

The Magic of Lavender

HISTORY OF LAVENDER

Throughout history, lavender has been known for its impressive healing powers. Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans used lavender as a remedy for skin problems, backaches, stress, and insomnia. Lavender was used as a surgical antiseptic, a healing salve for wounds, and to ease stress. In France and England lavender has been used to freshen the air and laundry, ward off headaches and repel insects, and in pillows to aid in sleeping. Lavender is a natural antiseptic, antibiotic, anti-depressant, sedative and de-toxifier.

Recent medical research substantiates that lavender has truly amazing properties including mood elevation, relaxation, and stress reduction.

Lavender lifts moods

According to researchers at the University of Miami School of Medicine, USA, aromatherapy can have a significant affect on our brain (EEG) activity, our sense of alertness, and our moods. Forty adults were given just three minutes of aromatherapy using lavender (considered a relaxing odour). The participants were given simple math computations before and after the therapy. The participants showed increased beta power, suggesting increased drowsiness, they had less depressed moods, reported feeling more relaxed and performed the math computations faster and more accurately following aromatherapy.

The implications of these findings are far reaching - suggesting that aromatherapy can be beneficial not just in clinics and hospitals, but also in schools, colleges, and the workplace.

Lavender aids relaxation

Researchers at Oldham Cottage hospital recently investigated the potential of essential oil of lavender to aid rest and relaxation and thereby encourage the healing process in elderly patients.

At the end of the seven days, all of the patients reacted favorably to the treatment; the researchers observed increased daytime alertness, improved sleep patterns and those patients who had previously experienced confusion were observed to display as much as a 50 per cent decrease in their symptoms.

The value of essential oil of lavender not only promoted sleep at night, but it also has the effect (which very likely occurs as a result of the improved sleep) in improving mental alertness and energy during the day.

Hudson, R. The Value of Lavender for Rest and Activity. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*. 1996; 4: 52-57
Jones, NA Field T; et al
Int J. Neurosci, 96: 217-24, 1998 Dec.
Source: Aromatherapy Positively Affects Mood, EEG Patterns of Alertness and Math Computations. Diego MA

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Which Problems can Aromatherapy Help? Results of Clinical Studies

Lavender is particularly effective for stress, anxiety, and psychosomatic induced problems, muscular and rheumatic pains, digestive disorders and women's problems, such as PMS, menopausal complaints and postnatal depression.

Behavior: Considerable evidence exists that fragrant compounds have a profound effect on our mind and behavior. Animal studies have found that hyperexcited mice (as a result of consuming a large quantity of caffeine) was calmed by the aroma of lavender.

Sleep: In a study reported in the British Medical Journal Lancet, elderly patients slept "like babies" when a lavender aroma was wafted into their bedrooms at night. These patients had complained of difficulty falling asleep and had to take sleeping pills to get sleep prior to the aromatherapy.

Postpartum discomfort: In a double blind study, 635 women applied lavender oil to their perineal area (part of the body between the vagina and the rectum) after child birth. The women reported a distinct improvement.

Stress: 122 patients who were in an intensive care unit, reported feeling much better when aromatherapy was administered with the oil of lavender (compared to when they were simply given a massage or allowed to rest.)

Male Sexual Response: Circulation to the male sexual organ was found to have improved substantially by the aroma of lavender. These studies prove that aromatherapy is an effective therapy for the treatment of male impotence from the blood vessel disease or from psychogenic factors.

Five medical studies report benefits of Lavender

Insomnia: Essential oil of lavender has a calming effect which can be helpful in treating insomnia. Inhaling lavender may be as effective as using a prescription tranquilizer, according to one study. It is also effective when applied topically to help relax muscles.^{1,2}

Post Partum: Lavender oil helps to ease perineal discomfort after childbirth. It can be applied as a massage oil, or used in a bath.³

Stress Reduction: Massage with lavender oil may induce a transient degree of relaxation in patients in intensive care units⁴, or after bypass surgery.⁵

Vitacost References:¹Buchbauer G, Jirovetz L, Jager W, et al. Aromatherapy: Evidence for sedative effects of the essential oil of lavender after inhalation. Z Naturforsch [C] 1991;46:1067-72.

²Hardy M, Kirk-Smith MD, Stretch DD. Replacement of drug therapy for insomnia by ambient odour. Lancet 1995;346:701 [letter].

