

dōTERRA® eBOOK

Focus, Motivation, and Essential Oils



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CHAPTER

Essential oils can create a variety of responses

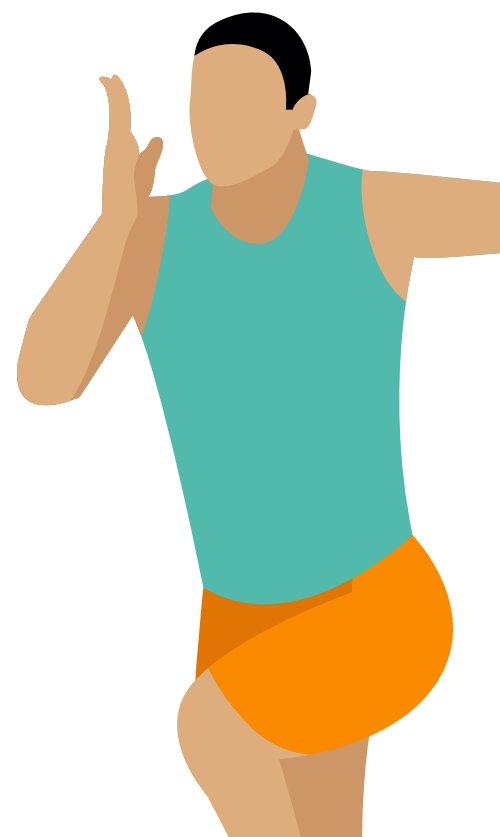
The ability to feel focused and motivated is essential for success, no matter what type of task you are hoping to accomplish. Whether you are a third-grader trying to finish a math problem, a business owner trying to balance your books, an artist creating a new piece, or a busy parent trying to complete a long to-do list, you'll need to find enough concentration, inspiration, and enthusiasm to get the job done. It should come as no surprise that our mood and emotions are major factors when it comes to feeling focused and motivated. In most cases, our emotions either work in our favor to help us accomplish the task at hand, or they become an obstacle that stands in our way of getting things done.



Emotions can influence our quality of life

Every day we are faced with experiences, decisions, and outside factors that can shape and influence our mood. As humans, we can never completely escape the impact of emotions, and typically, our emotions have a significant influence on our mood, motivations, behaviors, and way of thinking. We experience dozens of negative and positive emotions throughout a single day, and our responses to these emotions will determine our general mood—which, consequently, can play a major role in our ability to feel focused and motivated.

While positive, uplifting emotions can help us to be more focused, concentrated, motivated, or committed to a task, negative emotions can leave us feeling discouraged, disinterested, or confused, thus limiting our ability to move forward.



Internal and external experiences influence our emotions



Our responses to our emotions will shape our mood



Our mood can play a major role in our ability to feel focused and motivated

Positive emotions



can lead to focus, concentration, and motivation

Negative emotions



can lead to discouragement, disinterest, and confusion

There are many solutions for promoting focus and motivation—some more effective than others. Because each individual has a unique personality and a different set of experiences, tactics that help to promote focus and motivation in one person might not be as effective for another person. It is also important to remember that some people struggle with focus and motivation more than others. Certain tasks can be difficult for some people, while others find them easy.

Among the many methods for promoting motivation and focus, the use of essential oils has the potential to create an uplifting, energizing, or calming environment that can propel us toward successfully accomplishing important daily tasks.

Aromas and mood

Our sense of smell is one of the most miraculous ways that we experience the world. Even faint aromas can engage our sense of smell and trigger a response. Compared to animals, the human sense of smell is actually relatively weak; however, our sensitivity to aromas and odors allows us to experience responses when we encounter any scent.

We often don't realize it but our sense of smell does more than just detect aromas. A specific smell that we encounter has the potential to generate certain responses, depending on how the aroma interacts with the brain.



How do aromas interact with the brain to cause responses?

Although the way that our brain processes aromas is somewhat complex, there is a simple explanation as to how a specific aroma can elicit a response within us.

When something emits an odor or aroma, molecules from the matter float through the air and into the nostrils. Once they reach the nostrils, these molecules are picked up by olfactory receptors found in the nose, and the aroma is then processed in the olfactory system of the brain. The **olfactory system** is the area of the brain that is known for controlling our sense of smell. Once the **neurons** (nerve cells) detect the aroma, they send **nerve signals** to the brain, which can then identify the smell. The nerve signals transmit information from the olfactory system to the **limbic system**, the part of the brain where our emotions and memories are stored. The limbic system then creates a response based on memories or emotions associated with that particular aroma.



