Top 15 Essential Oils for Migraine Relief

by JAIME SANDERS

How to Use Essential Oils for Migraines

What's the big deal about using essential oils for migraines? Essential oils and their use are based on the idea that the body can potentially heal itself and people can harness those powers to alleviate a multitude of ailments by choosing the right oils. That can include the treatment and relief of migraines.

Several essential oils have properties that reduce inflammation, stress and anxiety, promote healthy sleep habits, relieve sinus pressure and allergies and manage hormonal levels.

There have been several studies done that show the benefits of popular essential oils as an alternative treatment to traditional therapies. The use of less studied scents for migraines and headaches relies more on the knowledge gained through centuries of tradition. Ancient cultures like the Egyptian, Greek and Chinese practiced the use of essential oils.

Before using any essential oil for your migraines, talk with your doctor first to go over any risks there may be by including them in your holistic migraine treatment plan. Some essential oils are not safe for pregnant or breastfeeding people, so check with your doctor before using any new oils.

What to Look for Before Purchasing an Essential Oil

When looking for and purchasing essential oils, quality is important. The higher the quality, the more concentrated the oil. You will pay more for it, but since a little goes a long way, it will be a wise investment.

Try to find oils that are pure, organic and unadulterated. Look for reputable sellers and brands with positive reviews, read the labels (the more information on them the better) and avoid oils with added fragrances and dyes.

Best 15 Essential Oils for Migraines

1. Lemon

Lemon essential oil has cleansing, purifying and invigorating properties — it is a versatile oil. The benefits of lemon essential oil include cleansing and purifying the air and surfaces. It aids in digestion, naturally cleanses the body, supports healthy respiratory function and enhances mood. It can be used as a natural cleaning agent in the home, added to food to enhance flavor and diffused to promote a positive and healthy mood.

My favorite ways to use lemon essential oils are:

- Adding a drop to a cup of hot water in the morning to help aid in digestion.
- I add a drop or two to a cup of hot water and golden turmeric paste, which helps relieve pain, inflammation, bloating and detox. I drink this at the onset of a migraine to help take the edge off (I will

often add a dropperful of feverfew extract to help ease the migraine if it is severe).

2. Ginger

Ginger is excellent for digestion, relieves nausea and occasional indigestion. I try to keep a box of ginger tea or ginger chews on hand, but when I run out I can put a drop of ginger and lemon essential oil in a cup of hot water to help ease any nausea due to migraine.

If I need a quick absorption of ginger, I will rub a few drops of it onto my abdomen. It can also be used in a diffuser to help ease nausea. If you are traveling, rub a drop into your hands and inhale or use a car diffuser if driving.

3. Peppermint or Spearmint Oil

Peppermint oil has a long-lasting cooling effect on the skin with the ability to inhibit muscle contractions. It also stimulates blood flow in the forehead (when applied topically).

In a 1996 study, peppermint oil was used as an alternative treatment to usual headache therapies with 41 patients. Participants applied the peppermint oil topically 15 to 30 minutes after a headache began and reported pain relief in their headache diaries. It was well-tolerated and there were no adverse side effects.

If peppermint oil is too overwhelming, using spearmint instead can help. Spearmint has the same qualities as peppermint oil with a much subtler scent.

4. Lavender Oil

Lavender oil has many benefits.

It works as a sedative, antidepressant, anti-anxiety and calming agent, as it induces relaxation and relieves tension and stress. It can also help with feelings of restlessness and poor sleep and regulates serotonin levels, which can help minimize pain in the nervous system.

Aromatic and topical use of lavender oil affects the limbic system, which is a set of brain structures located on both sides of the thalamus. It is here that two main components of lavender oil (linalool and linalyl acetate) are rapidly absorbed through the skin and are thought to cause central nervous system depression. Due to this effect, lavender oil can be used to treat anxiety-provoked headaches.

5. Frankincense, Lemongrass and Marjoram (Morphine Bomb)

The combination of frankincense, lemongrass and marjoram essential oils is an effective pain reliever for most chronic pain conditions. Frankincense promotes feelings of relaxation, lemongrass supports healthy digestion and marjoram has calming properties and positive effects on the nervous system.

I combine 20 drops of each essential oil in a rollerball and top it off with fractionated coconut oil. Whenever a migraine hits or my sciatica flares up, I just whip out my roller ball and apply this blend to wherever I am feeling pain or discomfort.

You could also make capsules by adding six drops of each to a veggie capsule and take one every three to four hours as needed.

6. Deep Blue Proprietary Blend

Deep Blue is a soothing and cooling oil blend made up of wintergreen, camphor, peppermint, ylang-ylang, helichrysum, blue tansy, blue chamomile and osmanthus essential oils. I love using this blend to ease the sciatic pain I often have, soreness of tender spots and occipital or neck pain due to a migraine.

This proprietary blend of oils is available in a cream, roll-on and supplement. It works well with the morphine bomb to tackle achy, sore or painful joints and muscles. You can either buy this blend or make your own with the same combination of oils.

7. Eucalyptus Oil

Eucalyptus oil works as an expectorant — it helps to cleanse the body of toxins and harmful microorganisms. It opens the nasal airways and eliminates sinus pressure, which can contribute to headaches, and it promotes emotional balance and boosts mood.

