

ESSENTIAL OILS BLENDING BASICS

No matter what the application, essential oils should always be diluted before using. There are many different ways to dilute essential oils, and depending on the desired use, one option may work better than another. Some of the more common methods of dilution and types of carriers are base oils, water, alcohol, and vinegar.

Base oils = Base oils are usually vegetable-based oils that have been extracted from the fatty parts (seeds, nuts, kernels) of the plant. Unlike essential oils, they do not evaporate, are not as strongly scented, and they will spoil over time. Like essential oils, base oils should be stored in dark glass containers with tight-fitting seals for maximum lifespan. Some of the more commonly used base oils include jojoba oil, sweet almond oil, olive oil, castor oil, sesame oil, coconut oil, grapeseed oil, rose hip seed oil, and sunflower oil.

(Note: Only vegetable-based oils should be used in aromatherapy practice. Mineral oil (baby oil) and other petroleum-based products will interfere with essential oil absorption, will render the essential oils used ineffective, and are toxic to the skin.)

Water = Generally speaking, water and essential oils do not mix well; however, water makes an ideal carrier for facial and body spritzers, air fresheners, and compresses. Distilled or purified water is best, to ensure that it does not contain bacteria or chemicals, such as chlorine.

Alcohol = Alcohol mixes with essential oils much better than water. Vodka is a preferred alcohol to use in aromatherapy practice, because it contains only pure grain alcohol and water without any additives. Also, compared to rubbing alcohol, it has no smell. Alcohol makes an ideal carrier for liniments (pain-relieving mixtures for sore joints and muscles) and can be mixed in facial and body spritzers for oily skin types.

Vinegar = Vinegar is a great product to use as a carrier for essential oils when using for your hair or complexion, because of the naturally-occurring alpha-hydroxy acids it contains. However, it is not a commonly used carrier because of its strong smell, and essential oils typically cannot mask it. Apple cider vinegar is preferred because it contains more minerals than white vinegar, and is less likely to be made synthetically. Vinegar can be used in place of alcohol for skincare applications, because it is less drying and still penetrates deeply in addition to evaporating quickly off the skin.

Recipes and Dilution Guidelines

General safe frequency of use of essential oils is 3 weeks on – with 5 days on and 2 days off throughout the week – and then 1 week off completely. This both lessens the risk of sensitization and ensures effectiveness.

Remember to use essential oils sparingly – 1 drop of essential oil equals 1-4 (or more) cups of dried plant matter. Less is more!

Safe Dilution Guide

Adults = 10-15 drops of essential oil per 1 oz carrier of choice

Children (10-18 yrs) = 6-9 drops essential oil per 1 oz carrier

Children (4-10 yrs) = 4-5 drops essential oil per 1 oz carrier

Measurement Equivalents

| Drops | Teaspoons | Ounces | Milliliters |
|------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| 12.5 drops | 1/8 tsp | 1/48 oz | 5/8 ml |
| 25 drops | 1/4 tsp | 1/24 oz | 1 1/4 ml |
| 75 drops | 3/4 tsp | 1/8 oz | 3.7 ml |
| 100 drops | 1 tsp | 1/6 oz | 5 ml |

(FLIP OVER TO SEE SOME EXAMPLE **RECIPES**...)

Now that we have discussed different types of carriers and how to safely dilute essential oils, here are some recipes for you to try. Remember, there are hundreds of variations on these recipes – don't be afraid to experiment and have fun!

All-Purpose Disinfectant Spray

- 25 drops lemon oil
- 15 drops eucalyptus oil
- ¼ tsp vinegar
- ½ c distilled water

Combine ingredients in a dark glass spray bottle. Use on floors, sinks, and countertops to clean and disinfect.

Powder Room Air Freshener

- 22 drops peppermint oil
- 16 drops bergamot oil
- 6 drops ginger oil
- 1 oz distilled water

Combine ingredients in a dark glass spray bottle. Shake well and spray liberally to both freshen and disinfect the air.

Enough Already! Garden Spray (from "Aromatherapy for Dummies")

- 5 cloves garlic
- 1 cup water
- ½ tsp cayenne powder
- 25 drops peppermint oil
- 25 drops rosemary oil
- ½ tsp biodegradable dishwashing liquid

Put garlic, cayenne, and water in a blender and mix. Strain through a very fine strainer or coffee filter. Stir in essential oils and soap. Put solution into a spray bottle. Spray liberally on vegetables and flowers to keep pests away.

Foot Soak

- 8-16 cups warm water
- ¼ cup Epsom salts
- 8 drops tea tree oil
- 8 drops geranium oil
- 4 drops rosemary oil

Combine all ingredients in a small tub big enough to fit both feet and the water. Soak feet for 15 minutes. Helps to relax sore, tired feet, and also fights bacteria and fungus.

Stimulate Your Senses (an aphrodisiac blend)

- 8 drops sandalwood oil
- 5 drops vanilla oil
- 3 drops myrrh oil
- 2 drops jasmine oil
- 1 ½ oz carrier oil (jojoba or sweet almond suggested)

Mix all ingredients in a glass jar. Apply all over body, concentrating on pulse points (wrists, crooks of elbows and knees, cleavage, etc.), or use as a sensuous massage oil.

Also remember to check out the already-made home and self-care products that Remedies offers, from such companies as WiseWays Herbals, The Little Red Hen, and The Aromatherapist USA.

More information on recipes and essential oil uses can be found in "Aromatherapy for Dummies" by Kathi Keville, "Reference Guide for Essential Oils" compiled by C. and A. Higley, and online at aromaweb.com and thearomatherapistusa.com.