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Topical Use of Essential Oils

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Introduction

The Body's Largest Organ

Did you know your skin is your body's largest organ? Just like the liver and kidneys, your skin has vital functions that keep you healthy.

One of the skin's most important functions is it protects your tissues and other organs. It keeps out unwanted or harmful substances and even protects the internal organs from threats like radiation or injuries.

The skin also gives you a sense of touch. It helps you understand your surroundings by sending sensory messages to the brain, recognizing changes in temperature, pain, pressure, and more. When you feel the soft threads on your favorite blanket, the prickly thorns on a rose bush, or even the wind on your face, that's all thanks to the receptors on your skin that are communicating with your brain.

Because the skin plays such a large role in your overall well-being, it should be protected at all costs. Nourishing and protecting the skin is about more than just self-image. When you apply products topically, they absorb into the skin. This is why your choice of topical products is so important. What you put on your body could potentially end up in your body.

Whether you care about maintaining a youthful complexion, soothing muscles, or just prioritizing overall health, taking a closer look at the products you use topically is a great starting place.

For millions of people worldwide, essential oils offer a safe, natural way to care for the body. One of the easiest ways to reap their benefits is through topical use. Your skin is powerful. When you use equally powerful and natural topical products, endless benefits await you.

In this eBook, you'll learn all about the topical use of essential oils and discover their benefits for the skin and body. You'll come to understand more about sensitivity, dosage, and dilution.



For millions of people worldwide, essential oils offer a safe, natural way to care for the body



Chapter one

Why Use Essential Oils Topically?

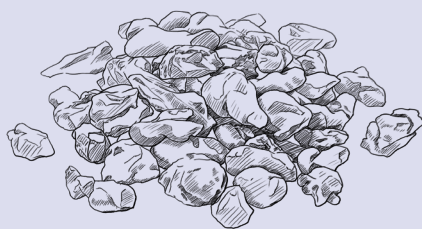
In the world of essential oils, topical use refers to the direct application of an essential oil to the skin or body. But why use essential oils topically?

While aromatic use allows you to enjoy essential oils through the air and internal use involves consuming essential oils, topical use is a simple way to experience the power of essential oils and provide significant benefits for the skin and body. When applied correctly, essential oils can be extremely beneficial for the skin, soothing for the body, effective for massage, and enjoyed in a variety of everyday ways.

Topical use is unique because it allows you to target specific areas to achieve a desired effect. Along with targeted benefits, topical application also provides overall support. Once you see how easy and effective topical application is, you can instantly enhance your essential oil experience.

Historical Cases of Topical Use

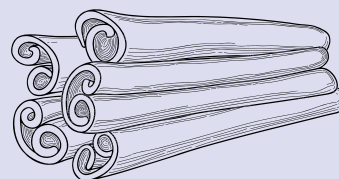
Using essential oils and natural plant components topically isn't a new trend. It's a practice that's already been done for centuries. Ancient cultures throughout the world saw the value of using plants, plant extracts, and essential oils to soothe the skin and body, produce cooling and warming effects, beautify the skin, and much more.



Ancient Egyptians used frankincense for perfumes and salves to soothe the skin.



Australian aborigines used the leaves of the melaleuca tree for centuries. They'd crush the leaves and apply them to the skin for a cooling effect.



In Biblical times, cassia was used on the skin as a warming oil.



People of ancient Rome frequently used lavender for its relaxing aroma, for bathing, and as a perfume.

During the Middle Ages, clary sage was often used to soothe the skin.



The practice of harnessing plants for topical benefits is still in use today. With pure essential oils, you can discover dozens of benefits for the body—just as civilizations have done for centuries.

Benefits of Essential Oils for Skin

Because they offer powerful cleansing and purifying properties, essential oils have long been used to soothe, maintain, and improve the skin. Essential oils are effective for reducing the appearance of skin imperfections, soothing irritated skin, cleansing oily skin, reducing wrinkles and fine lines, promoting a healthy complexion, reducing the appearance of blemishes, and a lot more.

Unlike many skin care products, essential oils provide a pure, natural, and safe way to care for your skin. While the natural chemical components found in essential oils are helpful for the skin, they don't include toxins or fillers that are often found in commercial cleansers, toners, and lotions.

