

# Aromatherapy Can Help Dementia Patients and Caregivers

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Caregiving for the person with dementia can be very stressful, so caregivers need to take steps to refill their well and care for themselves mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. There are simple, holistic methods for caregivers to care for themselves, and these methods can also be used with the person with Alzheimer's or other form of dementia. Research on holistic health care continues to demonstrate its many benefits for natural health, prevention, and wellness. This is article two of three sharing 3 holistic tips for Alzheimer's caregivers to cope and stay well.

Aromatherapy has been found to be helpful for those experiencing symptoms of dementia, and may also benefit the caregiver. Essential oils are the plant essences that when distilled become concentrated components of the plant. They have been used since time immemorial for the simple pleasure of their scent, their healing and life giving properties, to prevent disease, and as cleaners and disinfectants. They are an herb, have medicinal and therapeutic qualities, and are a part of ancient pharmacopeia.

A research study with people with dementia showed that lavender, geranium, and mandarin put into almond carrier oil, **increased alertness, contentment, sleeping at night, reduced agitation, withdrawal, and wandering**. Another showed **other essential oils such as ylang ylang helped to decrease disturbing behaviors**. These people were then prescribed fewer medications. People with dementia may have less sense of smell, but can still benefit from it being applied topically to their skin.

There is a beautiful array of essential oils to choose from. They can be applied to the skin. Be sure to use just a few drops mixed in a base oil or lotion and test a small area to make sure there is no reaction. Diffusers are a great way to get the scent into the air or simply opening a bottle and enjoying the scent can be enough to give you the therapeutic benefits. Listen to and pay attention to how you and your loved one react in body, mind, and spirit to each essential oil.

## 7 Essential Oils that Can Be Relaxing and Calming for Caregivers and People with Dementia

- Lavender
- Orange
- Chamomile
- Ylang Ylang
- Cedarwood
- Sandalwood

- Rose

### **7 Essential Oils that Can Be Energizing, Improve Alertness, or Lift Fatigue for Dementia Caregivers and Patients**

- Peppermint
- Rosemary
- Juniper
- Ginger
- Grapefruit
- Lemon
- Lime

With the popularity of essential oils increasing as well as more people using pharmaceuticals, you want to be sure to avoid cases of drug interactions. You might consult with your physician and this article on aromatherapy safety when used with medications.