

AROMATHERAPY APPLICATIONS FOR YOGA PRACTICE

ENERGETIC & PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE OF ESSENTIAL OILS FOR THE CHAKRAS

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Aromatherapy and Yoga share a common goal of returning individuals to a holistic state of well-being.

The physical therapeutic benefits of Aromatherapy have come to us down the years from the aromatic plant medicines of our ancestors. Even today's allopathic medicines still look to Nature, which was and remains the principal inspiration for the treatment of disease. Whether the distilled extract of slippery elm bark into aspirin, of the scent of lavender to reduce stress, plants are the basic healing substance. Aromatherapy, unlike orthodox medicine, aims to offer the therapeutic properties of a plant's essence in its whole, full, integrated state. This honours and approaches the client as a whole, full, integrated example of humanity and widens the scope of treatment beyond just the physical.

Yoga too holds an appreciation for the human as a complicated and complete expression of a larger whole. Through physical postures, breath-work, meditation, diet, spiritual ritual and practices, and reflective exercises, a unique approach for each person can be found to maintain or recapture the fullness their individual bodily manifestation of the Source. In the philosophical teachings of Yoga there are many pointers to the theory of holism, the idea that parts of a whole are interconnected to such a degree that they cannot exist independently of the whole, and cannot be understood without reference to the whole, which is thus regarded as greater than the sum of its parts.

Yoga is an ancient and yet evolving tradition. Beginning in India some 5000 years ago, it contains a myriad of ways for practitioners to find an optimal balance in their life and aims to produce health and well-being in all the different levels of human existence. The Yogic systems see no division between body, mind, feeling, and soul and in working towards a healthy state may utilize any of the various aspects as a gateway towards increased welfare. In Yoga exists the understanding that the experience of each individual is greater than any generalized idea of a situation. In this way the personal results stemming from each person's relationship with the many approaches to Yoga are all correct and valid, the key is in finding a doorway through which the practitioner can pass *not in spite of where they are in their life but because of it.*

All this is full. All that is full.
Fullness comes from fullness.
When fullness is taken from fullness,
fullness still remains.

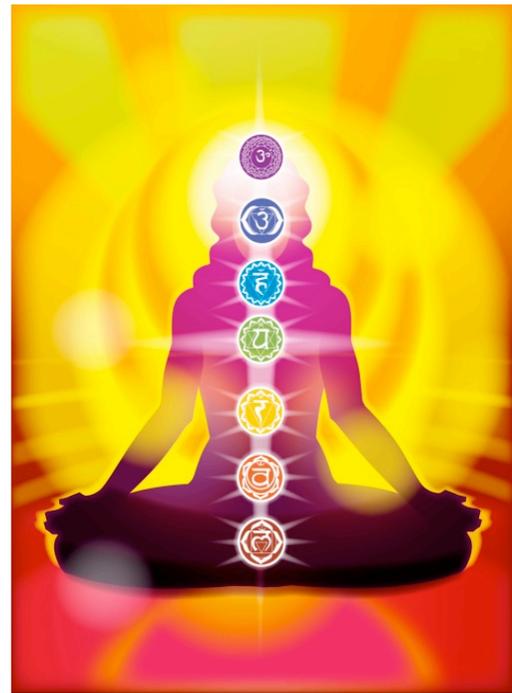
From the Isha Upanishad

The Chakra System

An important aspect of health offered to Aromatherapy and the Western world from Yoga is the chakra system. This multi layered approach to the human experience and identity is often swiftly grasped by those much removed from its origins. A colourful, easily recognizable description of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual development via seven coalescing centers of subtle energy, the chakras have the ability to meet individuals where they are in their life.

The most widespread chakra system details seven vortexes of energy that permeate all the layers of an individual's existence, though there are systems working with 12 and more. Found along the spine these centers are believed to take in, direct, and utilize prana, the life energy that animates all things. Anodea Judith, Ph.D., defines chakras as 'an organizational center for the reception, assimilation, and transmission of life energy' (1987, page 24) and Ambika Wauters considers them 'subtle organs that act as conductors for change' (1999, introduction).

It is important to consider that the seven chakras are not sequential but circuitous and serpentine. Spirals of connected issues and concerns create a fluid course for the energetic journey of individual development. In working to heal an immediately identified area of imbalance, of either excess or deficient nature, it is not only common but nearing the practitioner's expectations to find another energy center contributing to the stated concern in some fashion. Aromatherapy, with its twofold method of delivery, systemically through the blood (physiological) as well as the olfactory-nervous system route (psychological), has built into its application the ideal multifaceted approach akin to that which Yoga seeks to offer.