On top of the safe, pure nature of essential oils, it's also easy to accommodate sensitive or delicate skin by diluting essential oils before use. Those with particularly sensitive skin often have a hard time finding a skin care solution that won't irritate. Not only do essential oils leave out the parabens and toxins often found in skin care products on today's market, but they can also be diluted to accommodate people with particularly sensitive skin. Anyone who worries about skin irritations and sensitivity can still reap the cleansing, purifying benefits of essential oils for the skin.

Benefits of Topical Use for the Entire Body

Along with impressive benefits for the skin, the chemical components in essential oils make them useful for the entire body. Some essential oils have calming properties that soothe your skin. Other essential oils are known for their warming or cooling properties, which can be helpful for calming the skin. Certain essential oils can even promote feelings of clear airways when applied to the chest and neck area, while others are recognized for their ability to comfort tired muscles and joints.

As mentioned before, one of the advantages of using essential oils topically is your ability to target a specific area of the body. Topical application allows for specific, targeted usage, which means you can select a specific essential oil based on its known benefits, and then apply it to a precise area to achieve an effect you want.

Now that you understand the vast benefits of topical use, we'll dive into how essential oils deliver benefits when used topically.





Chapter two

How It Works

We know skin plays a vital role in protecting the body and keeping it healthy. Understanding what an important and powerful organ the skin is helps us to see how we can use topical application of essential oils to influence health.

Essential oils are a lipid-soluble substance, which means they penetrate the skin easily. Topical application is an effective way to use essential oils because once they've been absorbed into the skin, they'll remain in the applied area, giving you benefits in a localized area.

Each essential oil has a unique chemical profile that determines the benefits it provides. Certain essential oils have topical warming properties, while others have chemical components that make them topically calming, soothing, or cooling. When an essential oil is applied topically and absorbed into the skin, you begin to experience the benefits of a specific essential oil's chemical properties.



For example, let's say you apply Tea Tree to your skin. The unique chemical profile of Tea Tree essential oil includes components that are known to be cleansing. This means when you apply Tea Tree topically, those chemical components go to work, allowing you to experience the skin-cleansing benefits of the essential oil.

Or say you put Sandalwood on your skin. Sandalwood includes chemical components known for being soothing. So after applying Sandalwood to the skin, you'll experience the essential oil's soothing benefits, including its ability to soothe occasional blemishes or skin irritations.

Not only does topical use allow you to reap the benefits of essential oils for the skin and body, but you simultaneously get to enjoy the aromatic benefits of any essential oil being applied. You see, after applying an essential oil topically, its aroma will linger on the skin, and you can breathe in that aroma for up to a few hours. Even if you're using an essential oil for its topical benefits, you'll also experience a unique aroma as it sits on your skin and you breathe it in.

With a better understanding of how topical use of essential oils can impact the body, you're ready to learn about proper safety practices to help you maximize your essential oil experience.



Chapter three

Safety

Understanding safety precautions is necessary with any topical product you plan to put on your skin. You'd never go to your bathroom cabinet, grab a random bottle, and start washing yourself with it—you'd read the label and instructions first. The same goes for essential oils. Pure, unadulterated oils are safe to apply to your skin, but just like any product, there are important rules and safety precautions to be aware of. With a better grasp of safe topical use, your essential oil experience will be both effective and enjoyable.



Dilution

When it comes to safe topical use of essential oils, dilution is one of the most important principles to understand. Some worry that diluting an essential oil before applying takes away from its benefits; however, dilution actually makes for better absorption into the skin, extending the benefits even longer. By diluting an essential oil with a carrier oil, you slow the rate of evaporation, enhance absorption into the skin, and protect sensitive or delicate skin. Dilution doesn't take away from the essential oil experience, but rather allows for more effective topical experience.

Carrier Oils

A carrier oil is just what it sounds like—an oil that literally carries essential oils to the desired area on the skin. Carrier oils are incredibly useful for dilution. When you dilute an essential oil with a carrier oil, it dilutes the potency of the oil; however, it also increases absorption into the skin, which ultimately allows you to maximize the benefits the essential oil has to offer.

Ideally, a carrier oil should be a pure vegetable oil so it can easily dilute an essential oil without damaging its delicate chemical profile. If an essential oil's chemical makeup is altered or damaged in any way, its efficacy is reduced, and you won't reap the desired benefits.