Olfactory system: The part of the brain that is responsible for controlling our sense of smell

Limbic system: The part of the brain where our memories and emotions live

Neurons: Specialized cells (also known as nerve cells) that transmit information through signals

Nerve signals: How neurons communicate with and transmit information to one another

HOW DOES AROMA CREATE A RESPONSE?

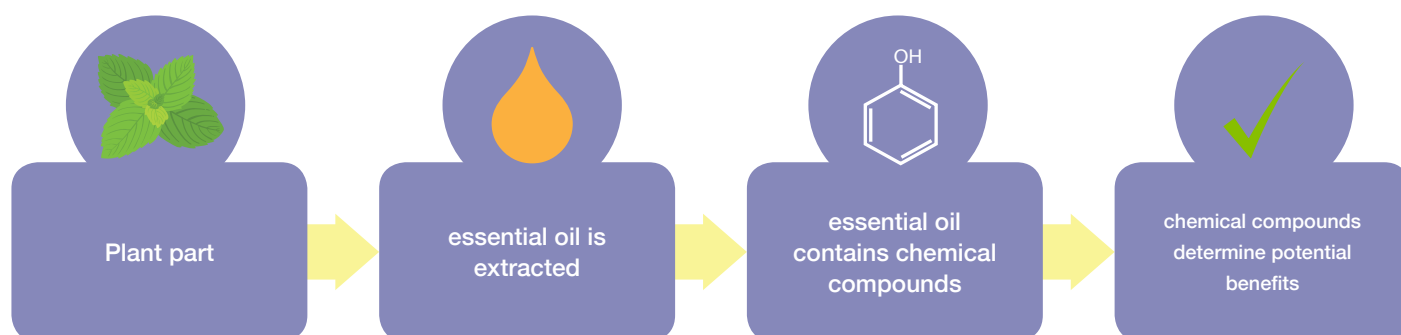
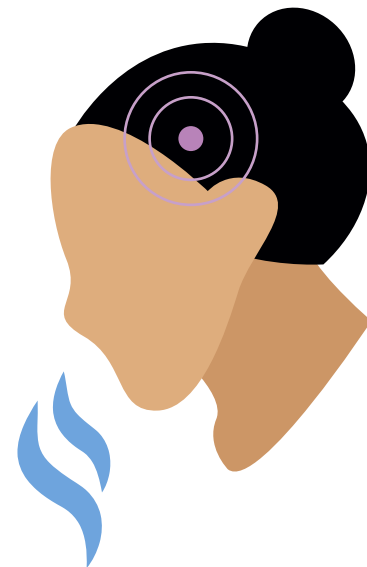
1. Aroma is inhaled
2. Aroma is picked up by olfactory receptors in the nose
3. Aroma is processed in the olfactory system (which controls our sense of smell)
4. Neurons (nerve cells) send nerve signals to the brain to identify the smell
5. Nerve signals transmit information from the olfactory system to the limbic system (where memories and emotions are stored)
6. The limbic system produces a response

Responses will vary from person to person

Practically anytime we experience an aroma, our brain makes a connection based on a memory or experience we have with the smell (or a similar smell). Because of this, no two people will have an identical reaction to a single aroma or odor. Each of us has unique memories and experiences, so when we encounter an aroma, our brain will make a unique connection and produce a custom response. However, because some aromas have specific chemical compounds that are known to produce a general type of response (positive or negative, calming or uplifting), it is still possible to harness the power of smell to elicit a desired response. This is the basic idea behind using essential oils for designated purposes—like promoting motivation or focus.

The chemical makeup of essential oils

We know that our brains process smells when chemical compounds float into the nostrils. Because each essential oil has a unique chemical profile made up of a combination of different chemical compounds, there is a wide variety of ways to use essential oils to achieve a certain type of reaction in the brain. Depending on the plant, fruit, or plant part from which the essential oil comes, it will have a different combination of chemical components (known as a chemical profile) and thus, each type of oil has its own unique potential benefits.



Typically, essential oils can be separated into one of two general categories: uplifting or calming. Depending on its chemical structure, the oil may have more specific characteristics in addition to being generally calming or uplifting—it could also have harmonizing, warming, cleansing, or other useful properties.

