# How Essential Oils Can Help Your Fibromyalgia

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## Essential Oils for Fibromyalgia and How to Use Them

When you live with fibromyalgia, it can be difficult to find solutions to your symptoms that don't cause unwanted side effects. One option that I enjoy experimenting with is aromatherapy or massage with essential oils.

You may be surprised to learn that research shows some essential oils have medicinal effects. In terms of fibromyalgia, there are three main symptoms that essential oils can help relieve: anxiety, insomnia/fatigue and pain.

### How to Properly Use Essential Oils

There are a few ways you can use essential oils for fibromyalgia, ranging from applying it directly to the skin or inhaling it via aromatherapy.

#### Applying to the Skin

If you want to apply an essential oil or essential oil blend, there are a few things to keep in mind.

Applying an essential oil directly on the skin can sometimes cause skin irritation or a possible allergic reaction. So, before you start applying essential oils on multiple areas, be sure to do a small skin patch test to see how you react. Another thing, you will want to always dilute the essential oil with a carrier oil. This will help reduce skin irritation.

When creating a topical essential oil for fibromyalgia, be sure to start off with low doses (1-2 drops is enough) and always mix it with a carrier oil, then apply a few drops and massage into the skin. Just avoid any areas where there may be cuts!

#### Aromatherapy

One of the best ways to use essential oils for fibromyalgia is through aromatherapy (diffusing the oil through the air and inhaling its scent). Essential oils are believed to work when compounds that are inhaled enter the bloodstream and are carried to the brain or other organs.

You can use a diffuser, which mists droplets of oil through the air, or an aromatherapy oil burner, which uses the heat from a candle to vaporize the oil. For a very inexpensive alternative, you can put a few drops in the melted wax of a burning candle!

### Essential Oils for Stress and Anxiety

Living with chronic pain and illness can be emotionally overwhelming. There are days when I feel anxious over an

upcoming appointment, frustrated by the limitations caused by pain and fatigue, lonely because I socialize less with friends — and the list goes on and on.

Managing stress by making time for relaxation can help you cope with anxiety. There are a number of essential oils that help promote relaxation.

For example, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center, “Scientific evidence suggests that aromatherapy with lavender may slow the activity of the nervous system, improve sleep quality, promote relaxation, and lift mood in people suffering from sleep disorders.”

Many of the same essential oils used for relaxation can also be used to promote sleep.

Other oils to consider for anxiety relief include: rose otto, frankincense, clary sage, sweet orange, bergamot, grapefruit, ylang-ylang, sandalwood, neroli, sweet marjoram, petitgrain, mandarin, lavender, rose geranium, tangerine, and jasmine.

**Essential Oils for Fatigue and Brain Fog**

Aromatherapy can also be used to promote energy and mental clarity. Fatigue and brain fog are two of the most challenging symptoms experienced by people living with fibromyalgia. They are also two of the most difficult to treat.

I was excited to learn that rosemary oil can help with fibro fog symptoms. According to a recent study, rosemary oil diffused throughout a room helped participants perform significantly better on a memory test than participants in a control room. This appealed to me because brain fog affects my word recall and short-term memory.

The refreshing smell of lemon oil and other citrus oils is thought to be energizing. Peppermint and wintergreen oil are also used to improve vitality.

**Essential Oils for Pain**

Finally, essential oils can help alleviate the muscle pain that is a constant companion for many people living with fibromyalgia. Essential oils relieve pain by improving circulation, reducing inflammation and calming irritated nerves.

The most efficient way to use essential oils for pain relief is through massage. A few drops of essential oil should be diluted in a carrier oil of cold-pressed nut, seed or vegetable oil — approximately 10-12 drops of essential oil in one ounce of carrier oil.

Pain-relieving herbs include: spike lavender, sweet marjoram, lavender, petitgrain, Roman and German chamomile, clary sage, lemongrass, helichrysum, peppermint, ginger and black pepper. Spike lavender with peppermint and helichrysum creates an anti-inflammatory synergy.

Blending essential oils is a creative art. In general, most floral oils blend well together, as do most woody oils. *Massage Today* recommends three blends for fibromyalgia:

- Four drops of lavender, one drop of frankincense, four drops of sweet orange, and one drop of neroli.
- Four drops of sweet marjoram, one drop of Roman chamomile, four drops of mandarin, and one drop of rose.
- Four drops of lavender, four drops of rose geranium, two drops of rosemary, and one drop of lemongrass.