- 7TH CHAKRA - SAHASRARA
CROWN - UNION
Sahasrara - "thousand petaled lotus"
Element: unqualified spirit
- 6TH CHAKRA - AJNA
THIRD EYE - INTUITION
Ajna - "control center"
Sense: intuition
Element: qualified spirit
- 5TH CHAKRA - VISSHUDHI
THROAT - COMMUNICATION
Visshudha - "purification"
Sense: sound
Element: ether
- 4TH CHAKRA - ANAHATA
HEART - COMPASSION
Anahata - "unstruck sound"
Sense: touch
Element: air
- 3RD CHAKRA - MANIPURA
SOLAR PLEXUS - MOTIVATION
Manipura - "city of the shining jewel"
Sense: sight
Element: fire
- 2ND CHAKRA - SVADISTHANA
NAVAL - CREATION
Svadhithana - "one's own sweet abode"
Sense: taste
Element: water
- 1ST CHAKRA - MULADHARA
ROOT - MANIFESTATION
Muladhara - "root center"
Sense: smell
Element: earth

Unfortunately, postures are sometimes the only one of the eight 'limbs' of Yoga taught in the West. Leaving out important aspects such as ethical guidelines and meditation, the underpinnings of the Eastern system, leads to further imbalances within practitioners. In contrast to the ancient ideal of physical comfort leading to increased meditation and god-communion, modern Yoga as practice in the West is often strictly a body practice that seeks to control and manipulate the physical vehicle, causing an incorrect identification of "self" with the shape, size, flexibility, abilities, and limitations of the body. Adding the overlay of the chakra system to instruction of Yoga poses can assist the expansion of awareness away from such a limiting and reductionist presentation.

Vibrational Approaches to Healing

Both Yoga and Aromatherapy include a foundational understanding of all matter as energy. There is a presupposition that all things, sentient and non-sentient alike, have an optimal vibration, and that this vibration is altered in the presence of illness and disease; in this context the possibility of returning to the original frequency, or a higher and more refined one, becomes the focal point or goal in treatment.

It is well known that clocks in a room together will entrain into a common rhythm, and that one string instrument sounded will, without any physical manipulations being made, encourage and begin other string instruments in the vicinity to vibrate along with it. This is called sympathetic resonance; it is a key reason that essential oils are so highly valued in psychological, emotional, and spiritual approaches to health. Over time, with continued exposure to an outside influence, it can be said that a move from sympathetic resonance into entrainment, holding the introduced rhythm pattern, may occur. This is the theory behind

vibrational application of essential oils for energetic support of the chakras. Proponents for the energetic use of Aromatherapy, Joni Loughtran and Ruah Bull state that 'essential oils vibrate in harmony with the energy centers and therefore can be used to assist in returning the centers to balance' (2001, page 14). When placed on the body or near it essential oils are believed to encourage the client to move once again towards the vibration of health and wholeness, from the subtle level through to the most gross.

One way information regarding essential oil frequency can be derived is from the colours related to the chakras as well as utilizing their associated musical notes. In keeping with the energy-based world view from which Yoga arose, the belief of the entire Universe coming from the sacred syllable 'om', each of the chakras has a bija mantra, or seed sound, which encapsulates the entirety of the complex energy center within a key syllable. Traditional work with the chakras often utilizes these sounds through chanting, either of the whole series of bija mantras or solely that of the one being focused on.

If these methods feel unnatural or unscientific, keep in mind E. Joy Bowles statement that it 'is not to say that the theory of vibrational energy is invalid, just that science has not yet measured it' (2003, page 18). Additionally, there *have* been experiments carried out to measure the effects of various essential oils on the brain's rhythm patterns using an EEG machine. Julia Lawless references a 1979 experiment in which it was found that oils traditionally considered mentally stimulating such as Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*), Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) and Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) induced beta pre-dominant patterns, correlated to attentiveness and awareness. Oils long thought of as antidepressant and

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and if we tamper with it too much it will lose much of its power.”

Robert Tisserand

anti-anxiety, including Neroli (*Citrus aurantium*) and Jasmine (*Jasminum officinalis*) effected unusual amounts of delta rhythms along with some alpha and theta – all slower frequencies which “indicate a quieting of mental chatter (alpha), with the mind going into reverie and intuitive flashes (theta and delta)” (1999, page 84).

