

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” (p.173).

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 behavior), 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 (See *Modern Essentials* p.274), which is important because stress is one of the biggest reasons why people engage in addictive behaviors in the first place. Below are a few essential oil suggestions from the book *Modern Essentials* that may be helpful for addiction recovery: If there are other issues you are dealing with that aren't listed here, *Modern Essentials* is a great resource to consult in finding which oils are often used for specific conditions.

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

Essential Oils Commonly Used for Addiction Recovery

Bergamot has been used to help calm agitation, alleviate depression, and increase energy (p.49).



Black Pepper is commonly used to help with addictions, especially tobacco addiction (p.51).



Clove is commonly used for tobacco addictions, metabolism balance, and muscle aches and pains (p.57).



Grapefruit has been used for drug addictions, appetite suppression, anorexia and bulimia, mental stress, and withdrawal (p.68).



Lavender is commonly used to help calm agitation, relieve anxiety, reduce mood swings, and fight insomnia (p.74).



Lemon is commonly used to help with anxiety, depression, energizing, overeating, stress, and relaxation (p.76).



Orange has been used to help with anxiety, fear, and withdrawal and is emotionally uplifting (p.102).



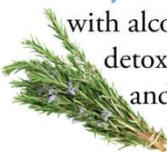
Peppermint has been used to help with headaches, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, and muscle aches (p.89).



Roman Chamomile is known to be calming and can be helpful for insomnia (p.91).



Rosemary has been used to help with alcohol addiction, detoxification, fatigue, and headaches (p.93).



How to Use Complementary Therapies within Your Addiction Treatment

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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.

If you are interested in using essential oils to help with addiction, you may wish to read our post [“Essential Oils & the Road to Addiction Recovery”](#) for more information. (Page 1 of this document)

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 lifestyle.

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
- Art therapy (see, for example, “[Colouring with Essential Oil–Scented Pencils for Mental Health](#)”)
- Massage
- Reiki
- Many more healthy, holistic options

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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