

Our Peaceful Times

ISSUE #1: FROM PEACEFUL HEALING THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE 860-349-HEAL

MUSCLE SORENESS/INJURY

Muscle soreness or injury can occur in many different ways. The most common of these are overuse or trauma followed by the rest of our body compensating for the strained area. Oftentimes we do things to ourselves unthinkingly. "I just went out to pull a few weeds" or "I just walked the dog around the block". Those few weeds turn into the shrubbery you never liked or your dog sees the neighbor's cat and takes you along for a championship steeplechase. The most common way to avoid these injuries is by taking a few moments to warm-up before an activity. A simple five-minute walkabout while gently moving your arms and shoulders through their range of motion to get fluid to the muscles and joints is enough to lessen the risk of injury.

But here you are: your back is killing you, your legs ache, and you sprained your ankle leaping over trash cans. What can you do? Pain relievers only numb the pain for a time. Days have gone by and you're so sore it's all you can manage to drag yourself to work. **Therapeutic massage**, however, can help by interrupting the pain/spasm/pain cycle going on inside you. Massage effects the nervous system, which initiates muscle relaxation, decreasing the tightness and pain, and increasing blood circulation so the body can heal the affected area. Your therapist can also work the muscles which are compensating for the damage and untie the knots to further release the injured site. After the massage session, they can also suggest ways to take care of the injury until the healing is complete . . . or until the next time Rover spots Fluffy.

AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy means more than just buying candles at the store marked "Stress Release" and "Passionate Nights". Essential oils can be used in many different ways to improve our health and emotions. The study of scents can involve much training and study to understand all the different facets possible in a single oil or different combinations thereof. Fortunately, a simple understanding is now possible with just a little bit of reading.

In recent years, aromatherapy has become quite popular. Where before a few fruit- or flower-scented candles were available at a common market, now we can find an array of products for our use, from new fragrances in our laundry detergent to prominent and expansive displays of candles and sprays.

Essential oils, though, can be of more use to us than just providing a pleasant scent for our houses. Some oils have properties useful in everyday cleaning and self-care. Some are antibacterial, anti-fungal, or deter pests. Learning how to use these essential oils can be beneficial

to us.

However, because essential oils are so potent, we must be careful how we use them. They should not be taken internally, applied near the eyes or other mucus membranes, or applied directly to the skin. Avoid using citrus oils if you are going to be out in the sun. People with high blood pressure, epilepsy, or who are pregnant should research an essential oil carefully to check for any adverse reactions which may occur due to their condition. Essential oils are not meant to be used to cure a condition; always go to a licensed medical practitioner first for diagnosis and treatment. To test for allergies, mix two drops of an essential oil to a teaspoon of a carrier oil you know agrees with you (grape seed, apricot kernel, jojoba, etc.) and apply a small amount to your inner arm. Avoid use of that oil if a redness or irritation appears. These warnings are not meant to scare people away from using aromatherapy and essential oils, only meant to convey the potency of the oils and the effects they may have.

Another important aspect we need to be aware of is how to know which brand name of oils is best. Aura Cacia is a very popular and inexpensive brand. A partner to Aura Cacia is Frontier. Their oils are slightly more expensive but likewise possess a higher quality. Warning signs to look for are synthetic blends or diluted oils. The best way to be sure of which brand to buy is to talk to a professional aromatherapist or an herbalist who distills oils. However, if you don't want to go to the trouble of searching, the aforementioned companies were recommended by an aromatherapist as being reliable for average use, inexpensive, and easy to find.

In the issues following this one, we will be printing recipes of various blends of oils and a variety of products you can make yourself using essential oils. A special note will be given if the recipe includes a less common and more expensive oil. A description of one or more of the oils used in the recipes will be included to provide more insight into the nature of essential oils.



Breathing and smiling together--that is peace education. If we know how to appreciate these beautiful things, we will not have to search for anything else. Peace is available in every moment, in every breath, in every step.

-Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace Is Every Step

Peace, Love, and Happiness, Jamie and Jenn