Holistic Healing Philosophies

Partly due to the primacy of individual experience, Yogic philosophies and healthcare include a great amount of detail about the various personality types and ways which best suit them in finding fulfillment and ease in life. Working with the energy centers is a way of entering into relationship with the self, of investigating patterns of behaviour in body, heart, mind, and spirit. Different approaches are appropriate for the different chakras, just as different approaches are beneficial for different people. Depending on what methods a person is most comfortable with and which come most easily, an idea of the client’s start point, where they are in their personal evolution, can be identified and the healing journey can begin from there. In a group class environment this idea is expanded from an understanding and intention relating to the individual client to the group as a whole. In part the style of Yoga will give an indication of the desires of the students and lead the choice of oils.

Unlike traditional medicines which try to enforce a return to an asymptomatic state, Aromatherapy and Yoga literature speak of ‘encouraging’ and ‘assisting’ clients, of utilizing practices to ‘support’ ‘stimulate’ ‘cultivate’ and ‘nurture’ individual’s inherent equilibrium. Robert Tisserand’s statement that ‘we cannot heal directly; we can only help the body to heal itself by encouraging the natural healing force within, and allowing it to do what it wants to do’ (1977, page 46) exemplifies this characteristic of holistic treatment.

To this end the quality of products used is of prime importance. It is critical to insure that synthetics or adulterants are not present as they have greater potential to provoke a reaction with the client’s body. Organic materials are less likely to irritate sensitive individuals and offer holistic, energetically vital substance that has the best

chance of effecting a return in the user to health via vibrational example and influence. In choosing therapeutic grade essential and carrier oils, organically grown, free of pesticides and genetic modification, the integrity of the life force, the plant’s prana, is most potent and it’s therapeutic constituents more likely to be intact and active. Dr. Jean Valnet succinctly addresses the physical side of things saying ‘the *whole* natural essence is found to be more active than its principal constituent’ (1980, page 26).

In considering offering Aromatherapy within a group Yoga setting there is the background concern of potentially imposing healing on someone who is not interested or ready. Gabriel Mojay (1997, page 132) states an idea held by many holistic practitioners that though all oils have potential for affecting growth ‘only those that are right for the individual – at that moment in their life – will possess the subtle potential to transform’ – implying that if the situation for subtle inner growth is not ripe, the oils will not disrupt the current stage of a particular individual.

Moving Beyond the Physical

Addressing common physical issues at a physical level cannot help but open into a second approach that addresses the fullness of human experience. Sat Bir S. Khalsa, assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, explains how ‘if you use yoga as a therapy for one thing, you’re not just treating that one thing. You’re treating yourself as a whole’ (Shepherd, 2009). Early understanding of the importance of recognizing and incorporating the interrelated aspects of human existence in healing comes to us from Plato in the 3rd century BCE: *The curing of the part should not be attempted without treatment of the whole. No attempt should be made to cure the body without the soul....this is the great error of our day in the treatment of the human body, that physicians first separate the soul from the body.* This forms the common understanding which shapes the healing approach of both Yoga and Aromatherapy - our body is the final manifestation of our spirit.

There are many explanations and systems that

detail the movement of subtle energy down into dense matter, the chakras being but one of several, but whichever is considered - at root they each utilize this concept. In response to this understanding, the holistic treatment from the physical (symptoms) to the psychological, emotional, and/or spiritual (cause) is consistent with the theory of liberating and manifesting currents within the chakra system. It can be considered that the translation of subtle energy into the body via the chakras is akin to a transformer working, as Richer Gerber, M.D. says, to 'step down' high frequency energy to a lower, more easily accessible frequency. 'This energy is, in turn, translated into hormonal, physiologic, and ultimately cellular changes throughout the body' (2001, page 128). In order to practice from this point looking at the physical connections of the body with the chakras is useful as it gives a framework to work within that has been honed through several millenia.

Combining Aromatherapy with an understanding of the chakras allows the current level of awareness to bring balance back to the forefront of experience. Essential oils absolutely offer immediate, visceral responses that while we may not completely understand, we cannot deny. The ability for Aromatherapy to work via both the bloodstream and the nervous system, through strictly physiological pathways as well as psychological ones, enables essential oils to be effective on gross and subtle levels - exactly the wide spectrum approach that a holistic Yoga practice aims to create.