The following carrier oils are commonly used to dilute essential oils:

- Coconut oil
- Avocado oil
- Walnut oil
- Macadamia nut oil
- Sweet almond oil
- Linseed oil
- Sunflower oil
- Olive oil

In most cases, carrier oils contain chemical components that oxidize over time. As you shop for carrier oils, you may find some have been fractionated, or gone through the process of fractionation. During the process of fractionation, the shorter length fatty acid chains are separated out to give the oil a longer shelf life.

dōTERRA offers Fractionated Coconut Oil, which is an example of a carrier oil with a long shelf life. Because it's derived from coconut, it has a non-greasy, lightweight feel when used as a carrier oil on the skin.

Dilution Guidelines

dōTERRA provides skin sensitivity descriptors on each essential oil to help users avoid sensitivity issues by practicing safe use. Each product includes one of three classification labels: "N" for neat, "D" for dilute, or "S" for sensitive. These labels can help you determine how to safely apply an essential oil topically.



Neat: Essential oils in this classification can be applied without dilution. These essential oils tend to have a mild chemistry and low risk when it comes to sensitivity.



Dilute: This category refers to essential oils that should always be diluted with a carrier oil before topical application. These essential oils have a stronger, more potent chemistry that can be safely enjoyed after dilution.



Sensitive: These essential oils should always be diluted before using on young or sensitive skin. Pay attention to this label if you have sensitive skin or if you plan to use essential oils with your children.

Application Tips

While essential oils vary in chemical components, potency, and aroma, there are some areas of the skin that are extremely sensitive and should always be avoided, no matter what kind of essential oil you're using. The eyes and the skin around the eyes, the inner ears, and injured, broken, or damaged skin should always be avoided.

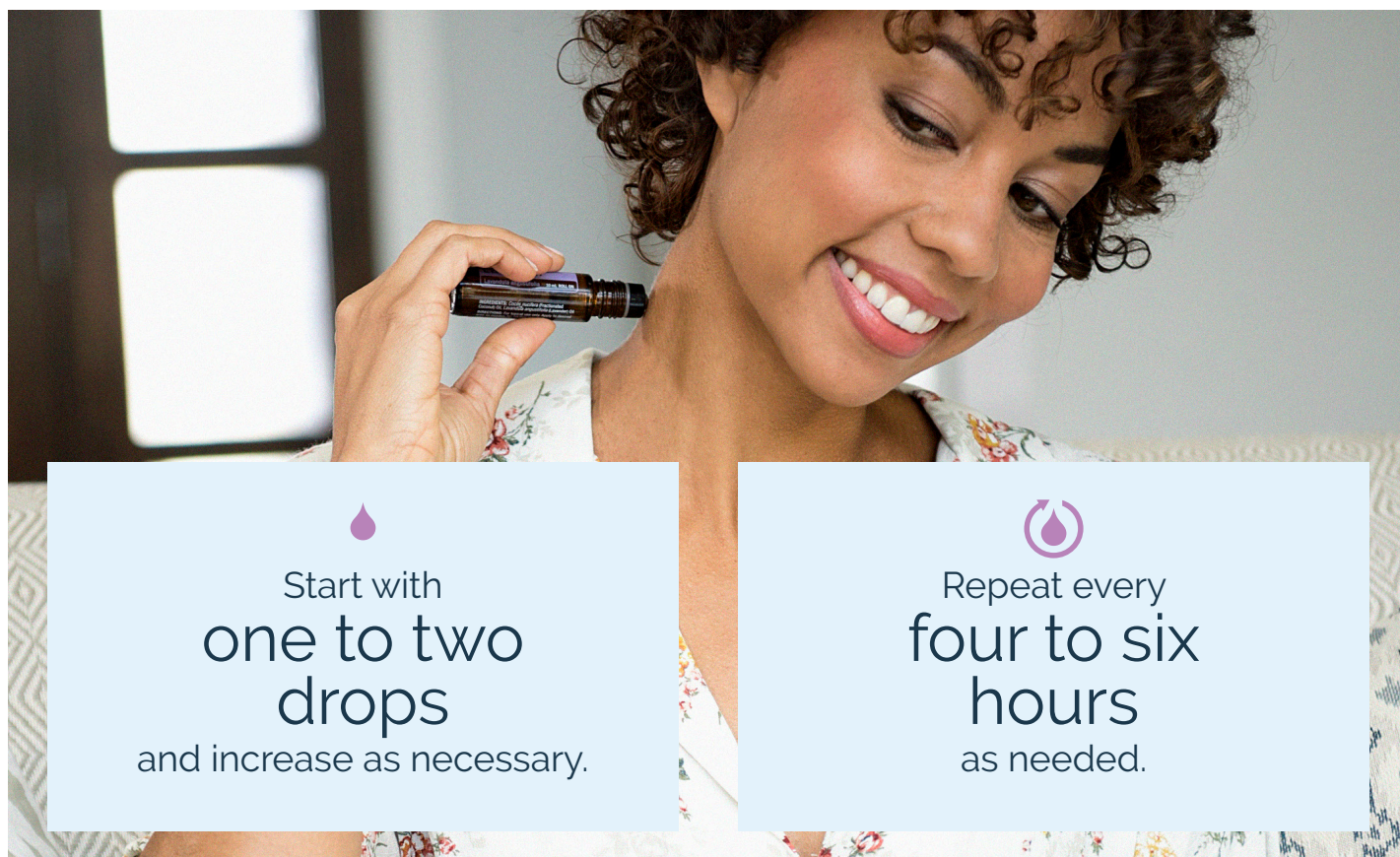
It's important to remember that essential oils can linger on the fingers and hands following topical application. After topically applying, avoid rubbing or touching your face and eyes, as these areas can be sensitive to essential oils. You might also wash your hands with soap and water after applying essential oils topically to help avoid contact with sensitive areas.