To get a better idea of how chemical components can determine the type of benefits that an essential oil offers, take a look at these different oil types and their chemical profiles:



Essential oil type: Mint

Common chemical constituents: ketones and alcohols

Benefits: energizing, uplifting, and invigorating properties



Essential oil type: Citrus

Common chemical constituents: monoterpenes: limonene

Benefits: uplifting and invigorating properties



Essential oil type: Floral

Common chemical constituents: monoterpene alcohols, esters: linalool, linalyl acetate

Benefits: uplifting and invigorating properties



Essential oil type: Spice

Common chemical constituents: phenols

Benefits: warming properties



Essential oil type: Herb

Common chemical constituents: esters, oxides, sesquiterpenes

Benefits: soothing, renewing, and grounding properties

Now that you have a better understanding of how aromas interact with the brain and how the chemical components found in essential oils can elicit specific responses, let's explore some of the possible ways that essential oils can be used to promote a sense of focus and motivation.



CHAPTER

Essential oils and feelings of focus

We live in a world filled with constant distractions, but the ability to focus is necessary for anyone who wishes to successfully accomplish his or her goals.

For many people, the influence of outside stimuli like sounds and sights can be a major distraction. Most people keep their phone and other electronics nearby at all times, which can make it difficult to concentrate when calls, messages, and notifications are constantly popping up. In addition to our constant connection to technology, the sound of people talking, the television playing in the background, or even pleasant sounds like music can make it difficult for our brains to focus on the task at hand.

For others, the influence of internal stimuli can make it difficult to focus. Internal stimuli—such as, wandering thoughts, daydreaming, or confusion—can make it difficult to organize thoughts. Whether you are hindered by internal or external stimuli (or both), it can be difficult to get things done when you struggle to maintain a sense of focus.

When we lack focus, our quality of life can suffer. Not only does it make it difficult to manage our time, but an inability to focus can cause stress when it results in diminished job performance, an inability to complete important tasks, or a general sense of confusion or under-achievement.

How can essential oils promote feelings of focus?

As discussed in Chapter 1, the chemical components found in essential oils can be useful for encouraging desired responses. Because focus has much to do with our emotional state and can be impacted by our mood, essential oils can provide a safe, natural way to promote feelings of focus. In addition to providing a natural solution for creating a focus-friendly environment, essential oils are also extremely potent, so only a small amount of oil is needed to be effective.



Chemical properties that are useful for focus

When it comes to promoting feelings of focus and clarity, there are several ways to create a favorable environment. As discussed earlier, most essential oils can be generally characterized into two categories—calming or uplifting. It turns out that both calming and uplifting essential oils can be used to help you stay alert.

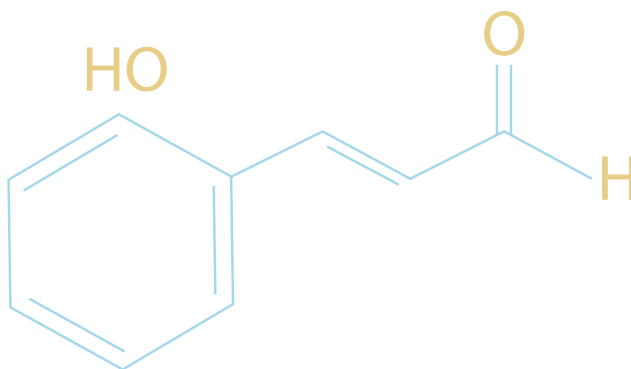
Sometimes, it can be helpful to promote calming, grounding, or balancing emotions to help encourage feelings of focus when your mind is too busy or distracted. By creating a calm environment, you can prepare yourself for focusing on the task before you, rather than worrying about everything else that is on your mind.

In other instances, it can be helpful to promote energizing or refreshing emotions to “wake up” your mind and prepare it for concentration. It can be difficult to focus when you feel sleepy, sluggish, or uninterested, so invoking feelings of energy can be useful for creating a focus-promoting environment.

When using essential oils to promote focus, you’ll want to look for oils that have calming, grounding, or balancing properties—or energizing and refreshing properties, when the situation calls for it. Here are a few chemical components that will help you achieve a sense of focus, whether you are aiming for a calm, balanced environment or need to rejuvenate the mind with energized or refreshed feelings:

Monoterpene alcohols	Toning, calming
Sesquiterpenes, esters, oxides	Grounding, soothing, renewing
Ketones	Energizing, uplifting
Limonene and beta-Pinene (monoterpenes)	Uplifting
Phenols	Warming

In Chapter 4, we will discuss which essential oils contain these chemical properties and how to use them to promote focus.



Combining essential oils with healthy habits to help promote a sense of focus

While essential oils can be useful for promoting a sense of focus, due to their potency and the way their aroma interacts with the brain, it is important to keep in mind that there are other practices that can help improve focus as well.