Application of Oils

Due to relationships with the various nerve plexes, and with the physical organ systems, a large body of information has been gained over the years concerning the physical ailments pertaining to chakras and the body-based approaches that Yoga offers to improve them. This presents a simple and straightforward utilization of Aromatherapy that draws from the known therapeutic properties and benefits of essential oils. It also draws on the known effect of olfactory conditioning whereby the presence of a particular scent in a specific environment can form memory pathways that will

reactivate similar emotional and mental responses when the fragrance is encountered again. These neural pathways are strengthened with repetitive exposure to the same fragrance, so the continuous use of a singular oil over time in a regular, weekly class can create a way for students outside of class to tap into the relaxation and peace they experience in Yoga class.

Within the setting of group Yoga classes the most researched and quantified property of essential oils, that of an antiseptic, can be of great use: many classes today are offered in gyms and use shared props. As most instructors incorporate hands-on teaching and interact physically with numerous students, the ability of an essential oil to reduce the spread of illness is quite a notable thing, not to

THERAPEUTIC OIL PROPERTIES INDICATED FOR USE IN YOGA CLASS

Analgesic Relieves feelings of pain; many new students are surprised at the amount of physical exertion some classes involve and/or do not honour their body's abilities.

Antidepressant Many practitioners prize the stress reducing qualities of regular Yoga practice, oils that are uplifting to the spirits would assist this aspect. Particularly indicated for winter months in areas with a high incidence of seasonal affective disorder.

Antiseptic An agent that prevents the growth of disease-causing microorganisms is especially important in Yoga environments with shared equipment such as mats and blankets. Outbreaks of athlete's foot in studios have been reported and the cause is always lack of proper hygiene for communal use mats.

Antispasmodic Muscles not used in everyday activity are often the first thing that students notice as they practice Yoga. Antispasmodics can be of use when, unaccustomed to engaging, such a muscle moves into a static holding pattern of tension.

Sedative The final pose of savasana (corpse posture) is often the most difficult for students as the purpose is to become still and quiet and allow the body to assimilate the active postural work on a deeper level. Oils with sedative properties can encourage students to more easily relax.

mention a desirable thing. With the simple addition of a commonly available oil such as Lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*) instructors can increase the already significant health rewards of Yoga by introducing analgesic, antidepressant, antiseptic, deodorant, hypotensive, nervine, and sedative therapeutic properties into the environment along with the subtle energy body balancing benefits.

Shirley and Len Price champion the healing effect of essential oils primarily through the use of inhalation. They purport 'that a lesser part of the healing effect takes place via the physical body' (page 204). This supports the usage in Yoga classes of a burner or of essential oil blended in a carrier oil on the hands and arms of the instructor near the end of class. Using oils in this manner, when making adjustments to the neck in the final position of total relaxation, best allows for the scent to be picked up and work towards olfactory conditioning of the essential oil with a peaceful state of, ideally, mind, body, and heart.

The most important decision of which oils to bring into Yoga is intention. What is the purpose or aim looking to be achieved? Loughran and Ruah (2001, page 103) offer the definition of intention as 'the deep, inner embrace of a spiritual objective and purpose that shifts reality on a subtle level to align with the Divine.' What leads people to work with others in an energetic way is a topic of much discussion in both Yoga teacher training programs and Aromatherapy courses. Individuals joining the two modalities may find that reassessing their intentions assists in the choices of oils and application methods.

Honouring the cyclical nature of the chakras and their interdependence on one another can hopefully alleviate undue stress regarding what oils to use in a chakra based Yoga environment. The ideas that firstly, oils will only effect people on the levels that they are open to and secondly, no one can take responsibility for another – Yoga instructors are merely guides for their students, offering suggestions for practice – it is very difficult to impose the subtle workings of Aromatherapy or Yoga in a class setting. When it is not appropriate to introduce students to the spiritual and emotional aspects of Aromatherapy or Yoga in an explicit way, addressing the correlating physical considerations will still effect great benefits.