Dosage

One key part of using essential oils safely is observing proper dosage suggestions. Whether you're using an essential oil aromatically, topically, or internally, ensuring you use the correct amount will allow you to remain within the limits of safe usage.

With topical use, there's always a risk for skin irritation or sensitivity, especially when you consider that each essential oil has a different chemical profile and each person has different skin sensitivity levels, skin conditions, and preferences. Remember, an essential oil dose depends on your age, size, health status, and personal skin sensitivity. If you have specific concerns about your skin, it's a good idea to consult with your physician before using essential oils topically.

When using an essential oil topically for the first time, always start with the lowest possible dose: one to two drops. Once you see how your body reacts to the small dose, you can increase it as necessary to achieve a desired benefit. Because essential oils are so potent, it's advised to use a few small doses periodically throughout the day, rather than a single large dose all at once. For topical use, a dose can be repeated every four to six hours.




Start with
**one to two
drops**
and increase as necessary.


Repeat every
**four to six
hours**
as needed.

Sensitivity Test

Because each of us has different sensitivities, health concerns, skin conditions, and preferences, it's possible for an essential oil to cause a sensitivity response. Children or those with sensitive skin should take extra safety precautions when using essential oils topically.

When applying an essential oil for the first time, consider conducting a sensitivity test to see how your body and skin react to its chemical structure. You can do this by applying a small dab of the essential oil to an inconspicuous area of the skin. Check the area each hour for a few hours to make sure no sensitivity or irritation has occurred. If you're using a strong essential oil for a sensitivity test, be sure to combine it with a carrier oil before topical application.



Sun Sensitivity

It's important that you know some essential oils, particularly citrus oils, can cause sensitivity when exposed to sun or ultraviolet light after topical application. Because citrus oils have photosensitive compounds, exposure to sunlight, UV light, or sunlamps at least 12 hours after application can cause sensitivity on the skin. Essential oils that pose a risk for sun sensitivity typically include a warning or caution, so carefully read essential oil labels before using topically.

Many people wonder if essential oils are safe to use on the skin and body. The answer is absolutely! Just like any other product on your bedside table or in your bathroom cabinet, when used as intended, essential oils are designed to help you, not hurt you. Equipped with the best safety tips, you're ready to start using essential oils topically!

In the next chapter, we'll go over some ideas to help you get started.

Chapter four

Ideas for Topical Application

Now that you've learned about dilution, sensitivity, and dosage, it's time to discuss how to actually apply essential oils topically! The previous chapter discussed a few sensitive areas to avoid during topical use. Now let's talk about some of the best areas to apply essential oils so you can reap their topical benefits.



Face

You can add essential oils to your daily skin care regimen to improve the skin and maintain a clear complexion. To incorporate essential oils to your routine, simply add a few drops to your facial cleanser, moisturizer, or body lotion. You can also dilute essential oils with Fractionated Coconut Oil and apply them directly to your face.

Some of the best essential oils here include **Tea Tree, Sandalwood, Lavender, Helichrysum, Jasmine, and Frankincense.**



Temples, forehead, base of the skull, and neck

Applying essential oils to any of these areas will allow you to enjoy their soothing effects on the skin. If you tend to hold a lot of tension in your neck, work long days behind a desk, or just need to unwind after a tense day, consider massaging soothing and relaxing essential oils to any of these areas.