For example, providing the body with proper nourishment can help to promote concentration. While we often turn to caffeine or sugar to keep us alert throughout the day, it turns out that feeding our bodies nutritious foods can do more to help our brains function properly. Just as our body needs fuel to make it through the day, our brain also needs fuel to continually function and perform tasks. When you properly feed your brain by eating a healthy diet, you will find it easier to concentrate and remember important things.

Along with healthy eating habits, the practice of getting good sleep at night could help to improve your ability to focus. A lack of sleep can influence our ability to concentrate during the day and often makes it difficult to make decisions or experience clarity when we think. Sleep provides our brain time to rest, recharge, and prepare for the next day. While we sleep, our brains go through vital processes that influence our memory and storage of important information, which is why missing out on sleep can affect brain function during the day.



CHAPTER

Essential oils and motivation

Just as the ability (or inability) to focus can have a major impact on our day-to-day lives, the ability to find motivation can influence our success and quality of life. Motivation can be described as the reasoning behind our actions, and this reasoning can generally be categorized into one of two types of motivation—intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is when internal factors cause a person to take certain actions or behave in a certain way. When someone does something for intrinsic reasons, it might simply be because the person wants to. In other cases, an individual may act out of intrinsic motivation because the person wants to reap the internal rewards (how it makes you feel).

Extrinsic motivation is the motivation to do something because of external factors. In most cases, extrinsic motivation spurs from the desire for a reward or to avoid punishment or undesirable consequences. External factors like rewards, praise, punishment, money, social pressures, and the fear of disappointing others can easily create extrinsic motivation that leads us to do something.



INTRINSIC MOTIVATION: The motivation to do something because of internal factors, like enjoyment or internal rewards.

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION: The motivation to do something because of external factors, like rewards, punishment, money, or fear.

While there are many opinions about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and which one is the most effective for getting things done, most of us probably experience a little bit of both. There are some things that we do simply because we enjoy them, while other things get done because we are motivated by outside influences or pressures. No matter what type of motivation is driving your day-to-day life, it is important to cultivate the ability to conjure feelings of motivation when you need them in order to get things done.

As mentioned earlier, it is no secret that it can be difficult to stay focused and motivated with all of the distractions and negativity in our world. For some people, too many distractions can be a hindrance to getting work done. For others, feelings of laziness, negativity, indifference, or discouragement can keep them from accomplishing their goals. Not surprisingly, even the way that we treat our bodies (eating poorly and missing out on sleep) can cause us to feel sluggish and unmotivated.



How can essential oils help with motivation?

So, if we are faced with a task that we are having difficulty starting, completing, or just tackling at all, how can essential oils help? Much like the way that essential oils with calming and uplifting chemical properties can be used to create an environment that is conducive to focus, there are many essential oils with uplifting, energizing, and invigorating properties that will help to promote a motivating environment.

When you can create an environment that invites feelings of motivation, enthusiasm, or energy, it is easier to get things done. Using essential oils to promote an uplifting and energizing atmosphere can help to engender feelings of confidence and inspiration for times when you need to accomplish an important task.

Chemical properties that are useful for motivation

Essential oils that fall in the “uplifting” category are the most effective for promoting motivation. Oils that have uplifting, energizing, or restoring properties can be useful for creating an environment that is conducive to getting things done. When you want to promote feelings of motivation, energy, and passion, look for essential oils with chemical constituents that are known to be uplifting, like the following:

Alcohols, ketones

Energizing

Limonene and beta-Pinene (monoterpenes)

Uplifting

Aldehydes, phenols

Restoring

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CHAPTER

How to use essential oils for focus and motivation

Now that we’ve discussed the science of aroma and how essential oils can promote focus or motivation, let’s dive into some specific ideas about which oils to use and how to apply them. Oftentimes, a sense of focus and motivation go hand in hand, especially when you need to reach a deadline, employ serious concentration, or accomplish something that is difficult for you. Because essential oils are potent and powerful, and because there is such a wide variety of oils with both uplifting and calming chemical profiles, there are endless options for using essential oils when you want to promote an environment for focus or motivation.



