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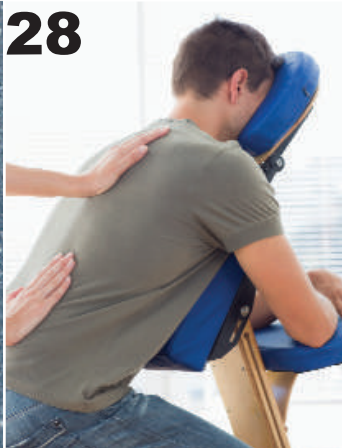
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# Choice

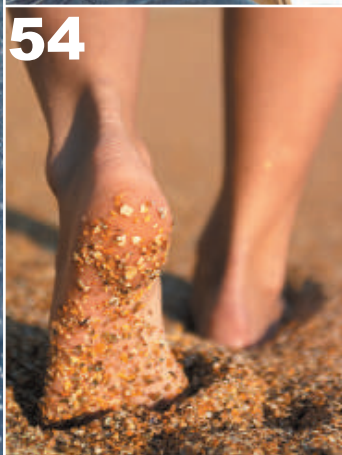
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54



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# Back pain and aromatherapy



**Back pain is something that will probably affect nearly everyone at some point in their lives. Some people will occasionally experience back pain, while for others it can be a curse both physically and emotionally and stay with us for many years.**

It may come and go, by day, week, month or even years. The cause can vary – from injury, certain activities, occupation, poor posture, genetics and even stress. Other diseases such as cancer, osteoporosis and arthritis can also cause back pain and discomfort. So it is vital to establish the cause of your back pain, whether through diagnosis or through the process of elimination, and not just for your own peace of mind, but also to determine a safe and

effective way of treating the problem. Whatever the cause the result is often pain and discomfort!

Many people will live with back pain that never really leaves them, and if it does it may be only for a few hours and often because they may have rested or done certain exercises, or even taken medication to ease the pain!

Learning to live with back pain can almost become a full-time job, especially if it prevents you from sleeping. Regardless of sleep, the pain

can cause ongoing fatigue, which is quite common for anyone enduring pain for any length of time.

Modern life allows us to sit down for long periods of time – at work, in the car, in front of the TV and now in front of computers, laptops, iPads and iPhones. The activity of sitting down for too long is probably where some of the problems may have started. Along with little exercise and not strengthening our core abdominal muscles, especially when we are younger, this may well lead to back problems in later life. Even wearing the wrong kind of footwear, especially for young girls, can lead to back problems, making sitting down for any period of time a problem.

Carrying out daily activities such as household chores, gardening or even just getting dressed, bending down to put on shoes and so on can be an unpleasant experience because of the discomfort it can cause.

All work environments provide safe working conditions to accommodate and, of course, try to prevent employees sustaining or aggravating any type of injury or condition. Any type of work station whether at home or in the workplace can be adjusted to accommodate the user.

Of course, keeping mobile and active is important, and walking can be a very effective exercise to combat and ease back pain and associated problems. Not staying in the same position for any length of time is equally important to prevent back and other health problems.

Recent studies have shown that one of the biggest causes of people being away from the workplace in the UK is due to back pain! Millions of days each year are lost due to back pain and other musculoskeletal disorders.

Using therapists such as a physio or osteopath

has become common practice and there are now even apps you can download that give advice about back pain and how to manage it.

Many of us will have clients who have or have had back pain. Indeed, many therapists can suffer back pain too.

As aromatherapists we know how effective aromatherapy treatments can be in dealing with pain and some of the other symptoms, such as inflammation, that occur as a result of poor posture that comes about through compensating for an injury, along with the discomfort and stress that this can cause.

Since the nervous system is key to our spinal column, this can cause other problems and ailments such as stomach upsets, headaches, blurred vision, numbness, tingling, feeling tired and stressed and so on. This may also depend on where in the spine or which vertebra is affected if that is the case. Either way these symptoms can be worrying.

Aromatherapy massage in itself is a soothing, relaxing treatment that can aid stimulation of the circulation and calm the nervous system. The essential oils, however, can play an important role in helping alleviate pain primarily through having an almost analgesic effect by relaxing the muscles and ligaments to reduce the effects of spasm and inflammation – a common cause of back pain, thus promoting healthy sleep. Aromatherapy massage can have a positive effect on the other systems of the body, and so it has a calming effect on both physiological and emotional well-being.



### So whether your back pain is acute or chronic, there are many oils to help with the pain and the various associated symptoms:

- ☉ **Chamomile** – analgesic and anti-inflammatory, calming and promoting sleep
- ☉ **Frankincense** – anti-inflammatory and a mild sedative
- ☉ **Ginger** – warming and stimulating, good for poor circulation
- ☉ **Helichrysum** – anti-inflammatory, especially good for inflamed joints and excellent in a cold compress for bruising

☉ **Juniper berry** – anti-rheumatic, anti-spasmodic, nervine, rubefacient, excellent for eliminating toxins from the body and can help strengthen the nervous system

☉ **Lavender** – anti-inflammatory, relieves anxiety and tension, prevents muscular spasm, promotes sleep

☉ **Peppermint** – eases muscle soreness

☉ **Rosemary** – analgesic, anti-spasmodic, improves blood circulation

☉ **Sweet marjoram** – analgesic, anti-spasmodic, a warming oil that eases tight muscles especially in the lower back, a sedative.



**SI Academy offers the best in training and development for the complementary therapist in the fields of Aromatherapy, Massage, and Product-making.**

In May 2014 we will be running the IFA accredited Professional Essential Oil Therapist (PEOT) course, leading to the PEOT diploma qualification and IFA membership.

Dinesh Kotecha is an aromatherapist (for 12 years). He is a principal teacher, examiner and past Chair for the IFA. Kalpna Kotecha is a cosmetic scientist and is responsible for developing the Spa Isha product range. They will teach this course, including product making, between them.

If you are interested in the PEOT course or any other training opportunities with Spa Isha, please contact Dinesh on 07958 769997 in the first instance, or email [dinesh@spaisha.com](mailto:dinesh@spaisha.com)



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Remember to always check your client's medical status to ensure they have no contraindications to the oils you are going to use, or are pregnant.

A combination of any of the above oils, plus many others that also contain the above properties to help with back pain and associated symptoms can have a powerful and positive effect on the client.

Don't forget to encourage your client to use the oils effectively at home, in between treatments, either in a blend which they can apply to the affected area or at bath time. A warm bath using essential oils can be an excellent way to ease the effects of back pain, especially before bedtime, in order to relieve pain and stress and encourage a good night's sleep. Also, using oils in a warm compress and applying directly to the affected

area can reduce swelling, inflammation and ease pain rapidly.

Remember prevention is better than cure, but managing our health, especially where pain and our backs are concerned, is equally important.

*Please note: If pregnant or if you suspect you may be pregnant or if you suffer with a medical condition, consult your GP or qualified aromatherapist for advice before using essential oils. Do not apply essential oils neat to the skin, always use with caution. CHW*

### References

NHS Back Pain at Work

*The Aromatherapy Bible*, Gill Farrer-Halls

Written by Pam Wilson

© If you would like more information about professional aromatherapy, are interested in training to become an aromatherapist or would like to find a qualified aromatherapy practitioner in your area, please go to the International Federation of Aromatherapists (IFA) website at [www.ifaroma.org](http://www.ifaroma.org) or email [office@ifaroma.org](mailto:office@ifaroma.org)

# Aromatherapy for menopause

## mini case study



The very mention of the word menopause can strike a chord of fear within many women all over the world. From a certain age we are bombarded with media images and articles on this very emotive subject.