Abdomen

While using essential oils internally can help relieve digestive discomfort* or promote healthy digestive function,* you can also apply them topically to the abdomen to experience soothing properties. Massage essential oils into the abdomen and enjoy their aromas.

Consider applying **DigestZen® Digestive Blend** or **DigestZen Touch** for this.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.



Arms, legs, and back

Massaging essential oils onto the arms, wrists, legs, and back after a workout or any sort of strenuous physical activity allows you to harness their soothing powers. Many essential oils have cooling and warming properties, which make for a relaxing massage after exerting yourself.

Cypress, Frankincense, Wintergreen, and Peppermint are especially helpful when it comes to topical relaxing comfort. You can also try using **Deep Blue® Soothing Blend** to help your arms, legs, or back when you need it most.



Chest

The cooling and invigorating properties of essential oils can promote feelings of clear breathing when applied topically to the chest. Plus, this type of topical application allows you to simultaneously enjoy the aromatic benefits of the essential oils as you breathe in.

The best essential oils for topical application on the chest—known for promoting feelings of clear breathing—include **Peppermint, Eucalyptus, and dōTERRA Breathe® Respiratory Blend**.



Bottoms of the feet

The bottoms of the feet are an ideal place to apply because the feet readily absorb the essential oils. When trying an essential oil for the first time or when using with children, the bottoms of the feet are a good starting place, as the skin is thick and less prone to sensitivity.



If you want to make topical usage a part of your daily routine, here are some more ideas to help you experience the everyday power of essential oils. As always, remember to pay attention to any precautions or specific instructions before applying, including the classification of each oil: neat, dilute, or sensitive.

Using Essential Oils for Personal Care

Throughout this eBook, we've talked extensively about the benefits essential oils hold for the skin. This is why millions of people worldwide choose to use essential oils in their personal care routines to improve the look or feel of their skin.

Here are just a few ways you can incorporate essential oils into your personal care routine:

- Apply Bergamot to the skin while showering to experience a calming aroma and skin-purifying benefits.
- Add Frankincense to your daily moisturizer to reduce the appearance of skin imperfections and rejuvenate the skin.
- After too much time in the sun, add Lavender to unscented lotion and apply it to the skin for soothing comfort.
- Apply Helichrysum to the face to reduce the appearance of wrinkles and promote a glowing, youthful complexion.
- Add Grapefruit to your nightly facial routine. (Make sure to avoid sun exposure and UV lights for at least 12 hours after application.)
- Rub Tea Tree on your fingernails and toenails after a shower to keep them looking clean and healthy.
- Apply Lavender or Sandalwood to the skin after shaving to help prevent skin irritation.

Using Essential Oils in a Massage to Soothe the Muscles

Next, let's go over ways to use essential oils to soothe the muscles. Essential oils with soothing, warming, or cooling properties (or any combination of such properties) are effective for massaging the muscles, especially after physical activity, a long day on your feet, or when you need extra comfort. When you massage pure and potent essential oils into targeted areas, your body will feel the natural, powerful comfort they have to offer.

Here are a few essential oils and methods you can use to soothe your muscles:

- Apply dōTERRA Balance® to the temples and back of the neck as part of a relaxing massage.
- Massage Wintergreen into the hands, back, and legs for a warming and soothing sensation after exercise.
- Add essential oils like Clove, Cassia, or Ginger to a lotion and apply to the muscles for a warming massage. Cinnamon Bark can be diluted and applied to help soothe your joints.
- Massage Deep Blue® or Deep Blue Rub into the knees and feet after exercising.
- After a day of outdoor activity, apply Frankincense to the hands and feet for a warming and soothing effect.
- Prior to a long run, use Cypress on the feet and legs.



Conclusion

One Drop Away

Now that we've discussed some of the ways topical use can change daily life, it's easier to see why so many people rely on these gifts of the earth.

Whether you want glowing skin, soothed muscles after exercise, or natural alternatives to commercial products you're used to, topical use of essential oils can be a powerful avenue for changing the way you feel every day.

With accurate knowledge of the best ways to apply essential oils and how to use them safely, you're just one drop away from changing your day. The next time you could use soothing comfort or serious support, reach for a bottle and see how quickly things can change for the better.

Want to learn more? Continue your essential oil journey by visiting [doterra.com](https://www.doterra.com) today!



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