Chakra Correspondence Chart: Emotions & Essential Oils

	Emotional Themes	Related Essential Oils
1st	Abundance, fear, self esteem, panic, family and social relationships, trust	Benzoin, Cedar, Clove, Douglas Pine, Frankincense, Patchouli, Sandalwood, Vetiver
2nd	Pleasure, sexuality, shame, intimate relationships, creativity, reproduction	Geranium, Jasmine, Mandarin, Neroli, Palmarosa, Patchouli, Petitgrain, Roman Chamomile, Rose Geranium, Vanilla, Ylang Ylang
3rd	Ego, identity, power, authority, anger, guilt, self confidence, anxiety	Basil, Black Pepper, Cinnamon, Clove, Fennel, Ginger, Grapefruit, Juniper, Lemon, Lemongrass, Lime, Tangerine
4th	Joy, grief, compassion, sympathy, depression	Basil, Bergamot, Benzoin, Keffir Lime, Melissa, Myrrh, Myrtle, Rose, Scotch Pine, Sweet Marjoram
5th	Self expression, ideas and ideals, clear communication, mental comprehension	Eucalyptus, Fennel, German Chamomile, Hyssop, May Chang, Orange, Peppermint, Rosemary, Tea Tree, Thyme
6th	Subconscious, dreams, spiritual seeking, imagination, intuition, nonverbal understanding, visualization	Aniseed, Cedar, Clary Sage, Juniper, Lavender, Myrrh, Nutmeg, Sage, Yarrow
7th	Meditation, faith, belief system, spiritual connection	Frankincense, Lavender, Myrrh, Rose, Sandalwood

In choosing to use essential oils for chakra emphasis the following points warrant consideration:

1. The emotional timbre of the center: uplifting, grounding, balancing, heating, etc. when functioning in any of three states: open and healthy, overactive, and deficient;
2. Physical issues that commonly relate to the area, especially those of most interest and concern to the practitioner(s);
3. Mental attitudes and beliefs that are related to the chakra;
4. The perceived genders of the focus chakra and also the oils recommended;
5. Top, middle, and base notes each of oil, indicating how long they will remain in the environment and body;
6. The atmosphere and emotional environment you wish to create.

Yoga sequencing often builds around a chakra, addressing poses related to the area of the body and potential physical issues that are associated. In adding Aromatherapy appropriately to such an environment not only can instructors physically support the practitioners with the medicinal benefits of essential oils, but can open the door for student who are ready to go further.

The following charts outline detail relating to the seven chakras: emotional and essential oil correspondences as well as properties that are helpful for related physical issues.

Conclusion

With such a strong basic tenant shared between Yoga and Aromatherapy, the viewing of human beings containing complex, layered experiences of existence, the combination of these two modalities is easily grasped and achieved. Yoga sequencing often builds around a chakra, addressing poses related to the area of the body and potential physical issues that are associated. Utilizing the chakra system as a tool to focus and organize the selection of possible essential oils can provide uniquely intelligent choices that specifically match the intention of a given Yoga practice. In adding Aromatherapy appropriately to such an environment not only can instructors physically support the practitioners with the therapeutic benefits of essential oils, but can open the door for students who are ready to go further.

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As can be seen in the previous chart and the one below, there is overlap of issues from one chakra to another and essential oils often are suggested for more than one chakra. Individual centers do not 'rule' malfunctions or body areas as much as exhibit influence, and when this is seen as the end result of the entire system's health as a whole, both the multiple listings of disorders as well as the seemingly contradictory therapeutic properties can be accounted for. For example, suggested oils for the first chakra, the root energy center, cover an excess of earth energy– stagnation requiring stimulation, as well as a deficiency of the same – flighty, spacey-ness indicating a need for relaxation and stillness.

CHAKRA	BODY AREAS	PHYSICAL MALFUNCTIONS	SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC OIL PROPERTIES
1 st : MULADHARA (Coccyx)	Legs, feet, kidneys, rectum, large intestine, bones, fascia, adrenal medulla	obesity, eating disorders, sciatica, constipation, circulatory issues, disorders of solid body parts: bones, teeth, issues with legs, feet, knees, base of spine, buttocks	Rubefacient, balancing, sedative, grounding, stimulating, analgesic, appetitif, laxative
2 nd : SVADISTHANA (Sacrum)	Hips, inner groin and thighs, reproductive organs, and glands, body fluids – blood, salvia, urine, semen, etc.	frigidity, erectile disfunction, infertility, urinary infections, difficult labour, low back pain, lack of flexibility, deadened senses, loss of appetite for food, sex, life	Aphrodisiacs, movable oils, diuretic, uterine, parturient, hormone balancing or stimulating
3 rd : MANIPURA (Solar plexus)	Stomach, muscles, liver, gall bladder, spleen, small intestine	eating disorders, ulcers, hypertention, chronic fatigue, digestive issues, hypoglycemia, diabetes, chronic fatigue, muscular spasms and disorders	Hypertensive, sedative, balancing, stomachic, carminative, hepatic, chologogue, digestive
4 th : ANAHATA (Heart)	Thoracic torso, arms, hands, shoulders, skin, heart, lungs, diaphragm	asthma, coronary disease, lung infections and illness, disorders of the heart, circulatory problems, immune system deficiency, chest pain, tension between shoulders	Respiratory, antiviral, antiseptic, lymphatic stimulants, hypertensive or hypotensive, cardi tonic, nervine
5 th : VISSHUDDHI (Throat)	Mouth, tongue, ears, throat, neck, thryroid	sore throats, respiratory tract issues, voice problems, ear infections, neck and shoulder pain, thyroid disorders, tightness of jaw, teeth grinding, toxicity	Respiratory, antiviral, antiseptic, antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, expectorant, antitussive
6 th : AJNA (Third eye)	Eyes, face, brain, amygdala	vision problems, headaches, migraines, nightmares	Nervine, sedative, restorative, calming, antiphlogistic
7 th : SAHASRARA (Crown)	Nervous system, spinal canal, skull	depression, confusion and memory issues, brain tumors, amnesia, cognitive delusions, coma	Antidepressant, uplifting, cephalic, stimulating, grounding

