

## Diffuse the Situation

By Heather Bremner Claverie



**ACCORDING TO** the National Institutes of Health, nearly 24 million individuals suffer from an autoimmune disease, many of which interfere with sleep. For example, autoimmune disorders such as lupus, multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barré syndrome and Graves' disease cause hormonal and nerve imbalances that disrupt sleep. In addition, immune globulin treatments for primary immunodeficiency disorders can lead to hot flashes, chills, anxiety and other issues that are not exactly the ideal recipe for rest and relaxation. Yet, while medications can help promote sleep, a growing number of Americans are opting for more natural alternatives such as aromatherapy.

### The Oily Evidence

Although aromatherapy has existed for thousands of years, the essential oils-based health and wellness treatment is experiencing an upward trend and is expected to continue to grow, according to Grand View Research, a market research and consulting company.

Driven by a desire to maintain a healthy lifestyle, while steering away from pharmaceutical drugs, more individuals

are looking at the various benefits of aromatherapy that include everything from reducing stress and anxiety and relieving migraines to treating insomnia and digestive and respiratory ailments.

Essential oils are literally compounds extracted from herbs, flowers and other plants. After capturing the plant's scent and flavor (or essence) through distillation or cold-pressing, the essential oil can be added to a carrier oil, sprinkled into water and diffused into the air or added to a capsule and ingested.

To take advantage of the therapeutic properties of essential oils, they can be inhaled or absorbed, and some can even be ingested. Inhaling the aromas can stimulate the limbic system, the part of the brain that plays a role in emotions, behaviors, sense of smell and long-term memories. In addition, the limbic system helps control unconscious functions such as breathing, heart rate and blood pressure. When applied to the skin, the chemicals from the plants can help penetrate through the layers of skin more easily.

### Flower Power

While much of the evidence surrounding essential oils is anecdotal,

multiple studies indicate they can help treat a variety of ailments.

In a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, researchers looked at the effect of sweet orange aroma to treat anxiety. The result? The group that inhaled the allegedly calming aroma, versus tea tree oil or water, exhibited a lack of anxiety and tension. The journal has published other studies revealing aromatherapy's positive effect on anxiety and stress.

Other studies have shown lavender harbors antiviral, antimicrobial and antibacterial properties, but its sweet floral scent can help ward off stress and induce sleep.

Many aromatherapy advocates swear by the power of an oil blend called "thieves." Commonly composed of cinnamon, clove, eucalyptus, lemon and rosemary, thieves is purported to boost the immune system, fight off nasal and sinus congestion and promote respiratory and cardiovascular health. Also, its alleged antimicrobial properties — some studies have shown it inhibits the growth of pathogens — make it an ideal, toxic-free cleaning product.

### Perfect for Any Situation

While the claims about aromatherapy may not be concrete, there's no denying this: A small plume of lavender-scented steam twirling from the depths of a diffuser add an undeniable calmness and delightful smell to any situation. 



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### Just Clip It

Need to bring the power of aromatherapy along for the ride? Simply add a drop of essential oil to the mini nasal inhaler, place in your nose and you're set. These tiny devices help relieve congestion, headaches,

nausea or insomnia by providing a targeted and continuous flow of aromatherapy, no matter where you are. The inhalers are adjustable and available with two or four holes.

*\$12.99; [www.amazon.com/Essential-Inhaler-Unscented-Reusable-Refillable/dp/B088ZRWLZH?th=1](http://www.amazon.com/Essential-Inhaler-Unscented-Reusable-Refillable/dp/B088ZRWLZH?th=1)*

### Steal Some Immunity

Fill any space with the healing properties of Young Living's Thieves oil blend. To achieve the spicy aroma, the company combines cinnamon bark, clove, eucalyptus radiata, lemon and rosemary oils. In addition to the essential oil, Young Living's proprietary oily blend is also available in home cleaning and personal care products, including household cleaner, detergent, hand purifier, wipes and hand soap. *Prices vary; [www.youngliving.com/en\\_US/products/c/thieves](http://www.youngliving.com/en_US/products/c/thieves)*



# Shopping Guide to Aromatherapy Products

## doTERRA®

### Scent-Worthy Subscriptions

Always heading to the store to stock up on more lavender oil? Once aromatherapy becomes a part of the day-to-day routine, some individuals find themselves running out of their favorite essential oils fast. Monthly memberships to companies such as doTERRA and Young Living often come with perks and help ensure you get your oily fix without stepping out the front door.

*Prices vary; [www.doterra.com/US/en/membership-comparison;](http://www.doterra.com/US/en/membership-comparison;) [www.youngliving.com/en\\_US/opportunity](http://www.youngliving.com/en_US/opportunity)*

### Designer Diffusers

Not exactly overjoyed to introduce a not-so-cute diffuser into your home? No problem. These days, many diffusers are designed as pieces to showcase, instead of hide, the beneficial aromas of essential oils. In white or black matte metal or the company's signature stone in a variety of shades, Vitruvi's diffusers are a pretty addition to a home's esthetic.

*\$119 to \$179; [vitruvi.com/collections/diffusers](http://vitruvi.com/collections/diffusers)*



### Stylish Scents

Want to look cute and smell great, all while enjoying the therapeutic benefits of essential oils? Simply clip on a Matrix Aromatherapy diffuser necklace or bracelet.

The necklaces are available in two sizes in either stainless steel or rose gold, while the bracelets are crafted with naturally porous lava stones and available in a variety of colors. The necklaces are packaged with three aromatherapy pads, and refills are available on the site. *\$14.99 for the bracelets and necklaces start at \$17.99; [www.matrixaromatherapy.com](http://www.matrixaromatherapy.com)*

### Just Breathe

Block out the light and breathe in the calming scent of lavender and chamomile flowers with a linen aromatherapy eye pillow. Made with soft linen and available in an array of soothing colors, Bodha's therapeutic eye pillow helps release facial tension by engaging acupressure points that soften the delicate muscles surrounding the eyes.

*\$38; [standarddose.com/collections/bodha/products/bodha-linen-aromatherapy-eye-pillow](http://standarddose.com/collections/bodha/products/bodha-linen-aromatherapy-eye-pillow)*

