



## Essential Oils for a Stress-Free Holiday Season

By Doreen Lafferty OTD, LAc, OTR/L, LMT

As the “ber” months arrive, they usher in a flurry of activity: back-to-school routines, Halloween festivities, Thanksgiving gatherings, and the whirlwind of winter holidays. With so much preparation, shopping, and travel, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed. But amid the hustle, there are simple, natural ways to support your well-being and maintain balance. One powerful tool is aromatherapy, the practice of using essential oils to enhance physical, mental, and emotional harmony. Essential oils are highly concentrated plant extracts packed with active organic compounds that work with

your body to restore balance. Known for their therapeutic properties, these oils can be anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, energizing, or calming. Popular choices like lavender, eucalyptus, ginger, and frankincense each offer their own unique benefits, making them a versatile addition to your wellness routine.

The easiest and most effective way to experience the benefits of essential oils is through inhalation, which allows the compounds to reach your brain quickly. You can add 6–8 drops to a diffuser or humidifier, mix them with water in a spray bottle, or place a few drops on a tissue and take three deep breaths. Steam inhalation is another soothing option—simply add 6–8 drops to a bowl of hot water and breathe deeply. Essential oils can also be used topically when diluted

properly. A warm bath infused with 6–8 drops can help you unwind, while a DIY massage oil—made by blending up to four oils (2 drops each) with a carrier oil like almond or coconut—can ease tension in sore areas. For localized relief from aches and pains, create a compress by soaking a towel in a bowl of water mixed with 8–10 drops of oil and applying it to the affected area. Effective blends include **Study blend:** lemon, basil, peppermint, black pepper; **Sinus blend:** eucalyptus, lemon, peppermint, ginger; **Calming blend:** bergamot, lavender, chamomile, ylang ylang, or frankincense.

Because essential oils are so potent, safety is key. Always dilute oils with a carrier oil or water before applying them to your skin and avoid direct contact with undiluted oils. If you’re pregnant, managing health conditions

like high blood pressure, or have sensitive skin, consult a trained aromatherapist before use. By approaching aromatherapy with mindfulness and care, you

can create small rituals that bring calm, energy, and comfort—helping you navigate the busy months ahead with greater ease and balance.

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