A SELECTION OF ESSENTIAL OILS FOR USE IN YOGA

Bergamot, *Citrus bergamia*

A wonderful restorative oil often utilized in cases of stress and depression. Related to the heart center through its balancing qualities, bergamot is also grounding due to relaxing the mind and body as well as uplifting with its fresh, bright fragrance. Contraindication of phototoxicity within 12 hours of application.

Frankincense, *Boswellia carteri*

Used traditionally in many religious ceremonies, frankincense is wonderfully supportive to meditation thanks to slowly and deepening the breath. Because of the action on the lungs (heart center) as well as being a resin (earth element, root center) along with the spiritual associations (spirit element, third eye and crown centers) this oil effectively wraps around all aspects of being.

Geranium, *Pelargonium graveolens*

By exhibiting a regulatory effect on the nervous system geranium is excellent to use for stress, tension, depression, headaches and anxiety. Particularly known to assist the balance of female hormones it can help PMS and menopause symptoms. Contraindications are not common, but use on very sensitive skin has been noted to cause dermatitis.

Grapefruit, *Citrus paradisi*

Citrus oils are typically associated with the third chakra and the pleasant intensity of grapefruit has a personality akin to individuals with healthily developed identities. Its uplifting qualities are stimulating without causing hyperness or 'type A' behaviour. Contraindicated in the use of homeopathics and oral contraceptives.

Lavender, *Lavendula angustifolia*

Considered to be clearing to the entire chakra system, particularly intuition at the third eye, it is also used as a near panacea for the physical body. The familiar scent is easily available to trigger the relaxation response in students outside of Yoga class when they have had regular exposure to it in the class environment. Contraindicated by low blood pressure.

Peppermint, *Mentha piperita*

A familiar tea for upset stomachs, headaches, study, and often found as an ingredient in sleep inducing blends. The essential oil is sharper and stronger than the dried herb and exceptional for the respiratory system and muscular complaints. Contraindicated by use of homeopathics, and can be skin sensitizing. It should not be used by those with pacemakers, circulatory problems, heart conditions, or the medication warfarin.

Pine, Scotch, *Pinus sylvestris*

Very much a cleansing oil, the essential oil is far removed from the household cleansers many people are familiar with. Scotch Pine is a gentle but persistent heart-centered oil, working on the respiratory tract, so aiding in breathwork as well as supporting the immune system to prevent airborne illnesses. Contraindications include high blood pressure and homeopathic remedies. Possibly skin irritating.

NB Individuals with allergies should avoid the essential oil of trigger plants unless a patch test has been performed and found to cause no symptoms.

Essential oils are highly concentrated plant material and have safety considerations and contraindications like all medicines. To reduce problems it is recommended that oils applied to the skin be organic or as near to it as possible. If you are purchasing from a reputable company the label 'P&N' can be trusted to mean 'pure and natural' but keep an eye and ear out for avoidance regarding the origin of an oil.

When applying essential oils to the skin it is imperative to dilute them in a carrier oil such as olive or jojoba. Firstly this will reduce the concentration and therefore any potential for irritation or sensitivity; secondly it will ensure that the oil remain on the skin surface for a longer time and slow the evaporation rate of the fragrance, similar in some ways to time release capsules inside the body.

Before applying oils to students it is best to first inform them of what you intend to do and with what ingredients so that those with allergies might be respectfully attended to without potential reactions.