

## Using essential oils safely

Essential oils are freely available to buy from many shops, from the Internet or through aromatherapy companies.

To be able to choose and blend essential oils for professional use, it is important to gain the correct qualification that is recognised by professional bodies such as the International Federation of Aromatherapists. This then demonstrates to prospective clients that the therapist has the necessary training and it allows them to obtain essential insurance cover.

*Image courtesy of [Gareth Boden www.garethboden.com](http://www.garethboden.com)*



Many companies have developed their own blends of essential oils for therapeutic treatment and a therapist does not have to provide insurance as the company providing the pre-blended oils would be held liable in any insurance claim relating to the effects of the blended oil. It is only the massage element of the treatment that the therapist needs to provide insurance for. It is important even when using pre-blended essential oils, that they are used safely and stored in the correct manner to maximise their shelf life.

### **The therapist should adhere to the following safety precautions:**

- Provide a detailed consultation to elicit as much information as possible from the client, in particular medical history, allergies, skin type and lifestyle. This ensures that the correct blend of essential oils is chosen to meet the needs of the client.
- Always patch test the client before treatment particularly if they have a sensitive skin or history of skin reaction.
- Ask the client if they suffer from a nut allergy and then make sure that there is no trace in the chosen pre blended oil.
- Check the dilution of the essential oil blend that is being used.
- Choose pre - blended oils that best matches the client's treatment objectives.
- Use oils that are suitable for the client's skin type.

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## **Using essential oils**

Care must be taken when using essential oils as they are now freely available to buy and use at home.

1. Always read the instructions for use carefully
2. Always use the recommended number of drops for their intended use
3. Never apply undiluted essential oils onto the skin ( a single drop of lavender, tea tree or chamomile are the exceptions as they may be used on burns or insect bites to soothe and protect. Tea tree however may cause irritation if used too often)
4. If skin is irritated after use rinse with cold water
5. Never take essential oils internally
6. Avoid using essential oils when pregnant
7. Avoid using essential oils before going out into sunlight particularly citrus oils that increase sensitivity to the sun
8. Do not use essential oils on babies and young children
9. Store essential oils out of the reach of children