's great for diffusing around the living room or in an office space.

### ***Jasmine Oil***

With its exotic, floral fragrance, jasmine essential oil soothes, relaxes and uplifts. The oil is ideal for balancing the energy of the body, enhancing self-confidence, and leaving the individual mentally refreshed. Combining multiple oils is the best way to wean off of caffeine addiction naturally. Using peppermint and orange essential oils together, for example, will provide an immediate pick-me-up. For this, place a few

drops of orange and peppermint oils in the palms of separate hands. Then rub the palms together and inhale the aroma from the palms.

## **Impulsive Overeating (Binge Eating Disorder)**

Aromatherapy is often used as complementary treatment for eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, or binge eating disorder. This is because most of these disorders stem from some underlying psychological factors. Compulsive eating can affect almost anyone, and it can range from minor to severe and even become addictive in nature.

Overeating is the most common eating disorder. When an individual overeats, they are trying to compensate for something lacking in their own lives, such as self-esteem, control, love, or courage. The condition can also arise as a result of anxiety, hormonal imbalance, or blood sugar imbalance. Trying to overcome addiction is often accompanied by a lot of psychological difficulties, cravings, anxiety, and mood swings.

The most effective essential oils for alleviating these symptoms include cinnamon, grapefruit, clary sage, orange, lemon, mandarin, and bergamot essential oils:

- Mandarin: Helps calm the nerves and improve digestion
- Bergamot: Appetite regulator
- Ginger: Improves digestion and uplifts mood
- Grapefruit: Controls appetite and uplifts mood
- Lemon: Improves mental clarity
- Cinnamon: Regulates blood sugar and curbs appetite
- Orange: Sedative qualities and curbs appetite
- Clary Sage: Calming qualities and helps balance hormones

Try combining a few of these oils and diffusing them throughout the room for about 15 minutes every hour the cravings hit.

## **Safety and Precautions**

When handling essential oils, it is important to be careful and mindful in order to avoid any adverse effects.

Never ingest an essential oil unless it is clearly intended for that purpose.

Additionally, it is important to know the effects of each of the essential oils being used. For example, rosemary essential oil can significantly increase blood pressure and should be avoided by those suffering from hypertension.

Individuals with respiratory conditions like asthma should take extra care when using essential oils, especially in aromatherapy.

Women who are pregnant or nursing should seek advice from a professional before using essential oils.

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