

# Ancient remedy has modern benefits

By Natalie Schreyer  
Staff writer

When it comes to wellness, one form of therapy uses a treatment found in our own backyards: plants. Essential oils — chemicals derived from flowers, herbs, seeds, roots, tree resins and citrus — can induce feelings of calm, focus, or energy, depending on the type of oil.

By breathing in the scent, molecules in the oils interact with receptors inside the nose, sending a signal to the brain that affects the body. According to Nicole Stevens, managing scientist at doTerra, a company that manufactures and sells essential oils, they are also “really strong players” as antioxidants, which protect against free radicals that can harm cells in the body.

Lavender is known for its calming, relaxing effect, according to Stevens. Peppermint oil can have an energizing effect, while scents like bergamot can help with focus. Oils derived from the leaves and stems of herbs like oregano, thyme and rosemary can help support the immune system, Stevens said.

An analysis published by the PDQ Integrative, Alternative and Complementary Therapies Editorial Board of the National Cancer Institute said that previous studies have shown good smells can be therapeutic in stressful or psychologically taxing situations. In addition to breathing in the fragrances,



Pixabay.com

Essential oils can induce feelings of calm, focus or energy, depending on the type of oil.

essential oils can also be applied on the body, but they should be mixed with a fatter oil like coconut oil to moisturize and protect the skin.

But the Food and Drug Administration urges caution about using essential oils on the skin. “Sometimes people think that if an ‘essential oil’ or other ingredient comes from a plant, it must be safe. But many plants contain materials that are toxic, irritating, or likely to cause allergic reactions when applied to the skin,”

it warns.

That is why, Stevens said, consumers should scrutinize the essential oils they buy to make sure there are no additives or fillers. And oils should not be overused to avoid skin irritation, she added.

While there are schools that train aromatherapists, a license is not required to practice, which can make treatments uneven and research inconsistent, according to the PDQ analysis.

But one study has also

shown that, with further research, essential oils could have powerful medicinal effects. In 2013 in the Journal of Infectious Diseases and Preventive Medicine, scholars from Johns Hopkins University outlined the possible benefits of essential oils for combating drug resistant diseases in the future.

“Perhaps by looking to the past, we may discover significant science behind the ‘myths’ of ancient remedies,” the authors wrote.



Clipart.com

Massages can increase flexibility and may help with depression.

## Massages are good for more than just relief, relaxation

By Natalie Schreyer  
Staff writer

Massages can relieve stress and produce relaxation, but they also have additional health benefits that can reduce pain for those with more serious health conditions. Massage can be used to increase flexibility, improve range of motion and relieve neck or back pain.

Massage techniques like deep tissue can increase blood flow to the muscles, which improves mobility, said Bobby Helmick, a licensed massage therapist at Charleston Area Medical Center’s Physical Therapy Center.

Helmick sees patients with a wide variety of health concerns, he added, including people with sprains and sore muscles from running, as well as people suffering from Parkinson’s disease, a disorder that affects the central nervous system and causes tremors.

Clinical trials have shown that massage may also help with depression, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health at the National Institutes of Health. In the short term, it can even help reduce pain and induce relaxation for cancer patients.

Although there is currently insufficient evidence to prove conclusively that massage has

a benefit for Parkinson’s patients, Helmick explained that those suffering from Parkinson’s often have rigidity in their back muscles, which massage can help relieve in combination with physical therapy.

According to the Mayo Clinic, massage can also help with headaches and digestive problems, but it isn’t for everyone. For those with bleeding disorders, fractures, burns, or bone conditions like osteoporosis, the clinic cautions that massage may not be a proper treatment.

The beneficial effects of massage are short term, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, and therefore visits should be continuous in order to maintain positive effects.

A patient with a severe injury should try to come in for a massage once a week if possible, said Helmick, but a visit every two to three weeks is sufficient as a maintenance program.

For those who are looking purely for stress relief, Helmick said Swedish massages can provide full-body relaxation. Swedish massage is more gentle than deep tissue, using longer strokes and circular movements.

With few risks and many benefits, massage is more than an average spa treatment.

## Nursing mothers at work

### What a pumping room should look like, and why

By Julia Beck  
The Washington Post

Breast-feeding is a very personal choice. However, the realities of breast-feeding and, later, returning to work as a pumping mother present a new set of very real challenges for a woman.

Workplaces that support a mother in her return to work by bringing her back with ease always win. Committed employers are not only supporting infant health, they are also establishing a powerful statement of collaboration, underscoring how much they value their employee.

