

## Lesson13: Blending Guidelines

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS LESSON

- Explain safe dilution and correct blending of essential oils;
- Understand different notes of essential oils.

### Recommended Dilutions

Dilutions depend of two factors: the treatment and the 'scale' of the treatment. The scale depends on which area/s the treatment is covering. The more experienced aromatherapist will adapt the recommendations to the individual client and their circumstances.

3%	dilution of essential oil in carrier is <b>maximum recommended</b> for healthy adult
2%	is most common dilution for treatments for healthy adult (up to maximum of 8 drops of essential oil in any one treatment)
1%	dilution for sensitive skin, the elderly, the frail/convalescents, pregnant or breast feeding women (only after first trimester) and children
.5%	dilution for babies

### Calculating dilutions

1 drop of essential oil in 99 drops of carrier equals a dilution of 1%. i.e. 1 out of a total 100 drops is essential oil;  $1/100 = 1\%$ .

2 drops of essential oil in 98 drops of carrier equals a dilution of 2% etc.

		Carrier Oil				
		10ml	30ml	60ml	120ml	240ml
Essential Oil Dilution	0.5%	1 drop	3 drops	6 drops	12 drops	24 drops
	1%	2 drops	6 drops	12 drops	24 drops	48 drops
	2%	4 drops	12 drops	24 drops	48 drops	96 drops
	3%	6 drops	18 drops	36 drops	72 drops	144 drops

100 drops of carrier is typically equal to 5 ml, however there is [evidence](#) to suggest that drops are not the most accurate way to measure either carrier or essential oils.

As you can see, when you start to want to scale and prepare larger quantities of aromatherapy oils, the number of drops naturally increases somewhat. There is a good argument for using high-accuracy scales to measure the quantity of carrier and essential oils. Drop sizes can be different, depending on the type of dropper in the bottle, therefore it is not always a reliable measure. Different essential oils have different densities, as do different carrier oils. Using weight maintains a consistent dilution each time you create a specific blend. Another reason to use scales to measure the weight, rather than count the drops, of an oil is to avoid human error. It is all too easy to miscount or be interrupted and forget where you counted too, even in low numbers.



		Carrier Oil (weights)				
		9g 10ml	27g 30ml	54g 60ml	108g 120ml	216g 240ml
Essential Oil Dilution	Approx.	0.045 gram	0.135 gram	0.27 gram	0.54 gram	1.08 gram
	0.5%	0.09 gram	0.27 gram	0.54 gram	1.08 gram	2.16 grams
	1 %	0.18 gram	0.54 gram	1.08 gram	2.16 grams	4.32 grams
	2 %	0.27 gram	0.81 gram	1.62 grams	3.24 grams	6.48 grams

You can decide which method you use – both are widely used by aromatherapists. The important thing is to accurately document the blend you use.

#### How much oil is needed for aromatherapy massage treatments?

Full body massages typically require about 20-25ml of oil.

For face massage, only about 5ml of oil is needed.



### Maximum dosage per treatment

The maximum number of different essential oils in a single treatment is 3 for the body and 1 of these for the face.

The maximum number of drops of essential oils to be used in a treatment is 8. This, of course, is only if mixed in enough carrier oil to meet dilution requirements. For example, you will not use 8 drops of essential oils if you are only using 5ml of carrier oil for a facial – in this case maximum number of drops would be 2.

### Client Blends

Oils that are blended for the client following a thorough consultation should be appropriately bottled and labelled. The label should contain the client's name, date that the blend was created, a 'use by date', the common and Latin names of the essences and fixed oils blended, directions for use i.e., once per day, the name and contact details of the therapist, safety precautions to be followed i.e., not to be used in the bath, not to be applied before sun exposure.



### Does the treatment start working immediately?

The smell of an oil during any treatment will register in the brain and provoke a response within seconds. In massage, essential oils are primarily absorbed through the skin, and then into the body fluids. An area of skin is only able to absorb oils for about ten minutes after which it becomes saturated. The time taken for the oils to pass around the body is dictated by the individual metabolic rate and this varies from about twenty minutes to twelve hours. Most essential oils are processed and eliminated from the body within 24 hours although there are a few exceptions e.g. juniper and myrrh which both remain in the body for longer and therefore require careful use.

### Blending Essential Oils

Blending is a complicated art at first - there are many oils to choose from and a potentially confusing array of client requirements, which can often seem daunting for the therapist. It is best to select between one and three oils for a blend. Using the client consultation, decide upon the presenting conditions. The client's skin type may also provide an opportunity to select specific oils. Decide upon the emphasis of the blend - for example is it stress, insomnia or backache the client is having problems with?



Select the appropriate oil based upon chemistry, therapeutic properties, and the client's scent preferences.

Clients often have favourite scents and may not always like the most relevant or useful oils for their condition. Select up to three essences in this way, taking into account any other conditions and approach the treatment in a holistic way, thinking about the physical and psychological needs of the client. Carrier/fixed oils will also need to be considered as part of an effective blend. Essences chosen may overlap conditions being treated and a synergistic effect may be created. Once the client is happy with the chosen oils, the therapist can create the blend using the correct dilutions (as detailed previously).

