

# eWellness magazine

## The Brain's Response to Smell (part 1) Essential Bathing for Stress & Insomnia

2012-06-04



*"The way to health is to have an aromatic bath and scented massage everyday." --Hippocrates*

Does stress keep you up at night? You're not the only one. In fact, according to the Better Sleep Council (BSC), "65% of American's are losing sleep due to stress, 16% of Americans experience stress-induced insomnia and 26% of women report trouble sleeping at least once a week compared to only 16% of men."

Relax! Set aside little time to de-stress so that sweet dreams can slip into your bed. If you're looking for ways to lower stress levels and get the sleep you've earned, aromatherapy may be your ticket to dreamland.



### What are Essential Oils?

If the scent of wild blossoms on the breeze of a warm spring day evokes memories both peaceful and loving, then aromatherapy may be for you.

According to French Aromatherapists Raymond Lautie and Dr. Andre Passebecq, "Essential oils are naturally occurring, highly concentrated aromatic compounds that are extracted from wild and cultivated plants. Their specific organic chemistry gives them a wide range of therapeutic and olfactory qualities."

Pure plant oils may be added to bath water to provide a soothing, calming effect on mind, body, and spirit. One study in the *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* investigated the use of lavender baths to improve two important aspects of psychological well-being--positive mood state and a positive outlook with respect to the future. The results showed that

“psychologically positive mood changes were found after the bathing regimen, and negative responses about the future were selectively reduced after lavender oil baths.”

If you want to chill out after a busy day’s work, essential oils may be added to your relaxation routine to quiet the mind, relax a tensed body and erase the trivial stresses of your day. An interesting study in the Perceptual and Motor Skills Journal found that “lavender odorants were associated with reduced mental stress and increased arousal rate.”

## **The Brain’s Response to Smell**

Aromas have been known for centuries to promote healing. Essential oils affect the body in different ways. When pure essential oils are inhaled through the nose, it’s believed the olfactory nerve is stimulated, sending messages to the limbic system, which may have a relaxing effect.

## **Aroma-Bathing for a Stress-Free You**

As the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates believed the way to health was through aromatic baths and massages. Hot water and stress-relieving essential oils combine to ease stress, tension, achy muscles, worries, and may even help restore awareness. If you need to settle down, consider the essences of lavender, orange blossom, chamomile, geranium, marjoram and rose.

Aromas allow your body to unwind for a stress-free you and a calm night’s rest. As professional aromatherapist, Shellie Enteen, LMT, Reiki Master, and author of *Inside Aromatherapy: How to Recognize and Offer High-Quality Aromatherapy* explains, safety protocols require that all essential oils should be diluted into a water soluble carrier, like honey, high fat content milk or bath salts, before adding to the bath.

Here’s how:

Draw bath water and, if possible, select candlelight and soft music. After you enter the comfortably warm (not scalding hot) tub, swirl your blend into the water. Warm water will release the aroma immediately. Lean back, relax and soak in this experience for 10 minutes, then rinse off (if you wish) and towel dry.

## **Aroma Bath Recipes**

Combat stress and sleep well with unique calming bath blends:

[1] Bath blend for anxiety & PMS relief:

- Lavender 7 drops,
- Geranium 3 drops
- Rose, 1 drop

[2] Bath blend, strongly sedating but emotionally uplifting:

- Marjoram 3 drops
- Chamomile 1 drop
- Geranium 4 drops

[3] Bath blend for classic insomnia:

- Lavender 7 drops
- Orange Blossom 2 drops

[4] Enteen's Bath blend for heaven on earth:

- Orange Blossom 2 drops
- Rose 2 drops
- Chamomile 1 drop



Constant use of any specific essential oil is not recommended, as there is a build up in the system. It is often advised that one should not bathe in essential oils during pregnancy.

Check with a professional concerning recommendation for essential oil use on children, as they require less and younger children should avoid the use of essential oils. "The aromatic potency of Chamomile, Rose and Orange Blossom suggest using fewer drops," says Enteen. "The sedative potency of Marjoram suggests the need for few drops. Lavender and Geranium can be used in higher dose," she notes. For high quality, therapeutic essential oils, visit; [www.astralescence.com](http://www.astralescence.com)