Uplifting essential oils

We’ve discussed what chemical components to look for when we need an uplifting essential oil, so now let’s talk about some of the best essential oils to use for uplifting purposes. Take a look at the list below to discover some essential oils with significant uplifting properties:

UPLIFTING AND ENERGIZING ESSENTIAL OILS		
Bergamot	Grapefruit	Lime
Blue Tansy	Fennel	Peppermint
Douglas Fir	Lemon	Tangerine
		Wild Orange

Calming essential oils

When you want to use calming essential oils to get your mind to slow down and focus, there is a vast number of oils (or combination of oils) from which to choose. These essential oils contain calming properties that may be useful for creating a calm environment that prepares your mind to focus:

CALMING ESSENTIAL OILS

Basil
Bergamot
Cilantro
Coriander

Clary Sage
Jasmine
Lavender
Neroli

Petitgrain
Roman Chamomile
Spikenard
Vetiver

Application ideas

When you are ready to use essential oils for motivation or focus, try a few of the following suggestions to get you started:



Diffuse **doTERRA Balance®** to create a calm environment.



Diffuse **Basil oil** to promote a sense of focus while studying, reading, or completing other tasks that require mental clarity.



Because **Bergamot oil** has both calming and uplifting properties, it can help to create feelings of self-confidence or calm, harmonious feelings when diffused.



After an afternoon nap or when you're dragging at work, apply **Black Pepper oil** to the bottoms of your feet for a stimulating aroma.



Diffuse **Blue Tansy oil** to uplift mood and create a positive atmosphere.



Diffuse **Cardamom oil** for feelings of increased mental clarity.



Cilantro oil is calming and relaxing when used aromatically and can help reduce anxious and restless feelings.



Diffuse **Citrus Bliss®** to help uplift mood with energizing and uplifting properties.



Clary Sage oil can help to create a calm environment, while reducing feelings of stress and anxiousness.



The aroma of **Coriander oil** is both stimulating and relaxing, and it can be diffused to promote feelings of calmness.



Douglas Fir oil promotes a positive mood and sense of focus.



Rub **Elevation** over your heart, temples, or wrists to elevate mood and promote vitality.



dōTERRA Cheer® promotes feelings of optimism, cheerfulness, and happiness.



Diffuse **Fennel oil** in your home or office to encourage a productive day.



Diffuse **Frankincense oil** during your morning yoga practice to focus your intention for the day.



Diffuse **Grapefruit oil** when trying to lose weight to increase motivation.



InTune® enhances and sustains a sense of focus and supports efforts of those who have difficulty paying attention and staying on task.



Lavender oil provokes positive thoughts of self-awareness and is helpful to diffuse when trying to stay on task.



Diffuse **Lemon oil** to allow the energizing, uplifting aroma to promote a positive mood.



Diffusing **Lime oil** can help to uplift mood on difficult or slow days.



dōTERRA Motivate® promotes feelings of confidence, courage, and belief, while counteracting negative emotions like doubt and pessimism.



dōTERRA Passion® ignites feelings of excitement, passion, and joy, while dissipating feelings of boredom or disinterest.



Inhale or diffuse **Peppermint oil** for an invigorating pick-me-up, or rub on the temples for an energy boost.



Diffuse **Petitgrain oil** to promote feelings of calmness.



Diffuse or inhale **Roman Chamomile** to soothe feelings of anger or irritability.



To boost energy and uplift mood, rub a drop of **Tangerine oil** between the palms and inhale the aroma slowly.

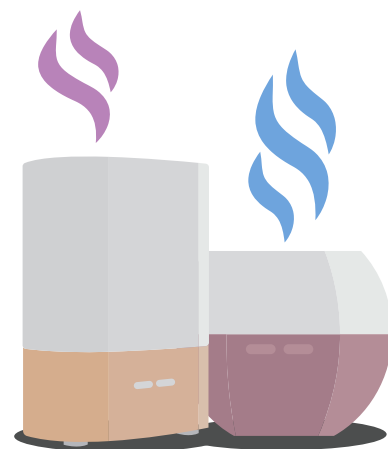


Before a stress-filled day, place a few drops of **Wild Orange oil** into the diffuser for an energizing, revitalizing aroma.



Diffuser blends for a sense of focus

Because each essential oil has a unique chemical makeup and aroma, it can be useful to combine several essential oils into one diffuser to create a new blend that will offer the uplifting or calming benefits that each oil brings to the table. To create an essential oil blend that will promote an environment to facilitate focus and concentration, combine a few drops of essential oils with calming or uplifting properties. Here are a few diffuser blend ideas that will promote a focus-friendly environment:



Diffuser blends for motivation

Whether you have the Monday blues, desperately need to finish a project, or are just having a difficult time getting motivated, diffusing an essential oil blend with uplifting and energizing essential oils might be just the thing you need. Try a few of these diffuser blends when you want to create a motivational atmosphere:





Helping children create a sense of focus

While it is possible for people of all ages to struggle to pay attention, it can be particularly difficult for children to maintain focus, especially when it comes to activities in which they lack an interest or do not find enjoyable.