³Dale A, Cornwell S. The role of lavender oil in relieving perineal discomfort following childbirth: A blind randomized trial. J Adv Nursing 1994;19:89-96.

⁴Dunn C; Sleep J; Collett D. Sensing an improvement: an experimental study to evaluate the use of aromatherapy, massage and periods of rest in an intensive care unit. J Adv Nurs 1995 Jan;21(1):34-40

⁵ Aromatherapy. Buckle J. Nurs Times 1993 May 19-25;89(20):32-5

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More questions about Lavender? Email rebecca@sonomalavender.com

Sonoma Lavender Products bring great comfort!

EMOTIONAL?

With antidepressant and sedative qualities, lavender lifts depression, eases stress and anxiety.

Solution: Sonoma Lavender Spray for a quick pick-me-up, or heat up the Sonoma Lavender Bear for an uplifting friend.

HEADACHES?

Lavender is useful in overcoming headaches and migraines. Lavender is a strong analgesic; alleviating pain.

Solution: A Lavender eye pillow or chilled spa mask. Rub lavender oil on your temples.

INSOMNIA?

The sedative quality of lavender can induce sleep and ease problems of insomnia, restlessness and agitation. One study of people with sleeping difficulties found that inhaling lavender oil was as effective as tranquilizers.

Solution: A Lavender Satin Pillowcase with removable lavender sachets for a deep, restful sleep.

PROBLEM SKIN?

Lavender is antiseptic and anti-inflammatory; healing cuts, burns, sunburns, insect bites, acne, eczema and even dandruff.

Solution: Sonoma Lavender Bath Gel, followed with a Sonoma Lavender Spray Mist soothes irritated skin.

POST PARTUM?

Lavender oil helps to ease perineal discomfort after childbirth. It can be applied as a massage oil, or used in a bath. Lavender eases post partum blues, as well.

Solution: Sonoma Lavender Spray Mist, Massage Oil, and Lavender Dream Pillow

STRESS?

The oil sends calming messages to the brain making it sedative and relaxant. Studies have shown that massage with lavender oil induces relaxation for intensive care patients⁴, or after bypass surgery.

Solution: Sonoma Lavender Massage Oil, Heatwraps and Booties

CUTS, STINGS or BURNS?

Analgesic and antiseptic. Eases pain, speeds up healing and prevents scarring.

Solution: Apply Sonoma Lavender essential oil directly on burns, cuts or stings.

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PMS?

Lavender is very effective in treating PMS symptoms. It is calming and soothing, strengthening the spirits.

Solution: Sonoma Lavender Heatwrap for tummy and back.

HIVES?

The best remedy for hives is to figure out what is causing them and eliminate that trigger. Meanwhile, Lavender works double duty, relaxing your body and mind, and soothing the irritations of the skin.

Solution: Bathe in Sonoma Lavender Sea Salt Bath, followed by Sonoma Lavender Body Lotion.

EASY BREATHING? Lavender is an antiseptic and kills germs. It is also an expectorant, which breaks up congestion. It can help fight colds, throat infections, coughs, sinusitis and flu.

Solution: Lavender Heat wrap or Spa Blankie opens up breathing and soothes an achy body. Lavender Spray mist freshens the air.

DETOX? Lavender helps to eliminate toxins through the pores.

Solution: Bathe in Sonoma Lavender Sea Salt Bath, followed by Sonoma Lavender Body Lotion.

CIRCULATION?

Lavender is a sedative and hypotensive, and reduces high blood pressure and palpitations.

Solution: Heated booties and mitts lower blood pressure, while increasing circulation in hands and feet.

MUSCULAR?

Lavender is analgesic, anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic; the oil is good for aches, pains, sprains, cramps and spasms. Lavender is effective when applied topically to help relax muscles.

Solution: Sonoma Lavender heatwrap, Spa Blankie, Mittens and Booties come to the rescue. Sonoma Lavender Massage Oil

Sources: Complementary Medical Association (the-CMA.org.UK) , The Herb Research Foundation, Herbs 2000, Vitacost.com; encyclopedia of health concerns and individual nutrients, Somerset Medical Center, The Magic and Power of Lavender by Maggie Tisserand, Lavender, Sweet Lavender by Judyth A. McLeod, Lavender, Nature's Way to Relaxation and Health by Philippa Waring , Complete Aromatherapy Handbook by Suzanne Fischer-Rizzi

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