Although the repeal of the Affordable Care Act might mean organizations no longer legally have to provide the space or time for women to pump at work, many companies know that providing this is not only kind, but also simply a smart business move. Birchbox, for example, offers hospital grade pumps, snacks and a comprehensive booking system for its growing population of mothers in the workplace.

Lauren Pfeiffer was out for 12 weeks after the birth of her second daughter. When she returned to New Jersey-based Association Headquarters, she was greeted with brand new private “mother’s room” that held comfortable seating, a sink, refrigerator, a mirror and even a shared calendar for booking the space. The space made her return to work much more seamless, and the fact that her company set it up made her feel supported and grateful.

The room was set up for quiet but also allowed for Pfeiffer to catch up on emails as she pumped breast milk for 20 minutes two to three times a day.

It is this piece of the puzzle that is my focus at the It’s Working Project. Not only do we gather and share stories of how parents in the U.S. transition back to work, the project also partners with workplaces to help them establish easy-to-execute programs to support working families.

As was the case with Association Headquarters, not only was the pumping room a wise thing for her company to do, but it’s also the law.

Washington D.C. has recently passed legislation and joined 18 states to pass enhanced pregnancy and nursing protections that offer strong protections (and also serious penalties for offenders) for a wide range of workers and situations.

Many of these state statutes, including D.C.’s law, also clarify and strengthen the rights of nursing mothers.

“Unfortunately, there is still a tremendous amount of con-



ALYSON FLIGG | U.S. Department of Labor

A Department of Labor “nursing office.”

fusion about the rights of pregnant workers,” said Dina Baskt, co-president of A Better Balance, an organization that works with lawmakers to enact legislation to help pregnant and nursing workers.

“Thankfully, a growing number of states and localities, including D.C., have stepped in to guarantee pregnant workers a clear, statutory right to reasonable accommodations — the same standard in place for workers with disabilities. Many of these statutes also clarify and strengthen the rights of nursing mothers. Ensuring that pregnant workers and new mothers can avoid the impossible choice between a paycheck and a healthy pregnancy is undoubtedly a win-win for women, families and our economy,” she said in testimony.

But smart businesses are many steps beyond just compliant. “We know it can be a challenging for parents to transition back to work and want to do everything we can to make the transition as smooth as possible,” said Annie Lavigne, human resources director at Edelman Inc. This is “one of the reasons why we are committed to providing a pumping space for nursing mothers that is private, clean, and comfortable. The happier

our employees are, the more likely they are to stay. We can’t achieve our business objectives without retaining our talent, and our employee’s ability to manage family and work effectively is a key part of that equation.”

So how do you get what you need at work?

“Employees should emphasize the bottom-line benefits to employers of providing first-in-class benefits to nursing mothers,” advises Baskt. “These programs increase retention and productivity, while also demonstrating the company’s commitment to working families.”

It takes very little for an organization to move from simply compliant to best in class. And the effort and results in a high level of return in the form retention and continued commitment.

What does a pumping room look like anyway?

First, and most critical — it does NOT look like a bathroom stall, not only is this not legal it is disgusting.

So, what does “compliance” mean:

- Private — not a bathroom
- Clean — sanitary space
- Close to workspace — not in a separate building or floors away
- Reasonable break times

— enough to pump and get milk stored and parts cleaned

And what about best in class:

- Locking Door — both sides
- Comfortable Seating
- Clear Surfaces
- Ottoman
- Outlets for pumps
- Sink for cleaning pump parts
- Refrigerator for keeping milk — separate from general staff fridge
- A place where mothers can display images of baby
- Mirror
- Personal storage space
- Snacks and water
- Sign-up system

**Dunbar Therapy Center**

Comprehensive therapy to restore your function and independence

1313 Dunbar Ave., Dunbar, WV  
304.400.4896

Specializing in:

- » Occupational Therapy
- » Physical Therapy
- » Speech Therapy

[www.dunbartherapycenter.com](http://www.dunbartherapycenter.com)

**1 in 14**  
children is raised by a grandparent.

Free resources and support for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Learn more at [healthygrandfamilies.com](http://healthygrandfamilies.com)  
or call Bonnie Dunn at (304) 204-4007

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
USDA United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Healthy Grandfamilies  
West Virginia State University

**1 in 14**  
children is raised by a grandparent.

Free resources and support for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Learn more at [healthygrandfamilies.com](http://healthygrandfamilies.com)  
or call Bonnie Dunn at (304) 204-4007

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
USDA United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Healthy Grandfamilies  
West Virginia State University