Record the specific blending ratios, quantities of oils used, oil details, including botanical names and reasons for choice on the client consultation form for future reference and reflective practice. The client must also sign the consultation form to endorse the blend chosen.

## **Fragrance Notes**

The note of an essential oil may help provide some guidance when creating a blend. A technique of classification developed by the perfume industry, essential oils are categorised by their volatility - the rate at which they evaporate.

### **Top notes**

Essential oils that are classified as top notes normally evaporate very fast and typically have anti-viral properties. They tend to be light, fresh and uplifting in nature and are usually inexpensive. Top notes are highly volatile, fast acting, and give the first impression of the blend. However, they are not very long lasting.

### **Middle Notes**

The bulk of essential oils are considered middle notes and normally give body to the blend and have a balancing effect. The aroma of middle notes are not always immediately evident and may take a couple of minutes to establish their scent. They are normally warm and soft fragrances.

### **Base notes**

These notes evaporate slowly and their scent develops over time. Some base notes can be overpowering so the aromatherapist needs to use them with care. Examples include Patchouli, Frankincense and Jasmine. This is not a definitive science as some oils fall into two or more note categories. An experienced nose will develop with time and blending skills will increase as the therapist gains practical experience and confidence.



Top notes	Middle Notes	Base Notes
Basil (top to middle)	Chamomile	Benzoin
Bergamot	Ginger	Ylang ylang
Clary sage (top to middle)	Fennel (middle to top)	Cedarwood
Eucalyptus	Geranium	
Grapefruit	Juniper	Frankincense
Lemon	Lavender (middle to top)	
Lemongrass (Top to middle)	Marjoram	Myrrh
Mandarin	Rosemary	
Orange sweet & bitter		Patchouli
Petitgrain	Black pepper	Rose
Peppermint	Cypress (Middle to base)	Sandalwood
Tea Tree (top to middle)	Jasmine	Vetivert
Thyme (top to middle)		
Neroli (Top to middle)		

## Blending Suggestions

### Peppermint oil

- Blended with ginger, it is a good digestive stimulant from mouth to stomach.
- In a foot bath, it is very good for soaking tired feet in.
- Lavender and peppermint are good for easing muscles which have just been over-exerted relieves muscular aches and pains
- It also blends well with benzoin, cypress, mandarin, marjoram, , pine, rosemary

### Patchouli

- Patchouli blends well with lavender to aid sleep
- It also blends well with clary sage, frankincense, geranium, ginger, myrrh, neroli, rose, pine, vetiver



### Clary Sage

- Over-use of clary sage can induce feelings of euphoria. Can become spaced out if you use too much — unpleasant feeling
- Clary sage blended with lavender can be used to 'wind down' the mind at night.
- It also blends well with bergamot, cypress, frankincense, geranium, grapefruit, jasmine, juniper berry

### Marjoram

- It blends well with cypress, lavender, mandarin, chamomile roman, rosemary, rosewood, ylang ylang

### Ginger

- Blended with peppermint, ginger helps most tummy complaints
- or with coriander to relieve indigestion.
- Blended with German chamomile and eucalyptus, ginger can be used to treat back pain.
- For the relief of colds with chills, blend with cinnamon and lemon
- It also blends well with coriander, eucalyptus, frankincense, geranium, all citrus oils



### Ylang Ylang

- The first distillation of the flowers produces ylang ylang extra / plus which is the highest grade. Then comes 3 further distillations (1, 2 and 3) which are successively lower grades. An absolute is also produced. There is an inferior essence from the same plant called cananga oil.
- Ylang ylang has an aphrodisiac effect especially for men
- Dry, aged or mature skin (also scalp) can be treated effectively with ylang ylang
- Integumentary system — balances sebum production for dry and oily skins, extracts acne — draws out spot and infection so it gets worse before it gets better, good for psoriasis if mixed with jojoba, stimulates hair growth]
- Nervous tension, insomnia and frustration can be eased by using this essence [nervous system — anger, balancing and calming down central nervous system, good for people who are jumpy, antidepressant, anxiety, creates feelings of joy,
- endocrine system — regulates flow of adrenaline to reduce stress, anger, frustration, panic, fear, shock, balances hormones
- It also blends well with bergamot, grapefruit, jasmine, lavender, orange, rose, rosewood, sandalwood. Digestive system — stimulates secretion,

### Jasmine

- Blended with sandalwood, jasmine is of broad spectrum benefit
- It also blends well with bergamot, frankincense, geranium, all citrus oils

### Neroli

- The emotional aspect of this essence is that it is good for shock [nervous system — sedative and calming effect on central nervous system but also livens people up so is a balancing oil, lifts depression, relieves stress, insomnia, anxiety, neuralgia]
- Neroli is wonderfully relaxing and uplifting, but not if a clear head and concentration is needed - can be rather hypnotic
- It also blends well with benzoin, bergamot, coriander, geranium, jasmine, lavender, lemon, palmarosa, rose, sandalwood, ylang, ylang

