

Essential Oils And Their Use At Body Mind Spirit

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Our goal at Body Mind Spirit is to offer a salon/spa where the consumer can be confident that the products that are used are better for them and for the environment. Our tag line is "Because it matters" which is why we ourselves make many of the sugar (and occasional salt) scrubs used in our pedicures. We do this so that we can create a product that is as organic as possible and so that we can customize the pedicure experience we offer. One of the ways we do this is with the use of essential oils, flower essences and gem elixirs. In our October 2020 blog we talked about flower essences and gem elixirs. This month we thought we'd discuss essential oils.

What is an essential oil and how is it different from a flower essence? A flower essence is strictly an energetic imprint of a flower, no actual components of the flower itself remain in the essence, whereas the essential oils are extracts of the aromatic substances in plants. The usual process of extraction is distillation, but not always. These oils are very volatile which is why they have a powerful aroma.

The therapeutic use of essential oils is called aromatherapy. Most people have heard of aromatherapy and often, when asked if they are familiar with flower essences (a lesser known healing modality), tend to confuse the two. We like to use both essential oils and flower essences because each modality behaves differently and can offer different benefits. Flower essences work mostly on the spiritual and emotional levels and their effects can then indirectly impact one's physical well-being (happy people often enjoy better health). Essential oils not only effect the emotional levels but have more of a direct impact on the physical level. Because they can effect the physical level, it is important to have some basic knowledge about essential oils before using them indiscriminately.

There are two ways to use essential oils. The first is strictly aromatherapy where one either inhales the scent of the oil from the bottle or uses something like a diffuser to dispel the scent in to the air. Dispersing essential oils using a diffuser at BMS has relaxing effect. The second way to use essential oils is topically. Because essential oils are very

concentrated, they must be diluted usually with a carrier oil before being applied topically or they can burn the skin. If adding to a bath, dilute a few drops in half a cup of milk before adding to the water. The exceptions to safely applying directly to the skin are lavender and tea tree oils.

Just like with herbs and supplements, one should work with brands that have a good reputation. There are cheap oils out there that might have used chemical solvents to extract the oils or have diluted the essential oils down for cost reasons and therefore diminished their benefits. Also like herbs, if the company starts with healthy organic plants, the end product (oil) will be more potent.

So what are the benefits of using essential oils? That depends on which oils you use although many overlap with their effects. The following are the benefits and reasons we use them in our pedicures.

- Lift one's mood
- Reduce inflammation
- Increase circulation (in legs and feet)
- Ease aches and pain
- Anti-septic, anti-bacterial and/or anti-viral
- Soothe and soften the skin

If you want to learn more, there are a plethora of good books on the subject. If you just want to enjoy the benefits, call and make an appointment with us for your wonderful, relaxing pedicure.

"Nothing is more memorable than a smell. One scent can be unexpected, momentary and fleeting, yet conjure up a childhood summer beside a lake in the mountains." - Diane Ackerman