Here are a few ideas for using essential oils to encourage a sense of focus within your children when they find it troublesome to stay on task:



During homework time, diffuse **Basil oil** in your child's homework area to promote a sense of focus for studying, reading, or completing other tasks that require mental clarity.

The fresh aroma of **Coriander oil** makes it both relaxing and stimulating. When your child is working on an important project, diffuse Coriander nearby.



When your child is practicing an instrument, learning a new skill, or needs help concentrating, diffuse **Peppermint** or **Spearmint** nearby to help the child stay alert and invigorated.

If your children have difficulty getting ready in the morning, consider placing a citrus essential oil like **Lemon** or **Lime** in the diffuser before they wake up to help give them a jump start.



Daily motivation and focus

If you have a difficult time getting going in the morning, or you find yourself dragging in the afternoon, it can be challenging to muster the motivation you need to make it through the day. If there are particular times of the day when you struggle to stay motivated or feel focused, try using essential oils to give you an extra boost.

MORNING MOTIVATION

- Turn your essential oil diffuser on in the morning (with energizing essential oils) and allow the aroma to uplift your mood and promote energized feelings as you get ready for the day.
- Place a drop of **Peppermint** on your tongue before you leave the house in the morning to help you feel alert and awake (and also to freshen your breath).
- Rub your temples with citrus or mint essential oils in the morning when you are having a hard time feeling up-beat or excited for the day.

SLUGGISH AFTERNOONS

- Place invigorating essential oils like **Wild Orange** or **Douglas Fir** in the palms, rub the hands together, and inhale slowly when you need an afternoon pick-me-up.
- Diffuse uplifting and energizing essential oils like **dōTERRA Cheer®** or **Lime oil** at your desk to wake up your senses during the long afternoon hours at work.
- When you are getting ready to tackle a long to-do list but already feel burnt out from your busy morning, place a dab of uplifting oils like **Bergamot** or **Tangerine** on your wrists to carry the aroma with you as you run errands.

Essential oils and meditation

On its own, the act of meditation can be extremely helpful for managing mood, creating self-awareness, and promoting concentration. When combined with the use of essential oils, it is easier to achieve your meditation goals and reach new heights of focus and inspiration. Because essential oils are so potent, they can generate effective responses. If you only have a few minutes to meditate, using essential oils can help you to focus and center your mind quickly.

During meditation, diffusing essential oils can create a calming or uplifting environment, thus promoting relaxed feelings that are conducive to successful meditation. Essential oils can also be applied topically before meditation to help produce specific emotional responses. Applying calming, grounding, or balancing essential oils to areas like the wrists or neck will offer a powerful aroma that will linger throughout the meditation session.

Here are a few ideas for using essential oils during meditation to help promote feelings of focus:



Diffuse calming oils like **Lavender** during meditation for a sense of peace and calm.

Use **doTERRA Balance®** aromatically or topically while meditating to promote harmony.



Apply **Clary Sage oil** to the pulse points (neck and wrists) to promote a calm atmosphere for meditation.

Apply one to two drops of **Spikenard** to the back of the neck or to the temples to promote feelings of calmness and relaxation when meditating.



Use **Vetiver** as an earthy base note in your meditation diffuser blend for a grounding effect on the emotions.

Promote a sense of focus and motivation by combining essential oils with other helpful practices

We know that because each individual has unique preferences, attitudes, and personal struggles, there is not one single solution that will help everyone to feel focused and motivated. Thankfully, there are a variety of essential oils available that are renowned for their calming, grounding, uplifting, or invigorating properties and have the potential to create an environment that is beneficial for promoting focus and motivation. In addition to the vast benefits and application options that essential oils hold, the use of essential oils can also be combined with other practices to help you feel focused or motivated.

FOR EXAMPLE...

- Essential oils can be used during exercise to help you feel centered and motivated for a new day.
- During study time, consider listening to classical music while diffusing essential oils to help create a serene environment.
- When you practice healthy eating and sleeping habits, it will be easier to concentrate throughout the day, and essential oils will prove to be even more effective for promoting focus and motivation.



If you are looking for a little extra help when confronting difficult tasks that require focus, motivation, dedication, a clear mind, and a favorable mood, enlisting the help of essential oils will allow you to accomplish your goals more efficiently and effectively.