In a clinical trial involving 52 patients who underwent total knee replacement surgery, eucalyptus oil was used as treatment. It promoted emotional stability in the patients, reduced edema formation and had anti-inflammatory effects. These pain-reducing and relaxing effects can be beneficial to people suffering from headaches.

8. Rosemary Oil

Rosemary oil has been used in folk medicine to treat headaches and poor circulation because of its stimulating, anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties. It has a calming effect and improves personal orientation and alertness. It reduces stress and emotional triggers that can cause headache attacks and aids in digestion and soothes an upset stomach, which can be a symptom of a severe headache.

In a 2013 study, the efficacy of rosemary oil as a form of herbal therapy for alleviating opium withdrawal syndromes was evaluated. Symptoms of withdrawal included insomnia, fever, headaches, muscle aches, nausea and dysphoric mood.

Rosemary oil, when taken internally for four weeks, proved to reduce these symptoms. It reduced tension and muscle jerks, alleviated pain, improved sleeping patterns and treated convulsions.

9. Chamomile Oil

Chamomile oil has many uses and benefits. There are two types of chamomile — the Roman Chamomile and German Chamomile.

While Roman Chamomile is more soothing and calming, German Chamomile has a powerful anti-inflammatory agent. Chamomile oil is used as a stimulant and anti-depressant, sedative, digestive aid, analgesic and antineuralgic and a relaxant.

The German variety is more effective than the Roman variety in curing inflammation, reducing blood pressure and curbing the swelling of blood vessels. Both have analgesic properties, reducing pain in the joints and muscles, decreasing the severity of headaches and relieving the severe pain of neuralgia.

10. Rose Oil

Stress is a common trigger for headaches. Learning how to reduce and alleviate stress in the mind and body can help in the management of a migraine.

The comforting and soothing properties of rose oil can help ease the nervous system, reducing tension in the body that can lead to headaches. Rose oil encourages deep relaxation, which is beneficial when treating migraine and headaches.

11. Lemon Balm or Melissa Oil

Lemon balm or Melissa oil is used to treat many health conditions in traditional medicine, including insomnia, migraine, anxiety, hypertension, diabetes and dementia. It calms the nerves in the brain, which helps to ease the pain caused by headaches and migraine.

12. Marjoram Oil

Marjoram oil is good fortifies and strengthens brain tissue, thus is an excellent use for brain health. This oil reduces pain caused by inflammation, controls or calms muscle spasms and provides feelings of calm and relaxation to help treat tension and anxiety.

13. Jasmine Oil

If stress or anxiety do not trigger your migraine, then jasmine oil may be of benefit to you. Using it outside of a migraine attack may cause you to feel more anxious than normal and can trigger an attack.

Jasmine oil can help stimulate mood and reduce depression, making you more alert and energetic. When migraine symptoms have you feeling lethargic, run down, or low in energy (i.e., during the prodrome or migraine hangover stage), jasmine oil can wake you up and give you much needed energy.

14. Clary Sage Oil

Clary sage has many health benefits attributing to its properties as an antidepressant, sedative, anticonvulsant, digestive aid, antiseptic, antibacterial and antispasmodic. It helps to ease menstrual cramps and reduces stress and anxiety.

With anxiety and menstruation being triggers for a migraine, it can be a useful essential oil for women with a migraine to use. A study conducted in 2014 found that inhaling clary sage lowered cortisol levels and depression in menopausal people.

15. Sweet Basil Oil

For hormonal headaches, migraines and digestive issues, sweet basil oil may be of benefit. This can be helpful for treating menstrual migraine, nausea and upset stomach. Sweet basil oil also has antispasmodic properties, which aid in the relief of muscle spasms and cramps.

How to Use Essential Oils for Migraines

Topically

Apply topically, diluted in a carrier oil, across the forehead, back of the neck through the shoulders and on the temples or rub into the palms of your hands. Then, inhale and breathe slowly and evenly.

Carrier Oils:

- Jojoba oil.
- Sweet almond oil.
- Avocado oil.
- Magnesium oil.
- Argan oil.
- Coconut oil.

Baths

Add 5 to 10 drops, 1 tablespoon of carrier oil and a cup of Epsom salts to a warm bath and soak for 20 to 30 minutes.

Diffuser

Diffuse five drops in a room diffuser to reduce muscle tension, boost mood, aid sleep and relieve stress. If you do

not own a room diffuser, place one to three drops onto a cotton ball or tissue, and place it near your nose and inhale.

Cold Compress

Apply a few drops to a cold compress and use as normal.

Taking Internally

You must use a high-quality food-grade essential oil. Take one drop internally by adding it to tea, water or food when experiencing headache or migraine attacks.

Making Oil Blends

There are different blends and combinations of essential oils for migraines, headaches, stress, anxiety and depression that can be used for relief. Here are three blends suggested by AromaWeb.com:

- Lavender chamomile – eight drops lavender, four drops Roman chamomile, 1-ounce carrier oil.
- Spearmint eucalyptus – four drops spearmint, four drops eucalyptus, 1-ounce carrier oil.
- Spearmint lavender – four drops spearmint, eight drops lavender, 1-ounce carrier oil.

Rosemary Peppermint Blend

To reduce headache pain, mix two drops of rosemary oil with two drops of peppermint oil and 1 teaspoon of carrier oil of choice. Then, rub it into the temples, forehead and back of the neck.